

The Limited Impact of Music Teacher Education Curricula on Social Justice: A Policy to Build Music Teacher Commitment to Empowered Music Making for All

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Abstract: Social justice inequities are tightly woven into educational practices, including music education. Social justice researchers and policy makers suggest that socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and cultural factors impact both access and quality of music education, but a majority of teachers and preservice teachers neglect the impact of these issues on classroom practices. Policy initiatives have, therefore, influenced teacher education programs by mandating that students experience diverse settings, courses in human relations, and to develop competencies for working with a wide range of students. Recent research has been conducted measuring beliefs relevant to social justice in general teacher education using the Learning to Teach for Social Justice: Measuring Changes in Beliefs Scale (LTSJ-B). Recent LTSJ-B measurements in music education research identified marginal differences between institutions probably influenced more by geographic location than curriculum, and static commitment levels throughout the stages of pre-service entry level music education student, music student teacher, and early-career in-service music teachers. We suggest, therefore, that the impact of current policy and curriculum related to social justice in music education seems limited at best. This policy paper will propose activities and curricular innovations that could build greater awareness and commitment levels of music teachers to social justice within their music programs. Central to these innovations would be assessment of social justice commitment levels, recognition of approaches to social justice, and open discourse about social justice while exploring case studies.

Title: Broadening Expertise: Incorporating Informal and Vernacular Musicianship into Music Teacher Education and Professional Development

Symposia Presenters:

Dale Bazan (Symposia Chair & Coordinator)

Associate Professor of Practice in Music Education

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Sharon Davis

Elementary Music Teacher

Loudon County Schools, Virginia, USA

Frank Heuser

Associate Professor of Music Education

University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Clint Randles

Associate Professor of Music Education

With:

Michelle Bednarek, Student

Trevor Butts, Student

Laura Garcia, Student

Kelly Guerre, Student

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Natasha Jackson, Student

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Abstract: A growing body of research suggests that incorporating informal and vernacular musicianship into traditional instruction can improve music learning altogether. It appears that young musicians can have “the best of both worlds” and that the benefits of such musical breadth can last a lifetime. However, the musical training offered in many formal music education programs around the world are disconnected from these findings. Musical knowledge and skills transmitted in formal education, while offering many rewarding experiences to certain types of students and musicians, often turn out to be of limited use to those for whom music will occupy

leisure time in informal settings as adults. Perhaps more informal and vernacular music making would round out the experiences of school-aged students, by reinforcing the skills of creative and independent musicianship. Such curricular expansion would be especially valuable if traditional outcomes can also be maintained, which seems to be the case when such approaches have been employed in many. However, teachers are often reluctant to use teaching strategies they are unfamiliar with. Some within music teacher education have piloted programs to address these issues. The presenters of this 90 minute symposia will share experiences offering courses and activities such as songwriting, popular music performance, and informal musicianship. How to best equip pre-service and in-service music educators to incorporate informal and vernacular music making into their teaching will specifically be addressed. These types of music making experiences differ significantly from those that traditionally comprise formal music education and include playing by ear, improvising, songwriting, small group collaboration, and facility on multiple instruments. This symposia will allow focused time within the World Conference for several models and philosophical tenets to be discussed in a subject area building interest internationally as evidenced by discourse, conferences, coursework and publishing related to informal and vernacular musicianship. The presenters have each explored the above issues through their research agendas, course offerings to music education majors, and professional development activities with in-service teachers. The symposia begin with micro-presentations by the panelists, in which they will describe their approaches and findings about encouraging vernacular and informal music making. Within their presentations each will describe models for music teacher education and professional development with a world-wide perspective. The session will also provide opportunity for questions and comments from audience members.

Title: Measuring Preservice Music Teacher Commitment to Social Justice (Individual Paper as part of the ISME Symposia on Social Justice Issues in Music Education)

Presenter: Dale Bazan Associate Professor of Practice in Music Education

Abstract: The purpose of this portion of the symposia is to describe a study examining the commitment to social justice of music teacher education students between program entry, student teaching, and early-career teaching from four different post-secondary institutions. Recent scholarship in music education has focused on the barriers to music education, impacts on music curricula, and injustices that may result from traditional music education practices. It is suggested that socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and cultural factors impact both access and quality of music education, but the majority of teachers and preservice teachers neglect the impact of these issues on classroom practice. Policy initiatives related to social justice have led teacher education programs to ensure that students experience diverse settings and to develop competencies for working with a wide range of students. This study was a modified replication of previous research measuring beliefs relevant to social justice in general teacher education using the Learning to Teach for Social Justice: Measuring Changes in Beliefs Scale (LTSJ-B). Three populations were surveyed using the LTSJ-B representing different stages of music educating. Sampling of a cross-sectional design of four cohorts resulted in 102 program entrants, 87 student teachers, and 71 graduates. Rasch scaling was employed to analyze data. Rasch scaling allows for raw data collected on human attributes to be transformed into additive, equivalent measurement scales and distinguishes item difficulty from persons. Findings included differences between institutions possibly stemming from location/setting and curriculum, and static commitment levels throughout the stages.

Broadening Musicianship through Alternative Modes of Learning

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Abstract: The traditional or conservatory approach to music instruction is significant and results in predictable levels of music performance. However, complete musicianship has been suggested as depending on a broader set of skills and knowledge than often provided by merely traditional performance-centered instruction. For example, ear playing or learning music by ear through vernacular experiences has been identified as a useful skill to musicians (Woody, 2010). Improvisation is yet another skill often neglected in the traditional music education classroom or conservatory studio. Moreover, varying modes of learning can result in heightened engagement levels of students, such as teaching through student-centered (Ormrod, 2004) or experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), in contrast to more structured teacher-directed approaches. This presentation will outline a theoretical framework for incorporating informal music making, student-directed instruction, and other alternative methods designed to broaden musicianship of instrumentalists at all levels.

Incorporating Technology into Instrumental Music Instruction to Motivate Learning

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Abstract: Students of all ages increasingly explore technology in their everyday lives. In school settings, many disciplines and subject areas rely on technology to facilitate learning and develop desirable skills. Although there are a growing number of technological resources available for instrumentalists, technology in school or conservatory music settings is often deemed non-traditional, costly, or too difficult to use. However, studies reveal that the primary reason students cease participating in music is the lack of relevance they feel music making has to their lives (Boyle, DeCarbo, & Jordan, 1995). Organizations such as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills claim that there is a need to “bridge the gap between how students live and how they learn” (p. 21). During this demonstration presentation we will outline a theoretical framework for incorporating technology and 21st century skills into instruction, practice, and performances to motivate students to continue participating in instrumental music. Demonstrations of various free, online resources will be conducted to illustrate tools and methods for incorporating technology in instrumental music instruction.