Musical Maps as Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract
This study explores the metaphorical relationship between the process of narrative inquiry and the process of "musical mapping." The creation of musical maps was used as a classroom tool for enabling students' musical understanding while listening to music. As teacher-researcher, I studied my fifth-grade music students as they interacted with music and one another during the creation of the maps. Their conversation with the materials of music and map, with each other as collaborators, and later with the class as audience parallels the process of narrative inquiry as the students experienced the music, constructed their story, and shared their story of the musical experience. Like narrative, the process of creating a musical map serves as a form of inquiry, enabling understanding of an experience and affecting change in self through the living and constructing of the story and affecting change in others through the sharing and telling of the story.

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Music suffers doubly: first from being nonrepresentational, and second from being written in a script that is arduous to learn. Even the most avid listeners would no sooner write about a piece of music than about a poem in a language they cannot read. Yet despite Barthes's engagement on behalf of a purely affective approach, the analysis of music holds great potential. For what music lacks in external referentiality, it gains in the distinctness of internal relationships. If it is the most abstract art, it is also the most highly formalized. Recommend this book.