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ISME Commission on Policy: Culture, Education, and Media**

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Mission statement for the Commission on Policy: Culture, Education and Media

The mission of the ISME Policy Commission is to:

- Provide an interactive international forum for debate, exchange of information, communication, critical analysis, and expansion of knowledge regarding cultural, education, and media policy development and implementation
- Develop the agency needed for responding to current cultural, education and media policies and political agendas through research, policy briefs, and other collaborations around the world
- Recruit and support commission participants, including new and experienced scholars from diverse geographic locations

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Note from the Commission Chairs

Dear colleagues,

We held the 23rd Pre-Conference Seminar of the ISME Commission on Policy: Culture, Education and Media at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, Canada, from July 20–24, 2026. Located on the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Faculty of Music has a long history of critical research and scholarship in music, education, and pedagogy. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to our local hosts, Associate Professor Nasim Niknafs and PhD Laura Menard, for their warm and generous hospitality and for creating such a welcoming and well-organized setting for the conference.

The seminar included two invited keynote addresses from long-term commission members Professor Patrick Schmidt (USA) and Professor David Forrest (Australia), and altogether 11 individual paper presentations, 19 lightning talks/posters, 4 symposia and 8 roundtables, by participants from 21 different countries from six continents. The seminar also marks the 50th anniversary of the Commission, which we had the pleasure of celebrating together.

This proceedings volume includes papers that were submitted for peer review and presented in the seminar. Authors of symposia and full papers were provided the option to publish full papers. Abstracts only are published for lightning talks/posters and roundtables.

The seminar's theme was "Exploring Music Education through Political and Apolitical Lenses in a Changing World". The seminar presented a unique opportunity to examine how music education is shaped by and responds to political forces, as well as efforts to maintain neutrality. Rather than assuming either an overtly self-consciously activist political role to achieve meaning, drive change and solve problems, or advancing the widespread notion that maintaining neutrality is a productive position, we propose that examining the variety of neutral, subtle and conspicuous actions that music educators and other stakeholders use to influence and shape policy is a fruitful area for theoretical and analytical exploration and discourse.

By exploring the impact of both political and apolitical forces on music education and the tensions between them, we hope to inspire music education professionals to eagerly examine the interconnections of policy, politics, and the daily work of music teaching in light of the global and local challenges they face (e.g., equity, accessibility, censorship, political hegemony, conflicting cultural practices, and rapid technological advancements). This commission seeks to foster collaborative dialogues, critical inquiry, practical problem solving, and a framework for future collaborations. We thank you, dear seminar participants, for the opportunity to learn from you and with you.

Dr Tuulikki Laes & Dr Daniel Hellman, Commission Co-Chairs

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KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

When Policy Means Otherwise: Capture, Professionalism, and the Micropolitics of Educational Practice

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Abstract

Today, educational policy must be understood within a broader political environment in which the formal language of policy is increasingly detached from its democratic, ethical, and historical purposes. In contemporary governance, policy is not only implemented or resisted; it is often captured, redirected, and made to serve ends that may contradict the very traditions from which its language emerged. In the United States, recent federal cooptation of civil rights enforcement offers a telling example: legal and policy vocabularies originally developed to address racial exclusion and structural inequality are increasingly mobilized to challenge equity-oriented practices themselves. Federal Title VI guidance in 2025, for instance, treated certain race-conscious diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts as potential civil-rights violations, a position contested by civil-rights organizations and legal scholars as a distortion of the statute's antidiscrimination purpose. In such contexts, the "letter" of policy may be preserved while its political meaning is inverted. This condition makes the gap between policy text and policy enactment not a technical problem of compliance, but a central site of micropolitical struggle.

In this paper, I center policy capture as a central condition of practice and politics in our current social, cultural and educative environs. Capture—where policy agendas, language, and implementation pathways are shaped by institutional, bureaucratic, market, or professional interests—is historically embedded to the policy process. In education as in other areas, actors understand that policies do not simply move from design to implementation; they are translated, evaded, intensified, softened, resisted, or repurposed through the micropolitics of schools, universities, professional organizations, and local communities. I have argued that this makes grassroots and bottom-up policy practice central to understanding how educational change actually occurs. Policy capture is becoming, however, not only a structural condition undergoing significant expansion and cooptation, as well as a discursive challenge, shaping in unusual, creative—if at times perverse—ways what can be said, what problems can be named, what solutions appear legitimate, and whose knowledge is authorized.

First, then, I theorize how policy tools are growingly appropriated by powerful actors, not only through lobbying or formal influence, but through discourse, implementation pathways, compliance systems, and institutional fear; going far beyond Stephen Ball's performativity or Shore and Wright's audit culture. Then, I explore the changing landscape and affective and professional costs and burdens of this new environment, include new relations to learning costs, compliance costs, and psychological costs. I explore the policy costs of *not knowing*, that is, the

contradiction of growing capture where further restrictive arena of action generate uncertainty, with over-compliance chilling institutional action and making non-action appear prudent.

The paper concludes by asking how educational actors might counterbalance “capture by enactment”—the process through which the practical meaning of policy is redirected not by changing the text, but by controlling the conditions under which the text is interpreted, documented, feared, and enacted. I argue that one response is to take seriously the political lesson embedded in recent conservative policy strategy: that national policy change is often built through coordinated local action, repeated across districts, boards, professional associations, legislatures, and institutional sites until it appears as common sense, procedural necessity, or public demand. This is not an argument for imitation at the level of ideology, but for recognizing that the local is not small, secondary, or merely reactive. It is one of the primary arenas through which national policy meaning is made. Against powerful forces of capture, policy practice must therefore be reclaimed as a form of organized professional and institutional work: the careful naming of problems, the refusal of distorted policy meanings, the creation of alternative interpretive communities, and the development of collective habits that make over-compliance less inevitable. In this sense, local action becomes more than resistance to policy; it becomes a means of producing policy meaning differently. Linking policy practice to professional identity and critical professionalism, the paper argues that educators must understand their interpretive, ethical, and collective labor as part of the substance of educational governance itself. Professionalism, then, is not secured by retreating into neutrality or procedural safety, but by developing the capacity to act with others in the contested spaces where policy is made real.

Patrick Schmidt is Professor of Music and Music Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, USA. Schmidt led consulting and evaluative projects for the National YoungArts Foundation and the New World Symphony. He co-edited the *Oxford Handbook of Music Education and Social Justice* (2015), the two-volume *Leadership in Higher Music Education* (2020) and the *Routledge Handbook for the Sociology of Music Education* (2021). His books *Policy and the Political Life of Music Education* and *Policy as Practice: A guide for Music Educators* were released by Oxford in 2017 and 2020.

The First Fifty Years of Development of the ISME Policy Commission

David Forrest

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Abstract

Under the theme of Exploring Music Education through Political and Apolitical Lenses in a Changing World I will explore the evolution and development of what is now the ISME Policy Commission. Fifty years ago, at the Montreux conference of ISME in 1976 the Commission was established under the name Music in Cultural, Educational and Mass Media Policies. Its aim was to work across the three complementary policy areas of culture, education and mass media. The first seminar of the Commission was held in Innsbruck in 1980, with the theme: Stock-taking of Music Life: Documents and Bibliographies for the Use of the Music Educator.

The establishment of the Commission was in close association with the work of the first Chair, Kurt Balukoff and the foundation of the Institute of Music Sociology at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. This also saw the establishment of the influential MEDIACULT, with academic luminaries including Irmgard Bontinck, Desmond Marks, Peter Etzkorn, Terry Gates and Nellie de Camargo establishing academic, professional and industry links across Europe, North and South America, the International Music Council and UNESCO.

At the ISME Board meeting in Montreux in 1976, Blaukopf provided a rationale and agenda for the Commission when he stated that “There are a number of factors influencing the musical life which would deserve the closest attention of ISME, such as the place of music and music education in the framing of policies governing cultural development, educational development and the mass media; the attempts at integrating educational institutions into local and regional cultural development”.

The paper will explore the changing themes and ideas of the Commission seminars as well as the people associated and driving agendas from an historical context. The work comes from my 30 continuous years of association with the Commission from 1996, my time as a commissioner, commission chair, seminar convenor, and more lately as a participant in the developing work of the commission.

The Commission has developed and amassed a library of scholarship that has informed debates around policy on culture, education and the media. The world in 1976 was incredibly different from when I entered the discussion in 1996 to our current time. The considerations and contributions have marked the developments in our thinking and practice over time. These shifts in focus are marked by the refinement of the name of the commission. Over the decades the Commission has reflected, engaged and critically examined the changing world in which we work as music educators.

Keywords: *ISME Policy Commission, MEDIACULT, Music in Cultural, Educational and Mass Media Policies*

David Forrest is Professor of Music Education in the School of Art at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. He is a longstanding leader in the ISME and the commission. His scholarship has focused on the development and implementation of policy in music and arts education at the state, national, and international levels. He is an Inaugural Fellow and Honorary Life Member of the Australian Society for Music Education, and recipient of the inaugural ISME Member Service Award for his extensive service to the organization.

SYMPOSIA

Between Global Influence and Local Identity: Rethinking Music Education in Contemporary Asia

Abstract

In Asia, music education has long been shaped by global forces, especially Western classical traditions, while increasingly encountering local demands for cultural representation, equity, and pedagogical renewal. This symposium brings together four perspectives from Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong to explore how music educators and systems navigate the tensions between inherited global models and evolving local identities. Topics range from AI's impact on cultural visibility to post-Enlightenment critiques of Japanese curriculum to Korea's curriculum balance between gugak and Western music to Hong Kong's post-handover reform struggles. Collectively, these studies invite rethinking of whose knowledge is valued, how music education defines cultural legitimacy, and what future paths Asian music education might pursue in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: *Social change, Other*

AI, Globalisation, and the Representation of Local Music in Taiwanese Education

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Abstract

This paper examines emerging questions surrounding generative AI and the representation of local musical knowledge in education, while offering reflective approaches and classroom-based examples from Taiwan. Situated within the context of the ISME Policy Commission symposium *Between Global Influence and Local Identity: Rethinking Music Education in Contemporary Asia*, it considers how generative AI brings new urgency to longstanding questions of cultural representation, legitimacy, and educational purpose. Drawing on policy documents, curriculum contexts, and a reflective university music course case, the paper highlights concerns related to accuracy, cultural visibility, educational appropriateness, teacher readiness, cultural responsibility, and digital justice. It also argues that AI-generated content may reinforce unequal patterns of cultural visibility, especially when local and Indigenous musical knowledge already occupies a less visible position within global digital systems. In Taiwan, where technological development plays a significant role in national life, these issues call for greater educational awareness and thoughtful engagement, rather than technological resistance. Instead of offering a final solution, the paper provides reflections, reminders, and practical responses concerning how music educators might engage with AI more carefully and responsibly. It suggests that meaningful engagement with AI requires more than technical familiarity, and calls for critical comparison, source-based verification, and culturally responsive pedagogical judgment. More

broadly, the paper invites continued reflection on how music education can respond to technological change while sustaining local identity and the deeper human meanings of artistic learning.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Local Music, Music Education, Taiwan, Teacher Education*

Introduction: Rethinking Local Music Representation in the Age of AI

This paper presents the Taiwan contribution to the ISME Policy Commission symposium *Between Global Influence and Local Identity: Rethinking Music Education in Contemporary Asia*. Across Asia, music education has developed through ongoing encounters between globally circulating traditions, particularly Western models of music learning, and diverse local cultures, histories, and musical practices. These encounters have created new possibilities for curriculum development and cultural dialogue, while continuing to raise questions about representation, legitimacy, and the purposes of music education (Chen, 2025; Ho, 2013).

In Taiwan, these issues have become more pressing in a context where technological development plays a major role in national life. Taiwan's National Development Council (2021) has described the ICT industry as a core force in the economy, while more recent official policy continues to identify semiconductors and artificial intelligence as key strategic industries (National Development Council, 2025, 2026). In such a rapidly changing environment, the growing presence of AI in education invites greater awareness, care, and preparedness from educators.

As a university teacher engaged in both teacher education and professional development for K–12 educators, and with over two decades of experience in researching and applying technology in music teaching, the researcher has become increasingly attentive to how technological change and AI are reshaping questions of musical knowledge, classroom practice, and cultural representation.

AI, Globalisation, and Cultural Visibility in Music Education

The growing use of generative AI in education should be seen as more than a technological shift. It also carries cultural and educational implications. Generative AI systems are trained on massive datasets, many of which are built from large quantities of internet-based text and other digitally available materials (Bender et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2023). These datasets reflect uneven patterns of global knowledge production and digital representation, often privileging dominant languages, widely circulated cultural materials, and forms of knowledge that are already highly visible online. As Bender et al. (2021) caution, large internet-based datasets tend to overrepresent hegemonic viewpoints and encode biases that may be harmful to marginalized communities. More recent evidence also suggests that widely used large language models exhibit cultural values closer to English-speaking and Protestant European contexts than to many other local settings (Tao et al., 2024).

Seen in this way, AI-generated content cannot always be treated as a neutral pathway to information. It may reproduce existing hierarchies of visibility and legitimacy. Knowledge that is more abundant, more digitally documented, and more frequently circulated is more likely to appear in generated outputs, which can further reinforce its dominance. Minority or less-documented cultural materials, by contrast, may become more vulnerable to simplification,

distortion, or exclusion. Similar patterns can be seen in other generative systems. For example, studies of text-to-image tools have shown that prompts for positions such as “CEO” or “director” have overwhelmingly produced images of White men, illustrating how generative models can reproduce and amplify dominant social stereotypes (Sandoval-Martin & Martínez-Sanzo, 2024).

In music education, this issue is especially significant because greater visibility can easily be associated with greater credibility, teachability, and curricular value. As digital technologies increasingly shape teaching and learning practices, questions of cultural representation, cultural equity, and epistemic justice become central, particularly for local and Indigenous musical cultures whose presence in global digital datasets may already be limited (Räisä & Stocchetti, 2024). AI should therefore be approached not just as a means of accessing or generating musical knowledge, but as a mediator that influences how such knowledge is organized, recognized, and valued in educational contexts.

Representing Local Music in Taiwanese School Education

In Taiwanese school education, the representation of local music and local musical knowledge has long been mediated by broader political and historical orientations, as well as by curriculum frameworks, teaching materials, teacher knowledge, classroom practice, and the availability of cultural resources (Chen, 2016). The current K–12 system is guided by the *Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education*, whose General Guidelines and Arts Domain Curriculum provide an important foundation for competency-based learning, cultural diversity, local awareness, and the use of technology in teaching (Ministry of Education, 2014, 2018). However, these documents were developed before generative AI became widely embedded in educational settings, and they do not yet provide explicit guidance on how teachers should address AI-generated content, data bias, cultural distortion, or the evaluation of machine-produced knowledge in music learning.

More recent guidance from the Ministry of Education has begun to address the use of generative AI in schools as a supplementary response to these emerging conditions (Ministry of Education, 2024). While such guidance is broader in scope and not specific to music education, it nevertheless underscores the growing need to consider how knowledge is evaluated, interpreted, and taught in AI-related learning environments. In this context, it becomes increasingly important to pay attention to how local music is represented in Taiwanese education. As AI becomes part of the learning environment, local music is increasingly shaped not only by curriculum and pedagogy, but also by the visibility, availability, and interpretive patterns of digital data. These shifts are likely to affect both teachers in lesson preparation and students in self-directed learning. In turn, they invite renewed attention to how local musical knowledge is selected, framed, and taught in school education.

New Demands in the AI Era: Appropriateness, Guidance, and Teacher Readiness

As AI tools become increasingly accessible in schools, music educators need to consider how these tools can be used in ways that are appropriate to students’ age, learning needs, interpretive abilities, and cultural understanding. This is especially important in elementary education, where students may not yet be able to independently judge the accuracy, relevance, or cultural limitations of AI-generated content. Under such conditions, teacher guidance becomes even more important.

Recent guidance from Taiwan's Ministry of Education has begun to address the use of generative AI in elementary and secondary schools, drawing attention to issues such as accuracy, terminology, intellectual property, and appropriate educational use (Ministry of Education, 2024). The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has similarly emphasized that meaningful technology integration depends on learners and educators engaging with digital tools and AI in responsible, reflective, and critically informed ways (International Society for Technology in Education [ISTE], n.d.a). Its standards for students and educators further highlight capacities such as digital citizenship, knowledge construction, and intentional instructional design as important foundations for educational practice in a changing technological environment (ISTE, n.d.b).

For music education, however, practical support remains relatively limited. Teachers need more than encouragement to adopt new tools. They also need ways of understanding the educational issues that AI brings into music learning, together with frameworks that help them connect technological knowledge, pedagogical judgment, and musical content in meaningful ways. One useful framework here is TPACK (Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge), which builds on Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and was later developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) to account for the role of technology in teaching. Whereas Shulman emphasized the relationship between pedagogy and subject matter, TPACK extends this framework by highlighting the need for teachers to integrate technological knowledge with pedagogical and content knowledge.

In the context of AI and music education, this means that teachers need more than technical familiarity with digital tools. They also need to make informed judgments about when AI use is educationally appropriate, how students should be guided in interpreting AI-generated outputs, and how such tools can be connected to meaningful musical and cultural learning. Teacher education therefore becomes a particularly important site for this work, since future teachers need opportunities to examine the accuracy, cultural limitations, and representational effects of AI-generated knowledge before they bring such tools into their future teaching contexts.

A Reflective University Music Course Case: Preparing Future Music Educators in the Age of AI

This case comes from a university music course attended by music majors and remains highly relevant to music education, since many of these students are likely to take up teaching roles in schools, private studios, or other music-learning settings in the future. Within this setting, the course became a useful space for exploring how AI may affect the understanding and representation of Taiwanese local and Indigenous music. One important challenge emerged during the researcher's course preparation: AI-generated outputs showed a relatively high rate of inaccuracy when dealing with local and Indigenous musical knowledge and related cultural content. Even among music majors, certain aspects of Taiwanese local and Indigenous music were sometimes unfamiliar. As a result, students were not always in a strong position to independently judge whether AI-generated descriptions were factually accurate, culturally appropriate, or overly simplified. This further heightened the researcher's awareness of how unequal visibility and uneven representation in databases can affect the composition and reliability of AI-generated knowledge.

To respond to this issue, students were guided to compare responses across different AI tools and large language systems, paying attention to differences in factual detail, terminology, emphasis, and cultural framing. Rather than treating AI as an authoritative source, the course approached it as something to be examined, compared, and questioned. Students also used NotebookLM, a tool that supported the organization, summarization, and review of source materials, to work with academic literature, historical texts, websites, and audio-visual resources related to music history and local musical knowledge. This process supported the development of a broader evidential base and reduced dependence on a single generated answer. They were also invited to create posts, images, short videos, and other digital materials for platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, with the aim of modestly expanding the digital visibility of Taiwanese local and Indigenous music. These contributions may remain small within the vast scale of online information, yet they serve an important educational purpose. They help future music educators recognize that representation in the digital age is not only something to consume, but also something they may actively contribute to shaping. More importantly, they cultivate awareness that the limitations of AI are not merely technical matters, but also questions of cultural responsibility that require ongoing attention and pedagogical response.

Between Global Influence and Local Identity: What Music Education Needs to Reconsider

The case discussed above speaks directly to the symposium theme, *Between Global Influence and Local Identity*. In earlier periods, tensions between global influence and local identity in music education were often discussed through curriculum content, Western musical traditions, and the place of local cultures within formal school education. In the age of generative AI, however, these tensions are taking on a new form. Global influence is no longer conveyed only through textbooks, repertoires, or institutional traditions. It is also embedded in datasets, platforms, algorithms, and the digital infrastructures that shape the visibility, searchability, and credibility of knowledge.

From this perspective, the question of local identity is no longer simply a matter of including local culture as a symbolic addition to the curriculum. It also concerns how local musical knowledge can continue to be understood, represented, and taught within learning environments that are increasingly shaped by global technological systems. This does not mean that AI or technological development should be rejected. Rather, it calls for a more careful and culturally aware mode of engagement, especially in contexts where educational practice is expected to respond to both innovation and cultural responsibility. In this sense, what music education needs to reconsider is not only what it teaches, or how it pursues pedagogical refinement and innovation, but also what kinds of knowledge, relationships, and human meanings it seeks to sustain in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion: Toward More Thoughtful and Culturally Responsive Uses of AI

This paper takes Taiwan as a point of departure for reflecting on how generative AI is reshaping the conditions under which local musical knowledge is understood, represented, and taught. In a context where technological development is both rapid and influential, the central question is no longer simply whether AI should be used in music education, but how it should be approached with educational judgment, cultural awareness, and a sense of responsibility. The discussion has suggested that issues of representation, appropriateness, teacher readiness, cultural visibility, and

digital justice are becoming increasingly important, especially when local and Indigenous musical cultures may already occupy a less visible position within global digital knowledge systems.

Rather than offering a final solution, this paper seeks to raise several issues that deserve continued attention. As music education responds to the expanding presence of AI, it will need to think carefully about how technological innovation can be engaged without losing sight of local cultures, educational purposes, and the human meanings at the heart of artistic learning. At the same time, these concerns also call for greater attention at the policy level, particularly in relation to curriculum guidance, teacher support, and the development of more equitable digital knowledge environments. Seen in this light, the Taiwan case offers a basis for continued reflection on how music education may respond to technological change while sustaining local identity, cultural responsibility, digital justice, and the deeper human and educational value of music.

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After the Light: Toward a Post-Enlightenment Vision of Japanese Music Education

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Abstract

This study critically examines the legacy of Western scientific Enlightenment in shaping Japanese music education. Enlightenment rationality, which replaced metaphysical and spiritual dimensions with scientific objectivity, redefined the artist as a secular genius—an ideal Japan adopted during its modernization in the late nineteenth century. This ideology emphasized technical mastery and individual genius while marginalizing children’s everyday creativity. After World War II, Adorno condemned Enlightenment as a regression from civilization to barbarism, and Habermas proposed communicative rationality and the *lifeworld* as alternatives to positivist domination. These critiques, together with R. Murray Schafer’s concept of the soundscape, provide a theoretical framework for rethinking music education beyond Western modernity. Through historical and philosophical analysis, this presentation explores how Enlightenment rationalism continues to shape Japanese curricula and pedagogy. It proposes a post-Western model of music education centered on children’s creative engagement and dialogic interaction, aiming to restore music as a shared, meaning-making practice rather than a vehicle for reproducing Western rationality.

Introduction

Modern music education in Japan has been profoundly shaped by the legacy of Western scientific Enlightenment. This intellectual tradition, grounded in rationality, objectivity, and

universality, has fundamentally reconfigured the meaning and purpose of music, the role of the artist, and the nature of learning itself. While Enlightenment thinking contributed to the institutionalization and standardization of music education during Japan's rapid modernization in the late nineteenth century (Imada, 2012), it also imposed a framework that marginalized alternative modes of musical experience—particularly those rooted in children's everyday lives, embodied practices, and communal forms of meaning-making.

This paper critically examines how Enlightenment rationality continues to inform Japanese music education and explores possibilities for moving beyond its limitations. Drawing on the critical theories of Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas, as well as R. Murray Schafer's concept of the soundscape, the study proposes a post-Enlightenment—or more precisely, post-Western—vision of music education. Such a vision seeks to re-center children as bearers of emergent, still-unheard musical possibilities, and to reconceptualize music as a dialogic and relational practice embedded in the lifeworld.

Rather than rejecting the scientific Enlightenment entirely, this paper interrogates its historical and philosophical assumptions and considers how its unresolved tensions might be transformed. In doing so, it aims to contribute to a reimagining of music education that is both critically grounded and future oriented.

Enlightenment Rationality and the Transformation of Music

From antiquity through the medieval period in Europe, the Greek term *technē* and its precise Latin translation *ars* encompassed a range of practices close to what we now call “art,” yet originally referred to a broad spectrum of skilled activities, including medicine, navigation, warfare, agriculture, and cooking. Over time, this expansive notion of skill bifurcated into the *Artes Liberales* (liberal arts)—grammar, rhetoric, logic/ethics, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy—characterized by intellectual and elite orientations, and the *Artes Mechanicae* (mechanical arts), which involved embodied labor and were often associated with guild practices such as agriculture, hunting, medicine, textile production, weapon-making, painting, sculpture, and architecture (Williams, 1976).

Within this historical configuration, music occupied a privileged epistemic position. As Robert Walker (2007) argues, Plato placed music at the center of the arts because of its direct connection to Pythagorean mathematical thought and proportional relations. Music was understood as a key to explaining cosmic order—why celestial bodies move harmoniously without collision—an idea later echoed in gravitational concepts. Moreover, Plato emphasized the pedagogical importance of learning music through mathematical proportion, viewing it as a means of cultivating self-regulation and preventing moral deviation among the young.

The scientific Enlightenment, unfolding from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century, brought a decisive reconfiguration of these relationships. The rise of empiricism, scientism, and rationalism challenged medieval cosmologies and sought to overcome superstition. In this process, rhetoric and music came to be regarded as heterogeneous to the emerging scientific order and were gradually excluded from the core of the liberal arts. Simultaneously, painting, sculpture, and architecture were detached from the mechanical arts and reclassified within more elite institutional contexts, particularly with the establishment of academies.

This reorganization fostered new efforts to identify a common foundation among rhetoric, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, leading to the integration of previously distinct domains divided between divine inspiration and human technique. In France, the concept of *beaux arts* (beautiful arts) emerged, explicitly linking art with beauty. By the late eighteenth century, the adjective *beaux* was dropped, and *arts* consolidated into a singular conceptual category, giving rise to the modern, unified notion of “art” (Batteux, 1746/2015).

Concomitantly, creativity and originality—once attributed to divine or transcendent realms in antiquity and the Middle Ages—were reconfigured as exceptional human capacities during the Enlightenment (Williams, 1976). The figure of the “genius” or “prodigy” came to embody a quasi-divine status within the individual. As Comini (1987) observes, the transformation of the artist into a “deified” figure is vividly illustrated in representations of Beethoven, including portraits from 1802 and 1820 and his monumentalization by 1902. The establishment of a “genius aesthetics,” influenced by thinkers such as Baumgarten and Kant—despite their limited engagement with music itself—further consolidated this shift (e.g., Ōoka, 1983; Williams, 1976).

This trajectory intersected with broader ideological developments. The valorization of exceptional individual capacities contributed, in part, to the emergence of eugenic thought (Proctor, 1988). Furthermore, from Kant and Schelling to twentieth-century philosophers like Nelson Goodman, logocentric aesthetics tended to privilege the *écriture* of the “genius” composer as the locus of artistic value, often neglecting the sonic reality of music as lived and experienced (Cook, 1990).

In this sense, Enlightenment rationality did not merely transform music into an autonomous art form governed by formal structures; it also redefined its ontological status, epistemological grounding, and pedagogical function. As the metaphysical and divine foundations of art were displaced, music came to function as an autonomous domain that, in effect, substituted for the sacred, assuming a quasi-transcendent status within human culture. At the same time, music became increasingly aligned with abstraction, notation, and authorship, distancing it from the embodied, communal, and experiential dimensions that had characterized earlier practices. This transformation laid the groundwork for modern music education systems that prioritize technical mastery, textual interpretation, and the reproduction of canonical works—conditions that continue to shape educational practices in Japan today.

The Marginalization of Children’s Everyday Creativity

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the theoretical foundations of music education have undergone a significant turning point. Earlier pedagogical practices, grounded in the rationalism of Western scientific Enlightenment, tended to objectify and institutionalize music, promoting a one-directional transmission of codified skills and knowledge. Within this framework, music was treated as a stable object to be mastered, measured, and reproduced, rather than as a dynamic, relational, and generative practice.

This modern rationality, while enabling standardization and curricular coherence, has also narrowed the scope of musical experience. By prioritizing reproducible performance skills and theoretical knowledge, it has struggled to account for the generativity, ambiguity, relationality,

and openness of music to the rhythms of human life. As a result, children's sensitivity, improvisatory capacities, and active engagement with their surrounding sonic environments have often been suppressed. Music education has thus become increasingly aligned with institutional imperatives of skill acquisition and assessment, rather than with lived musical experience.

In critical reflections on this condition, Walker (2012) argues that the term "music education" has gradually lost its inherent philosophical and musical complexity, giving way instead to a managerial logic structured around simplified objectives and measurable learning outcomes. In such a climate, educators are compelled to return to philosophical inquiry in order to address the fundamental questions that are unique to music education. He further suggests that when music education is reduced to the training of skills, the ideal of success is subtly replaced by the avoidance of failure, echoing broader concerns raised in the field (e.g., Bowman, 1997).

The roots of this condition can be traced to the broader epistemological orientation of Western modernity. Under the banner of Enlightenment, nature and culture were increasingly understood through universal laws and rational systems. Applied to music education, this orientation materialized in the privileging of notation, theoretical systems, and hierarchical evaluation structures, all of which emphasize objectivity, reproducibility, and standardization (Walker, 2007). Consequently, music came to be treated as a reproducible object, with accuracy of performance and mastery of theory positioned as central educational goals.

Such objectification has profound implications. It marginalizes the role of the body, sensibility, and environment, and gives rise to what may be described as a "textualized" or "symbolic" conception of music, in which sound is subordinated to its representation. As Adorno (2002) suggests, this tendency reflects a broader logocentric bias that privileges written structures over sonic experience. Within this paradigm, children's everyday musical practices—rooted in play, exploration, and situated interaction—are rendered peripheral or even invisible.

In Habermas's terms, this dynamic can be understood as the colonization of the lifeworld by systemic rationality. The communicative, embodied, and context-dependent dimensions of children's musical engagement are overshadowed by institutional demands for efficiency, control, and accountability. What is lost in this process is not merely a set of practices, but a mode of being in which music functions as a medium of shared meaning-making.

Reconsidering children's everyday creativity, therefore, is not simply a pedagogical adjustment but a philosophical imperative. It requires a reorientation of music education away from the reproduction of predetermined forms and toward the cultivation of open-ended, dialogic, and context-sensitive engagements with sound. Only through such a shift can music education recover its potential as a site of human flourishing, rather than merely a mechanism of technical training.

Habermas and the Lifeworld: Toward Communicative Rationality

Jürgen Habermas conceptualizes modern society through the distinction between system and lifeworld, highlighting how structures oriented toward efficiency and control tend to encroach upon domains of everyday meaning-making (Habermas, 1984, 1990). The lifeworld consists of

shared meanings, social relationships, and communicative practices through which individuals sustain their lived realities.

This tension can be illustrated through a simple analogy. The system resembles a globalized chain such as Starbucks, where interactions are standardized and trust is placed in the system itself. In contrast, a local café embedded in the lifeworld depends on personal relationships, situated knowledge, and embodied practices. Although system and lifeworld inevitably interpenetrate, systemic logic should not erode individual spontaneity, nor should the lifeworld be reduced to a miniature version of the system (Imada, 2024). From this perspective, the colonization of the lifeworld occurs when systemic demands intrude into domains such as cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization, thereby undermining the symbolic processes through which meaning is generated and shared (Habermas, 2018).

However, Habermas's framework presupposes participants capable of rational and linguistic communication, leaving insufficient room for forms of experience that precede or exceed such structures. In this regard, the work of Masaya Chiba (2013) offers a critical extension. Drawing on post-structuralist philosophy, Chiba explores the notion of "becoming-animal" as a mode of existence that resists fixed identities and rational stabilization, pointing toward dimensions of experience that are not yet fully articulated within language.

From this perspective, childhood can be understood not as a deficient stage on the way to adulthood, but as a form of difference—childhood as difference. Children inhabit a mode of being that is not reducible to adult rationality, characterized by openness, fluidity, and responsiveness to the immediate environment. Their practices, including music-making, emerge from a field of experience that precedes stabilization into fixed meanings and forms.

In the context of Japanese music education, this reveals a deeper tension. The "system," represented by standardized textbooks and curricula, organizes music as reproducible knowledge. Yet children's musical practices—shaped by interaction, environment, and spontaneous engagement—operate according to fundamentally different logics. When education is overly structured, these practices risk being marginalized, and music is reduced to predetermined material rather than a lived and generative process.

Reconsidering music education from this perspective calls for a rebalancing of system and lifeworld, while also recognizing dimensions of experience that exceed both. Music education should cultivate spaces in which children can engage with sound not only as communicative practice but as a generative field of experience grounded in difference. In this sense, children's music points toward forms of expression that are not yet fully codified, an insight that leads directly to Schafer's conception of the soundscape in the following discussion.

Schafer's Soundscape: Rethinking Music Education Beyond System

Habermas positions communicative rationality as a core principle of education, emphasizing the formation of mutual understanding through dialogue (Habermas, 1984, 1990, 2018). This perspective provides an important theoretical background for understanding education as a process of collaboratively constructing meaning.

In modern society, however, the “system”—oriented toward efficiency and standardization—tends to encroach upon the “lifeworld,” where meaning is generated through everyday interaction. This dynamic is clearly evident in music education. Standardized textbooks and curricula ensure consistency, yet at the same time reduce music to an object to be reproduced, shifting the relationship between teachers and students toward one based on institutional trust. As a result, children’s spontaneous and relational musical practices are marginalized.

In response to this situation, Schafer’s concept of the soundscape (Schafer, 1977) offers a perspective for reconnecting music education with the lifeworld. He redefines listening as an embodied engagement with the environment and repositions music not as notation or fixed works, but as lived sonic experience. He (Schafer, 2005) also criticizes conventional music education for overemphasizing canonical works and technical skills, thereby distancing children from the intrinsic joy of music.

At this point, the philosophical perspective of Masaya Chiba introduces a crucial refinement. Chiba (2013) argues that the process of becoming must be understood through a tension between the mechanical and the discontinuous. While modern systems tend to stabilize and regulate movement, becoming requires moments of rupture; yet excessive movement risks dissolving the very conditions that allow transformation to occur. Thus, “not moving too much” does not imply passivity, but rather a careful modulation that sustains generative change.

From this perspective, music education can be understood as operating within a dual structure: on the one hand, it is inevitably shaped by mechanical systems of reproduction—curricula, notation, and institutional frameworks; on the other hand, it contains discontinuous moments in which new sonic practices emerge. Children’s musical activities exemplify this second dimension. Their engagements with sound do not simply follow pre-given structures but unfold through interruptions, deviations, and unexpected connections.

Chiba (2013) further distinguishes between ironic retrospection and humorous return as two modes of engaging with structure. Irony reflects on established forms from a distance, while humor re-enters them in a transformative manner. In educational terms, this suggests that music education should not merely critique existing musical systems (irony), nor simply reproduce them, but rather re-engage them through playful and generative practices (humor). Schafer’s sound education can be understood in this light: it neither rejects musical structure nor submits to it but reconfigures it through embodied and environmental engagement.

It is important to note that Schafer does not directly engage with Habermas’s theory. What connects these perspectives is not a line of theoretical inheritance, but a shared critical stance toward the legacy of scientific Enlightenment. While Habermas articulates the tension between system and lifeworld, Schafer and Chiba point toward dimensions of experience that exceed both—particularly those grounded in sound, embodiment, and emergence.

From this perspective, sound education can be rearticulated through two key dimensions: (1) sensitivity to the sonic environment, and (2) creative generation through dialogic sharing. In Schafer’s work, such sharing is not limited to linguistic communication but is mediated through

sound itself. The teacher's role shifts from that of an authority transmitting knowledge to that of a facilitator who participates alongside children in the discovery of sound, the co-construction of meaning, and the creation of new musical forms.

Implications for Japanese Music Education

Implementing a post-Enlightenment model of music education in Japan requires both structural and conceptual transformations. At the curricular level, it is necessary to move beyond standardized repertoires and assessment methods, adopting more flexible and context-sensitive approaches. Teacher education programs should likewise be reoriented toward facilitation, reflection, and responsiveness, rather than the mere transmission of established knowledge.

At the same time, it is essential to critically examine the historical assumptions that continue to shape educational practices. This includes questioning the privileging of Western musical forms and the enduring influence of the genius paradigm. As Raymond Williams (1976) suggests, it takes only two generations for something to be considered "traditional." From this perspective, Western music in Japan may already be understood as having developed its own form of tradition. However, this apparent "tradition" must be situated within the broader historical context of Western scientific Enlightenment, which introduced not only new aesthetic frameworks but also the foundations of a modern market economy.

The institutionalization of Western music in Japan cannot be separated from these economic and ideological conditions. The canonization of certain works, the valorization of professional composers, and the standardization of musical knowledge are all intertwined with systems of cultural production and consumption shaped by Enlightenment rationality. In this sense, what appears as "tradition" may also function as a mechanism of reproduction within a global cultural economy.

Recognizing this ambivalence allows educators to move beyond a simple opposition between Western and non-Western music. Instead, it opens up the possibility of reimagining music education as a space that critically engages with its historical conditions while fostering new forms of musical practice.

Final Thoughts

This study has examined how the legacy of Western scientific Enlightenment continues to shape Japanese music education. While Enlightenment rationality enabled institutionalization and standardization, it also contributed to the marginalization of music as a lived, relational, and generative practice. The perspectives of Adorno, Habermas, Schafer, and Chiba reveal that this legacy contains internal tensions that open possibilities for rethinking music education. In particular, the interplay between system and emergence, structure and rupture, suggests that music education should not be understood as the transmission of fixed knowledge, but as a carefully modulated process of generative transformation. A post-Enlightenment vision of music education, therefore, is not a rejection of rationality but a reconfiguration of it. It calls for practices that sustain the conditions of becoming—neither over-regulated nor entirely unbounded—while foregrounding children's capacity to bring forth forms of music that are not yet fully known or heard.

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Glocal Music Literacy: Western and Korean Traditions in the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum

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Abstract

Korean music education today focuses on developing students’ ability to enjoy, perform, and understand music throughout their lives, rather than training professionals. The 2022 Revised

National Music Curriculum centers on three areas - performance, appreciation, and creation - emphasizing meaningful experiences that connect music with everyday life. Students learn both Western and traditional Korean music through active participation, gaining a balanced understanding of different musical systems. Western music is taught with respect to its own principles, and *gugak* (Korean traditional music) is taught with attention to its traditions, allowing students to explore diverse musical idioms and link them naturally through practice. The curriculum values cultural sensitivity, creativity, and emotional expression, encouraging students to appreciate local heritage while engaging with global music. Ultimately, Korean music education aims to cultivate musically literate, culturally grounded citizens. This study examines how Western and Korean musical traditions coexist within this curriculum while preserving their respective expressive systems.

Keywords: *Glocalization, The National Music Curriculum, Musical Traditions*

Introduction

As popular music continues to spread and the digital environment evolves, the music that students encounter in their daily lives has become increasingly diverse. Within this context, school music education functions as an institutional space that mediates students' musical experiences and shapes their cultural identities, and ongoing discussions have addressed what should be taught and how.

In music education, there has been sustained discussion about incorporating music from diverse cultures into the curriculum, drawing on perspectives from multicultural and world music education (Campbell, 1992, 2001; Ho, 2013). Approaches that seek to understand music within its cultural context have also been emphasized (Hebert, 2018; Hess, 2019; Kertz-Welzel, 2018). These studies suggest that music education can be understood as a space where different musical traditions operate together and underscore that curricula are constructed in ways that reflect diverse cultural elements (Ho, 2013).

This trend is also evident in Korean music education. The Korean music curriculum has gradually shifted from a focus on domestic musical culture toward the inclusion of music from a wider range of cultural traditions, reflecting a broader understanding of music education that extends beyond any single cultural tradition to encompass the musical practices of humanity more broadly. In this context, how different musical traditions are organized together within the curriculum becomes an important subject of analysis.

Given the rapidly changing musical landscape, there is a need to move beyond the question of which music to include, and to examine how different musical traditions are organized and related within the curriculum. Curriculum studies have established that not only what is included, but also how knowledge is arranged and presented, constitutes an important object of analysis (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2012). The perspective of glocalization, which attends to the interaction between global and local elements (Robertson, 1995), offers a useful lens for this kind of analysis. Drawing on these frameworks, this study analyzed the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum to examine the scope of music included, the ways in which it is presented, and the structures through which different musical traditions are positioned together. The following research questions guided the study. First, what music is included in the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum? Second, how are different musical traditions presented within the

curriculum? Third, in what ways does this organization reveal the relationships among different musical traditions?

Method

This study conducted a qualitative document analysis (Bowen, 2009) of the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum, including both the elementary-middle curriculum and the high school elective curriculum. The analysis focused on the sections covering the nature and goals of music education, the content framework and achievement standards, and teaching, learning, and assessment.

The analytical framework drew on the concept of glocalization alongside perspectives from cultural studies and curriculum research. Glocalization refers to the process through which global and local elements interact and are reconfigured within specific contexts (Robertson, 1995). Rather than applying this concept in a strictly theoretical sense, the study used it as a perspective for examining how different musical traditions are organized and presented together within the curriculum. The concept of representation from cultural studies, which emphasizes that meaning is constructed in particular ways (Hall, 1997), and the curriculum studies perspective, which attends to how knowledge is selected and organized (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2012), were also applied.

These theoretical perspectives were operationalized into three analytical criteria. First, the types and scope of music included in the curriculum. Second, the ways in which music was presented within each of the three learning domains of performance, appreciation, and creation. Third, the ways in which different musical traditions were positioned in relation to one another within the same learning domains or conceptual frameworks.

Findings

Scope of Music

The scope of music in the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum was not presented in the same way across all levels. In the nature and goals section, rather than specifying particular musical traditions or categories, the curriculum emphasized an orientation toward understanding music within its social and cultural context. At this level, music was presented not as a set of distinct types but as a culturally meaningful practice, with diverse musical experiences and communal communication foregrounded. In this sense, the nature and goals section functioned less to define the scope of music than to establish a perspective through which music was to be understood.

In the content framework and achievement standards, however, the scope of music became more concrete. Inclusive expressions such as “music of various genres,” “music of various genres and cultural spheres,” and “music of various periods, societies, and cultural spheres” were used alongside direct references to specific musical traditions, including “regional music national heritage,” “Korean music national heritage,” and *gugak*. This dual mode of presentation - broad categorization alongside explicit naming - reflects a curricular structure in which no single classificatory system governs the organization of musical content. This pattern was consistent across all school levels, though the framing shifted slightly. In elementary school, the scope of music was presented primarily within the spatial and present-tense contexts of daily life and Korea as a national space, while from middle school onward, historical and social dimensions

were added, expanding both the temporal and spatial scope. Nevertheless, expressions that directly named specific musical traditions appeared consistently from elementary through high school.

In this way, the scope of music in the curriculum was organized not through a single classificatory system, but through a mode of presentation in which inclusive expressions and specific references were used together.

Learning Domains

The 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum established three learning domains - performance, appreciation, and creation - as its basic structure, and was organized so that diverse music was addressed within this framework. What was notable was that while all three domains engaged with the same music, the ways in which music was made visible differed across domains.

In the appreciation domain, the scope of music was most directly apparent. Diverse music was presented through inclusive expressions such as “music of various periods, societies, and cultural spheres,” while specific musical traditions were explicitly named, including “Korean music national heritage” and *gugak*. In this domain, music was made visible primarily through naming, with inclusive categories and specific references appearing together. This suggests that in the appreciation domain, the curriculum’s approach to musical diversity operates most visibly at the level of nomenclature.

In the performance domain, musical categories were not explicitly named; instead, differences emerged through the ways in which music was performed. While students were expected to perform a wide range of music, specific elements associated with *gugak* - such as *jangdan*, *sigimsae*, and *gugak* instrument accompaniment - were emphasized, so that particular musical traditions were revealed through modes of performance rather than through explicit categorization. In this way, musical difference in the performance domain was expressed through embodied practice rather than through labeling.

A similar pattern was found in the creation domain. Different notational systems - Western staff notation and *jeongganbo* - were presented alongside one another, and different conceptual systems for musical elements were used simultaneously. The coexistence of these distinct notational systems within the same curricular framework pointed to a structure in which different musical traditions retain their own expressive languages. In the creation domain, musical difference was thus expressed not through what was created but through which expressive language and notational system was used.

Across all three domains, then, music was made visible in different ways depending on the domain. Appreciation was centered on naming, performance on modes of enactment, and creation on notational system so that different musical traditions came to occupy different positions within the curriculum according to the logic of each domain.

Co-presence of Musical Traditions

As the preceding analysis showed, the scope of music in the curriculum was presented through a combination of inclusive expressions and specific references, and the ways in which music was made visible differed across learning domains. Taken together, these findings made clearer that different musical traditions were positioned within the same framework while being constructed in distinct ways.

This was most concretely evident in how musical elements were addressed in the curriculum. Beat and meter were presented alongside *jangdan*, and solfège alongside *yulmyeong*, within the same conceptual framework. More specifically, the concept of form was addressed through both shared formal structures and those specific to Korean music, presented within the same conceptual category. Similarly, tempo was addressed through both Western notions of tempo and the *gugak*-specific concept of *hanbe*, again presented together within a single framework. In this way, the expressive frameworks of different musical traditions appeared in parallel within a single curriculum. Music was not unified under a single standard; rather, multiple expressive systems were used simultaneously. This parallel structure suggested that the curriculum does not seek to resolve or reconcile differences between musical traditions but rather allows them to coexist within a shared organizational framework.

This pattern was maintained in the achievement standards and in the sections on teaching, learning, and assessment. Diverse music was addressed together within the same activities, yet certain musical traditions were made visible separately through the emphasis placed on particular elements and approaches. Different musical traditions were thus presented together within a shared framework while their distinct expressive systems were retained.

In this way, different musical traditions in the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum were not excluded or separated but were positioned together within the same learning structure while being presented in distinct ways. In the scope of music, inclusive expressions and specific references intersected; across learning domains, music was made visible through naming, performance, and notational system respectively; and in the treatment of musical elements, multiple conceptual systems were used in parallel.

Discussion & Implication

The findings of this study confirmed that different musical traditions in the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum were not excluded or separated, but were positioned together within the same learning structure while being presented in distinct ways. Three implications of this organizational pattern are discussed below.

First, music in the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum was presented not merely as a technical object to be performed, listened to, or created, but as a cultural practice to be understood within its social and cultural context. This was evident in the way the nature and goals section foregrounded music as a culturally meaningful practice, emphasizing diverse musical experiences and communal communication. This orientation aligns with broader efforts to reconceptualize music education within cultural and social contexts (Kertz-Welzel, 2018), and serves as the foundation upon which different musical traditions are brought together within the curriculum.

Second, on the basis of this premise, different musical traditions were constructed together in specific ways. Inclusive expressions and specific references intersected in the scope of music; naming, performance, and notational system operated as distinct modes through which music was made visible across learning domains; and multiple conceptual systems - such as beat and meter alongside *jangdan*, solfège alongside *yulmyeong*, and shared formal structures alongside those specific to Korean music - were used in parallel in the treatment of musical elements. This can be understood through Hall's (1997) concept of representation, which emphasizes that meaning is constructed in particular ways rather than neutrally reflected. Furthermore, the way in which different musical traditions retained their own expressive systems while being positioned

together within a shared structure resonates with the perspective of glocalization (Robertson, 1995), and is consistent with Ho's (2013) observation that diverse cultural elements are reflected together within music education curricula.

Third, this organizational pattern carries important implications for the direction of school music education. The curriculum's approach of presenting different musical traditions together within a shared framework opens the possibility for students to experience diverse music and develop an understanding of the distinctive expressive systems of each tradition. At the same time, how this curricular structure is enacted in actual teaching and learning remains a separate and important question (Hess, 2019). The existence of a structurally inclusive curriculum does not in itself guarantee that different musical traditions are engaged with meaningfully in classroom practice.

This study demonstrated that the 2022 Revised National Music Curriculum is structured not to integrate different musical traditions under a single standard, but to present them together while preserving their respective expressive systems. How this structure is realized in actual teaching and learning, and what effects it has on students' musical experiences and cultural identity formation, remain important questions for future research. Furthermore, comparative analysis with music curricula from other countries could offer a broader contextual understanding of the implications of this organizational approach.

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Abstract

A decade ago I discussed the evolution of the music curriculum in Hong Kong, particularly in light of the political and cultural changes following the 1997 handover. Before the handover, the curriculum was predominantly influenced by Western classical and traditional music. After 1997, a local cultural awakening prompted comprehensive education reform, and Cantonese opera—a vital element of local musical heritage—was incorporated into the curriculum. Hong Kong pop music was also included, alongside traditional and contemporary Chinese music and popular music from other regions. Despite these advances, it became evident that many music teachers lacked adequate training to implement the revised curriculum effectively.

This previous research raised two key questions for further exploration: Is music teacher training in Hong Kong sufficiently robust to equip educators with the skills necessary to promote local music? And how is the revised curriculum being implemented in practice?

To address these questions, this study reviewed Hong Kong's music teacher-training programs and conducted semi-structured interviews with two pre-service teachers and their supervising teachers. The findings indicate that the professional-development environment for music teachers is diverse, offering opportunities that respond to different career stages and training needs—from initial qualification to in-service upskilling. This study aims to clarify how both traditional local music and popular music are taught within Hong Kong's schools and to evaluate whether teachers are adequately prepared to support these curricular goals.

Keywords: *Hong Kong, Music Curriculum, Local Music, Teacher Training, Education Policy*

Time flies. It has been a decade since the 2016 ISME Policy Commission Seminar in Birmingham. In my presentation at that seminar (Tang, 2016), I examined the evolution of the music curriculum in Hong Kong, particularly in light of political and cultural shifts following the 1997 handover. Before the transition, Western music dominated official syllabuses during the mid to late twentieth century. The primary-school music syllabus (Curriculum Development Committee, 1987) shows that most learning objectives—pitch, rhythm, sight-reading, instrumental practice, movement, creative activities, and listening—were framed in Western musical concepts and repertoire; only a few items explicitly addressed Chinese instruments or forms. Textbook analyses (Lai & Yip, 2000) corroborate this: across four widely used series, foreign (predominantly Western European) songs and listening materials comprised the vast majority of content, while Chinese and local songs were scarce.

After Hong Kong's 1997 handover to China, social and technological change helped spark a local cultural awakening (Tang, 2016). The 1998 education reform and subsequent curriculum developments—most notably the 2006 Music Curriculum Guide (Curriculum Development Council, 2006)—placed renewed emphasis on creativity and on rediscovering and preserving local musical culture. The revised curriculum explicitly incorporates Chinese musical elements: skills in reading *jianpu* (number notation) and *gongche* (Cantonese opera notation); listening

to and singing Cantonese opera excerpts; exploration of Chinese instruments; and study of Cantopop.

My previous research raises two important questions for further exploration in the current context:

- Is Hong Kong's music teacher training sufficiently robust to equip teachers with the skills needed to promote local music? and
- How is the new curriculum being implemented in practice?

Methodology

To address these questions, I reviewed Hong Kong's music teacher-training programs and conducted interviews with two music-teacher trainees and their supervising teachers. These interviews examined the extent to which Cantonese opera and Hong Kong popular music are integrated into classroom teaching.

Music Teacher Training Programs in Hong Kong

The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) is the leading institution in the region offering qualifications for music teachers. It provides three distinct program streams—the five-year Double Degree, the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), and the Professional Development Program (PDP)—which respond to diverse candidate profiles and career stages, including primary, secondary, pre-service, and in-service teachers.

The five-year Double Degree program (Education University of Hong Kong, 2025a) targets secondary-school leavers, higher-diploma holders, and associate-degree graduates seeking an integrated degree and teacher-preparation pathway. This program incorporates multiple courses responsive to contemporary industry practices and pedagogies. Five courses explicitly oriented toward popular music and industry are offered: MUS1213 Jazz Study: An Introduction; MUS3347 Technology in the Popular Music Industry; MUS1346 Exploring Digital Music; MUS2348 Digital Media and Music Learning; and MUS3338 Popular Music and Society. To attend to local cultural heritage and non-Western repertoires, the curriculum also contains courses such as MUS3252 Traditions and Practices of Music II and CAC3023 Chinese Music Traditions and Culture. To address gaps between Western-focused music training and local performance traditions, the program embeds Cantonese-opera workshops within music-pedagogy courses. Graduates of the Double Degree program are certified to teach in both primary and secondary school settings, reflecting the program's comprehensive pedagogical preparation.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (Education University of Hong Kong, 2025b) comprises four modalities—full-time, part-time, primary, and secondary—designed for candidates who already hold a music degree. Eligibility for PGDE admission is contingent upon possession of a music-related undergraduate qualification. Given participants' prior subject-matter expertise, the PGDE omits subject-based content and concentrates on pedagogical theory and practice to equip candidates with classroom management, curriculum design, and assessment skills. Part-time PGDE applicants (both primary and secondary) are required to be employed in school settings—typically as teaching assistants—ensuring that professional coursework is immediately contextualized within active teaching environments. Upon completion, PGDE (Primary) graduates are qualified to teach only in primary schools, and

PGDE (Secondary) graduates only in secondary schools, aligning credentialing with institutional needs.

The Professional Development Program (PDP) (Education University of Hong Kong, 2026) targets in-service teachers seeking short-term, concentrated upskilling. The PDP is structured as a five-week intensive for which teachers may apply for full-pay leave. The program is subject-focused and prioritizes professional development in popular music, music technology, and Cantonese opera—identified as the three most pressing areas of need among practicing music educators.

EdUHK's tripartite program architecture constitutes a coherent response to the professional-development continuum for music teachers in Hong Kong, from initial degree formation through certification and in-service enhancement. The integration of popular-music studies, music technology, and local non-Western traditions—coupled with flexible delivery modes for practicing educators—positions EdUHK to address both contemporary industry influences and the preservation of regional cultural practices within school music education.

Interview with Two Pre-Service Teachers and Their Supporting Teachers

I have interviewed two music teacher trainees and their supervising teachers. Here are their background.

Pseudonym	Background
Peter	A double-degree participant with a major in electric guitar and a stronger background in popular music, conducting his teaching practice in a secondary school
Queenie	Peter's supervising teacher, practicing mainly on traditional Western music with limited exposure to popular music.
Rosa	A PGDE (Primary) participant from mainland China, She can speak fairly fluent Cantonese.
Sam	Rosa's supervising teacher. The panel head teacher of the music subject of a primary school.

Table 1. Interviewees' background

During the interview, Peter reported that his prior training was oriented primarily toward pop musicianship, explicitly noting that he was not interested in traditional music. He said,

“When I was studying in secondary school, I was bored during the music lesson as the music lesson focused on traditional music... There was a band room in the room with a drum-set and electric guitars. The school had developed a pop band. I was fascinated and joined the pop band. It was how I started learning music.”

During his 8-week teaching practice, Peter aimed to introduce Cantopop. He treated Western pop as the “foundation” of popular music, and used this rationale to guide lesson content: early

lessons were structured around the common instruments used in pop genres and demonstrations of genre styles spanning R&B, funk, and rock. He further incorporated songwriting instruction using AI assistance and guided students in writing Cantonese lyrics.

He continued to explain:

“Writing lyrics in Cantonese is difficult because Cantonese consists of nine tones. But, it is more important that the students can write lyrics that can reflect Hong Kong culture or at least something closely related to their daily lives so that the audience can resonate the experience.”

When I asked him about his comment on his teacher training, he said,

“EdUHK has provided students with strong training in pop music, not only from the courses, but also extra-curricular activity. We have pop/jazz band performance groups, offering performance experience to us.”

Queenie, Peter’s supervising teacher, indicated that her teaching primarily covers traditional Western music with limited teaching of pop music at her school, describing pop music instruction as “very new” to her in her professional role. She said,

“I have learned a lot from Peter as well. I consider he is a very reliable colleague more than a teacher trainee.”

On the other hand, I am interested to know how a non-local music teacher can teach Hong Kong local music to students. As mentioned, Rosa is a non-local PGDE participants. She studied Chinese music in her Bachelor degree. Prior taking the PDGE program, she has completed a Master degree in music education, familiarizing herself in Western music and music technology.

She said,

“Cantonese opera is very interesting. I don’t find any difficulty in the learning and teaching of Cantonese opera as my Cantonese is fine... As I studied Chinese music, I have advantages teaching Cantonese opera”

However, a practical issue prevented Rosa from teaching Cantonese opera at school. She said,

“Due to the school’s existing teaching schedule, I will not teach Cantonese opera during my teaching practice, but I am interested in teaching Cantonese opera when I become a licensed teacher.”

Her supporting teacher, Sam, confirmed that,

“Our school provides Cantonese opera learning in Primary 5 and 6. As Rosa teaches only Primary 2 to 4, she does not need to teach Cantonese Opera.”

Collectively, these findings indicate that curriculum implementation in practice is mediated not only by teacher capability but also by timetabling structures and year-level allocation of local music content. Even when trainees possess relevant cultural and subject knowledge, implementation may be constrained by where local cultural content is positioned within the school timetable.

Implication and Recommendation

The practical promotion of local music in Hong Kong schools depends strongly on teachers' prior experience and on informal, collegial learning. This dependency is particularly acute in many secondary schools, where a single music teacher is often responsible for the school's entire musical culture. In such settings, teachers tend to emphasize the areas in which they are strongest; as in the cases of Peter and Queenie, this can lead to neglect of other traditions, including popular music forms.

Primary schools, by contrast, more commonly employ multiple music teachers. This staffing allows teachers to share responsibilities and to build a more diverse, school-based music culture that reflects different specializations. For example, in Rosa and Sam's school, although music teachers also teach other subjects, they are able to coordinate curricula across grade levels to introduce a wider range of music, including Cantonese opera.

Pre-service training affects teachers' capacity to teach local music. Peter's experience at The Education University of Hong Kong shows that the Double-degree program—through both structured coursework and informal learning in music—give trainees broad exposure to multiple musical styles. In contrast, the PGDE program places primary emphasis on pedagogical knowledge and offers fewer opportunities to develop deeper musical skills. As a result, PGDE graduates often must rely on prior musical training; if they lack background in local music, they are less likely to promote it in their schools.

Recent policy changes may further complicate efforts to sustain and promote Hong Kong's local musical traditions. The 2024 Policy Address (Chief Executive, 2024) increased the permitted proportion of non-local students in university programs to 40% (for example, a program with a quota of 50 students would admit 20 additional non-local students). The 2025 Policy Address (Chief Executive, 2025) raised this quota again to 50%. Over time, these higher intakes of non-local students will increase the number of non-local graduates from Hong Kong teacher-education programs. Because many of these graduates will be less familiar with Hong Kong's local musical traditions, this shift could weaken the transmission of local music practices in schools.

In the longer term, these demographic and policy trends could also affect how “local culture” is defined in Hong Kong. I anticipate that the concept of local culture may broaden to encompass the wider Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area. Such a redefinition would reshape which musical forms are prioritized in teacher training and school music curricula, with implications for the distinctiveness and preservation of Hong Kong's musical heritage.

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Who Counts as an Artist? Cultural Policy Disguises in Toronto's Arts Sector

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Abstract

This symposium brings together two interrelated research projects that critically examine how cultural policy, refugee and newcomer arts programming, and the political economy of funding shape artistic recognition, support, and retention in Toronto. As government arts funding undergoes experimental and austerity-driven shifts, this panel explores the political, economic, and bureaucratic dimensions of organizational support for artists. It challenges the notion that arts support is a neutral technical process, arguing instead that cultural policy in Toronto functions as a governance tool—determining who counts as an artist, who receives support, and under what conditions. Toronto's cultural policy landscape is marked by a tension between renewal and restraint. For example, Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto (2025-2035) signals municipal efforts to revitalize the sector through increased funding and strategic investment. Yet many artists and organizations continue to face financial precarity and operational fragility, exacerbated by provincial and federal austerity measures. This environment, defined by simultaneous expansion and contraction, often promotes short-term, project-based inclusion initiatives while leaving deeper structural inequalities untouched. Refugee and newcomer arts occupy a particularly precarious position within this policy framework. Since

2017, the Toronto Arts Council has offered recurring grants (e.g., \$15,000 mentorship stream) aimed at access and mentorship. However, these programs remain largely temporary and project-based. They often serve as tools for data production—generating metrics and success narratives for funders—while artists navigate immigration-status restrictions, credential hierarchies, and categorical definitions of art that marginalize hybrid practices. Equity discourse and initiatives tend to surge during moments of crisis (e.g., migration waves, racial justice movements, pandemic recovery) but stall within core systems such as assessment norms, operating support, and institutional hiring. Presenter 1, Nasim Niknafs, analyzes the political nature of cultural policy and its framing as technical common sense. Through a close reading of municipal frameworks and budget documents from Culture Connects, the presentation shows how inclusion is reframed as a competitive resource allocation issue under fiscal constraint. Immigration status and formal credentials act as gatekeeping mechanisms, shaping eligibility and turning equity into a distributional slogan rather than a structural commitment. The analysis reveals how zero-sum logics persist even during periods of supposed investment. Presenter 2, Ely Lyonblum, explores how artistic identities and participation are shaped by bureaucratic, economic, and immigration-status frameworks. Drawing on Toronto’s arts policies (2015-2025) and interviews with cultural workers (2015-2023), three key policy moments are identified where equity narratives were selectively amplified: (a) the Syrian refugee influx and the launch of the Newcomer and Refugee Arts programs (2017), (b) racial justice mobilizations and the Black Arts Funding for a Black Arts Future report (2020), and (c) post-pandemic cultural recovery efforts (2024). Despite these episodic commitments, newcomer artists are often required to self-identify through rigid categories that fail to reflect their hybrid practices and lived experiences. Immigration status quietly operates as a filter for recognition and funding. Presenter 3, Saghar Moghadamfar, advocates for rethinking cultural policy from the ground up, emphasizing local, community-based support. Through a case study of Sustainable pARTnerships: Collaboration and Reciprocity in Creative Cities, a multi-year participatory arts-based research project, the presentation highlights how collaboration between cultural and academic sectors can foster thriving post-pandemic artistic ecosystems. The initiative developed the methodology of “crystal-scaping” and produced The Artists’ Broadsheet website and the public exhibition Art (Un)done: Private Lives, Public Encounters, showcasing Toronto-based artists working across diverse media. Presenter 4, Sinem Eylen Arslan, interrogates quantification and data governance in cultural funding. Using data from the Sanctuary City research project and interviews with refugee newcomer artists, the presentation examines how documentation, archiving, and metrics serve both artistic and compliance functions. Evaluation frameworks that prioritize tangible, time-bound outputs limit learning to narrow performance metrics, framing failure as risk rather than generative knowledge. They call for evaluation systems that emphasize process and continuity, supporting refugee newcomer artists beyond audit-friendly deliverables. Together, the panel critiques bureaucratic inclusion initiatives and calls for systemic transformation. It urges cultural policy to move beyond project cycles and tokenized inclusion, advocating for structures that value artistic practice over institutional fit. The symposium envisions a policy landscape that honors lived experience, sustains creative life, and reflects Toronto’s diverse cultural pulse.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Social Change, Social Justice, Other*

Bridging Research and Policy: Rethinking How We Shape Music Education for All

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Abstract

Despite decades of compelling evidence demonstrating music's profound impact on learning, wellbeing and inclusion, music education remains marginalised in policy priorities around the world. This 90-minute panel discussion, jointly organised by the Music Education Policy Group (MEP Group) and the ISME Policy Commission, seeks to address this gap by bringing together policy-makers and researchers to explore how research can more effectively inform and strengthen music education policy that supports every child and every person. The session provides a structured forum for dialogue and collaboration, recognising that effective policy emerges where evidence, professional practice and the realities of governance intersect. The panel will include two music education policy researchers from the ISME Policy Commission (named within the submission) and two policy-makers from the MEP Group — an international network established to connect policy-makers, funders and music educators through policy dialogue on the value and impact of music education. The chair (named within the submission) will guide the conversation. The format includes 15 minutes of participant introductions, 60 minutes of moderated discussion, and a 15-minute Q&A with the audience. The symposium will be held in hybrid form, allowing both speakers and participants to join in person or online. The discussion will draw on the MEP Group's Global Compact on Music Education, which outlines six universally shared guiding principles promoting music education as a human right and as a foundation for wellbeing, diversity and inclusion. These principles underpin the symposium by offering a shared framework for examining how research can better respond to the needs and challenges of policy-makers in real-world contexts. Key discussion questions include: * What do policy-makers most need from researchers to address current challenges in music education? * How can existing research be communicated more effectively to inform policy? * What forms of evidence—quantitative data, case studies, or lived experiences—are most meaningful to decision-makers? * How can researchers and policy-makers co-design practical, sustainable approaches to support music education for all?

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation*

Reframing Music Career Pathways: Policy Misalignment and the Future of Music Education in Canada

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Abstract

Contemporary music careers in Canada are increasingly characterized by flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and portfolio-based work, however, our education and policy frameworks have not kept pace with these shifts. This paper examines structural misalignments across labour, education, and cultural policies that contribute to a persistent perception-reality gap regarding music career pathways with a particular focus on the Province of Ontario. We examine the ways Canada's National Occupational Classification (NOC) system, narrow curriculum emphases, and fragmented cultural policy collectively obscure the diversity and economic significance of music work, highlighting and privileging traditional pathways of performance and teaching. Drawing on international comparisons from Australia and the United Kingdom, we argue that addressing misalignment requires revisiting occupational classifications, embedding career development in curricula, and strengthening connections between research, policy, and practice. In so doing, we aim to reframe music career education in Canada as a dynamic, future-oriented field that better reflects sector realities and promotes equity and sustainability within Canada's creative economy.

Keywords: *Canada, Career Pathways, Creative Industries, Portfolio Career, Protean Career*

Introduction: A Policy Problem Hidden in Plain Sight

Across international policy landscapes, there has been a growing emphasis on preparing learners for careers that are flexible, adaptive, and responsive to rapidly changing labour markets. Frameworks such as the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* and the European Union's *New European Agenda for Culture* position creativity, agency, and adaptability as central competencies for sustainable futures. These frameworks reflect a broader recognition that work within creative and knowledge economies is no longer linear, stable, or easily categorized.

Music career education in Canada has not kept pace with these shifts. Despite the scale and significance of our music sector, education and communication surrounding music career pathways remain fragmented and outdated. Directly and indirectly, Canada's arts, culture, heritage, and sport sector supports approximately 1.1 million jobs across the country in 2024, contributing \$131 billion to the economy (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2025), and experienced nearly an 8% GDP growth over the past three years, with the live music sector alone supporting over 100,000 jobs through direct, indirect, and induced impacts (Canadian Live Music Association, 2025). Yet, these realities are not reflected in how music careers are presented within education or policy contexts. This fragmentation has consequences for how students, educators, and the public understand and perceive what it means to pursue a career in music.

In this paper, we examine several structural elements within the Canadian policy landscape (focusing particularly within the province of Ontario) that constrain how music career pathways are understood and navigated. Here, we argue that misalignments across education policy, labour classification systems, and cultural policy frameworks contribute to a widening gap between the

perception and reality of music and music-adjacent careers. While the Canadian live music sector alone contributes nearly \$11 billion annually to GDP (Canadian Live Music Association, 2025), educational and policy attention continues to center narrowly on traditional pathways such as performance and teaching.

We recognize a broad trend within recent Canadian music education scholarship and grey literature which focuses on the value of the arts for individual and community development and a relative silence around engaging with labour markets and industries. This paper highlights the importance of building bridges drawing on international comparisons from Australia and the United Kingdom, suggesting that more integrated approaches that align education, labour, and cultural policy offer valuable models for rethinking music career education. Our goal is to position music career education not simply as vocational preparation, but as a site of innovation, sustainability, and civic participation within the broader creative economy.

Music Careers in a Changing Economy

To understand the misalignment between perceptions and realities around careers in music, we must first recognize how music careers themselves have changed. Scholars have increasingly described contemporary careers using various terms such as a) a protean career model characterized by adaptability, self-direction, and continuous reinvention (Hall et al., 2018; Westerlund & López-Iñiguez, 2024); and b) a portfolio career, in which individuals maintain multiple income streams across different roles and sectors (Bartleet et al., 2019).

In music, these shifts are particularly pronounced, with scholars suggesting that learning pathways in the music field “involve some of the most complex and fast-moving work contexts in existence” (López-Iñiguez & Burnard, 2021, p. 128). Many professional musicians today are required to move fluidly between varied contexts rapidly and, increasingly, work is project-based, mediated through digital platforms and highly dependent on networks.

These changes are reflected in labour patterns. According to a 2021 Labour Force Survey, 65% of artists in Canada are self-employed, compared to approximately 15% in the general labour force (Hill Strategies Research, 2024). Multiple jobholding is also significantly more common. Together, these patterns point to a sector structured around flexibility, hybridity, and rapid adaptation.

At the same time, digital platforms have transformed distribution and consumption, direct-to-fan models have reshaped financial pathways (Williams & Wilson, 2016), and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence are beginning to influence both creative processes and labour markets (Herington et al., 2025). Success in music increasingly requires a complex mix of skills: digital literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, collaboration, adaptability, and critical self-reflection.

However, education and policy systems have been slow to respond. Many continue to assume stable, linear career trajectories that no longer reflect the lived realities of music professionals. This disconnect sets the stage for the structural misalignments explored in the following sections.

Structural Misalignment in Canadian Policy

Labour Policy and the Problem of Occupation Classification. Labour policy plays a central role in shaping how work is understood, valued, and made visible. In Canada, the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system is a key mechanism through which occupations are

categorized, tracked, and regulated. In the case of music careers, this system presents a significant challenge.

Only one of the 516 NOC category codes explicitly includes the word “music” – 51122, “Musicians and Singers.” In reality, music-related roles are dispersed across multiple occupational categories, often spanning management, business, education, social services, and the arts. For example, a music industry executive is classified under management occupations, a music therapist under social and community services, a researcher under occupations in education services, a private music instructor under arts and culture, and a performer under “musicians and singers.” This dispersion obscures the interconnected and interdisciplinary nature of music work and does not effectively map onto the realities of our industries as portfolio career models require workers to span several categories.

The implications of this fragmentation are substantial. Occupational classification systems do not simply describe labour markets: they actively shape them. They influence immigration pathways, funding eligibility, workforce statistics, and public perceptions of career viability. An audit of unique job postings listed by the Government of Ontario throughout 2023 revealed only 71 entries under the “Musicians and Singers” category—out of over one million posted that year (Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, n. d.). This example demonstrates a systematic failure to capture the richness and diversity of available opportunities in music that do not “fit” the neatly packaged solo musician category.

When music work is scattered across categories, it becomes difficult to see the full scope of opportunities within the field; after all, this is a far cry from the reported 750,000 jobs in Canada’s arts, culture, heritage and sport sector (~4% of all jobs). This contributes to a perception that music careers are rare, unstable, and pay poorly.

In summary, while only ~0.2% of NOC unit groups explicitly reference music, the sector itself is substantial and growing. Music is not a small sector, rather, its opportunities are systemically miscounted and misclassified.

Education Policy: Curriculum Intentions and Practical Gaps. A similar misalignment can be observed within education policy. In Ontario, the Arts Curriculum (2010) includes explicit and specific expectations related to career exploration, formalizing student investigation into pathways in and through the arts. On paper, this suggests a recognition of the importance of career education within formal school-based music learning.

In practice, however, these curriculum expectations are often under-addressed. From conversations with teachers, they frequently report limited training in career guidance, a lack of accessible resources, and low confidence in supporting students’ exploration of music-related careers (The Music Pathways Project, 2025). Guidance systems, where they exist, are oriented toward more traditional professions, leaving music students without meaningful support structures. It is also important to acknowledge that there is a large portion of the high school population who are not enrolled in school-based music, but who are interested in pursuing post-secondary music education. Lack of reliable available information for these students, and for the Guidance or Careers educators they may engage with during their secondary school education, perpetuates the gap between perceptions and realities regarding pathway possibilities.

The dominant narratives within formal school-based music education continue to center on performance and, to a lesser extent, teaching. While these are important pathways, they represent only a small fraction of the opportunities available within contemporary music industries. Emerging areas such as digital production, arts management, community-engaged practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration are absent or marginal within formal curricula. This gap is particularly problematic given the skills required for modern music careers. Portfolio and protean career models demand adaptability, entrepreneurial thinking, and the ability to navigate multiple and/or complex professional identities.

Cultural Policy and Fragmented Sector Narratives. Cultural policy adds another layer to this misalignment. In Canada, arts and culture policy has historically operated somewhat independently from both education and labour policy. While there have been significant investments in the cultural sector, these are often framed in terms of economic impact or cultural value, rather than as part of an integrated workforce development strategy.

This fragmentation is compounded by a reliance on grey literature, such as reports produced by industry organizations and non-profits, rather than sustained academic research. While these reports provide valuable insights, they are disconnected from broader policy frameworks, are partisan and commissioned by advocacy groups, and lack long-term continuity.

The Perception–Reality Gap

The misalignments across labour, education, and cultural policy do not operate in isolation. Taken together, they produce a systemic disconnect between how music careers are represented and how they are actually experienced. This perception–reality gap is not simply a matter of misunderstanding; it is structurally produced through the ways policy frameworks classify, communicate, and support work.

One consequence of this gap is a narrowing of what is seen as a “valid” music career. Despite the breadth of activity within the sector, dominant narratives continue to center on a limited set of pathways, most commonly performance and teaching. These narratives persist even as the structure of work has shifted toward portfolio-based and interdisciplinary models.

A second consequence is informational opacity. As music work is dispersed across occupational categories and inconsistently represented in labour data, students, educators, and families often lack access to clear, credible, and comprehensive information about career possibilities. What emerges is not an absence of opportunity, but an absence of visibility.

Finally, this gap has material consequences for participation and equity. When career pathways are poorly articulated and weakly supported, students may disengage not because opportunities do not exist, but because they cannot see or navigate them. In this way, the perception–reality gap contributes to patterns of exclusion, privileging those with existing networks, resources, or insider knowledge.

International Models: Lessons from Australia and the United Kingdom

To better understand how these challenges might be addressed, it is useful to consider international contexts where policy and practice more explicitly recognize the realities of contemporary music work. In Australia, research and policy-adjacent frameworks increasingly position music education within a broader creative industries and skills ecosystem, emphasizing community engagement, interdisciplinarity, and portfolio careers (Bartleet et al., 2019). This is

reinforced through Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways, which integrate music learning with industry-relevant competencies and nationally recognized qualifications. VET music programs explicitly develop skills in performance, production, collaboration, and industry practice, while providing direct pathways into employment or further training. These approaches reflect a broader policy logic in which music education is linked to labour market participation and creative industries development, supported by national initiatives that connect education, industry, and community sectors, such as Creative Australia's *Music Australia* programs.

The United Kingdom offers another instructive case. There, creative industries policy has been more explicitly linked to workforce development, with a recognition of portfolio careers and cross-sector skills. Educational initiatives reflect this alignment, embedding career development and entrepreneurial thinking within curricula. This appears to have significant impact, with creative industries contributing ~6% of UK gross value added GVA, according to the UK Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2024).

While these contexts are not without their own challenges, they demonstrate the value of coordinated policy approaches. By aligning education, labour, and cultural objectives, these models make music careers more visible, more accessible, and more responsive to contemporary realities. For Canada, the lesson is not to replicate these systems wholesale, but to recognize the importance of integration. Policy silos limit our ability to respond effectively to complex, rapidly changing labour markets.

Toward Policy Alignment: Reimagining Music Career Education

If misalignment is the problem, alignment must be part of the solution. This requires a shift in how we conceptualize music career education at a fundamental level.

First, music careers must be recognized as inherently interdisciplinary, multifaceted, and economically significant. This requires metrics that move beyond narrow single-title categorizations and acknowledging the full spectrum of roles and their attendant skill requirements within the music ecosystem.

Second, education policy must more intentionally integrate career development into formal school-based music learning. This includes not only providing information about pathways, but also fostering the skills required to navigate them for both educators and students, which include: adaptability, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and critical reflection.

Third, labour policy frameworks such as occupational classification systems must be revisited to better reflect the realities of contemporary work. Developing these in consultation with musicians active in the field, supporting the development of more nuanced categories will make music careers more visible within these systems, a crucial step toward shifting public perception.

Finally, stronger connections must be built between academic research, policy development, and industry practice. Without a robust evidence base, policy decisions risk being driven by short-term trends rather than long-term understanding.

Equity, Access, and Sustainability

These issues are also deeply connected to questions of equity and access. Current systems tend to advantage those who already possess the social, cultural, or financial capital needed to navigate complex career pathways.

Digital platforms, while often framed as democratizing forces, can reinforce existing inequalities through algorithmic bias and unequal access to networks. Similarly, the lack of clear pathways within education and policy disproportionately affects students who rely on institutional support.

Reimagining music career education, therefore, is also an equity project. By making pathways more visible, providing meaningful support, and aligning policy frameworks, we can create more inclusive and sustainable opportunities within the music sector.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the challenges facing music career education in Canada are not simply the result of outdated curricula or limited resources. Rather, they are rooted in structural misalignments across education, labour, and cultural policy.

These misalignments obscure the realities of contemporary music work, contributing to a gap between perception and reality that affects students, educators, and the sector as a whole. In the context of rapid digital transformation, this gap is only widening.

However, by looking to international models and rethinking how policy domains intersect, there is an opportunity to move forward. Aligning education, labour, and cultural policy can help reframe music career education as a dynamic, integrated, and future-oriented field.

In doing so, we are able to faithfully reflect music's position not only as an artistic practice, but as a vital component of Canada's creative economy and civic life, one that deserves policy frameworks capable of supporting its full complexity and potential.

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INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

Examining the Policy Entrepreneurship' of Teachers Who Changed the Pedagogical Approach Employed in Their Classrooms

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which seven music teachers demonstrated dispositions associated with 'policy entrepreneurship' when facilitating changes to the dominant pedagogical approaches used within their school's music program. Seven music teachers (n=7) and two school principals (n=2) across three schools in Victoria, Australia (N=3) served as participants in a qualitative multiple case study exploring the process by which music educators transitioned from the dominant use of teacher centred pedagogical methods exploring the discourses of art musicianship to the dominant use of non-formal pedagogical methods exploring the discourses of popular musicianship (see Green, 2001, 2008). Throughout this paper, this transition is conceptualised as a pathway which is characterised by the presence of various policy related factors which participants positioned as having the potential to impede - and potentially prevent - pedagogical change. These factors included budgetary allocation to the music department, western art music informed curriculum requirements, and school marketing strategies positioning discourses of tradition as highly valuable. Though Ball (2003) and Shieh (2020) note that some teachers may see policy as non-malleable, and themselves as agents who could (or should) not alter it, the participants in this study perceived themselves as agents able to achieve change despite (and at times in spite of) the presence policy related barriers. In particular, participants demonstrated dispositions to engage with policy creatively, and themselves as agents who are able to mitigate the impact policy related barriers to change have on their individual agency via strategic interactions with policy/policy makers. Such dispositions align with Ball et al.'s (2011) conception of policy entrepreneurship as the disposition to creatively and strategically engage with policy within potentially restrictive policy environs. The findings of this study indicate that instead of seeing change as not possible in the face of policy related barriers, participants perceived such barriers as able to be altered (malleable), able to be interpreted in strategic manners (interpretable), and/or able to be creatively avoided/mitigated (navigable). Though participants perceived policy as a potential barrier to change, they positioned themselves as agents able to mitigate the impact policy may have on their pedagogical agency. Thus, this paper provides an example of the ways in which 'policy entrepreneurship' can be employed as a theoretical lens through which music teacher facilitated change can be examined.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Implementation, Social Change*

From Ideology to Neutrality: Music Education Policy Enactment in Ecuadorian Schools in Times of Change

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Abstract

In this study, I investigated how political transitions and shifting ideologies in Ecuador have shaped the enactment of music education policy in public schools, and how these processes compare with enactment practices in select private schools. Drawing on Ball, Maguire, and Braun's (2012) theory of policy enactment, I examined how the National Curriculum for Cultural and Artistic Education (NCCAE), which advances a political vision of cultural identity, intercultural dialogue, and creative citizenship (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016), has been interpreted, negotiated, and re-enacted under successive governments with differing agendas and reforms. Building on two earlier studies that analyzed the perspectives of school administrators (Abril, 2019) and generalist teachers (Abril, in review), this new qualitative phase explored how the enactment of the NCCAE has evolved across four presidencies, from Rafael Correa to Daniel Noboa. These administrations represent shifts from left-wing socialism/populism to centrist and right-leaning leadership, each redefining educational priorities and accountability structures (Zambeta, 2014). I further analyzed how such political change influences teachers' interpretations of policy, their pedagogical decisions, and their sense of agency (Chapman, Wright, & Pascoe, 2016). Participants included ten teachers, generalists and music specialists, selected through purposeful sampling to expand upon previous findings rather than to achieve representativeness. Among these participants, three music teachers from private schools were included to provide a comparative dimension that explains how different governance structures and resource availability shape enactment. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Ball et al.'s (2012) framework of situated, material, professional, external, and discursive contexts, identifying political, apolitical, and hybrid forms of enactment across both sectors. Guided by the theme "Exploring Music Education Through Political and Apolitical Lenses in a Changing World," the study asked: How do teachers reconcile the political ambitions of national curriculum policy with their classroom realities? In what ways do neutrality, compliance, or avoidance serve as forms of political action or quiet resistance? How do shifts in power, ideology, and leadership shape teachers' capacity to act, resist, or conform? Preliminary evidence suggests that while the aims of the national curriculum are explicitly ideological, its enactment often reflects de-politicized, symbolic, or survivalist adaptations (Abril, 2019). By comparing how these patterns manifest across public and private institutions, I aim to illustrate how educators simultaneously reproduce, resist, and reinterpret policy, revealing neutrality itself as a profoundly political stance within Ecuador's changing educational landscape.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Other*

Designated Experts: Constructing Credibility for Policy Enactments of Research-Informed Music Teaching

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Abstract

Building on a prior study, this paper introduces the concept of designated experts, a policy technology observed in media texts published by three organizations representing the professional interests of Swedish music teachers. The paper is situated in the context of Swedish education policy, where the Education Act (SFS 2010:800, §5) prescribes that all schooling shall rest on a scientific foundation. Adopting a post-structural perspective within critical policy sociology in education, policy is understood as both text and discourse enacted by policy actors across different sites. The policy technology presented takes the form of a discursive mechanism through which textual subjects are equipped with resources positioning them as credible and knowledgeable when speaking about music teaching in relation to research. Through rhetorical and linguistic strategies, such as highlighting academic titles, institutional affiliations, publications, or professional commitment, the publishing organizations construct textual subjects as trustworthy spokespersons for research-informed music education. These constructions of expertise are understood as policy actions themselves, as they participate in the production of meaning and legitimacy. Furthermore, critical or problematizing perspectives tend to stem from experts speaking from within music or arts education research, while affirmative and utilitarian appraisals are more often voiced from outside these fields.

Keywords: *Music Education Policy, Policy Technology, Critical Policy Sociology, Expertise, Scientific Foundation*

Introduction

This paper aims to describe a particular policy technology emerging in media texts published by two teachers' unions and a national music teacher association in Sweden – three organizations concerned with the professional lives of Swedish music teachers. The publications issued by these actors constitute a policy arena for opinion work among Swedish education professionals, as well as towards the broader public (see also Lilja, 2014). Over the past few decades, the policy demand articulated in the Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800, §5 [The Swedish Code of Statutes]), prescribing that all school education shall rest on a scientific foundation, has generated a plethora of policy initiatives by various actors, some of which have sought to relate music teaching to research. The ways in which music teachers and music teaching are described and addressed in relation to research in texts published by professional organizations for educators participate in the production of 'truths' about what it means for music teaching to rest on a scientific foundation. Schmidt (2009) highlights the importance of advancing critical policy knowledge so that policy actions affecting the music teaching profession, rather than functioning as "a dictum to an uninformed field" (p. 40), may instead spark the discursive engagement of a knowledgeable community of music educators. According to Schmidt (2009), a critical question to consider here is: "What roles can individuals and institutions play in policymaking?" (p. 42).

Rather than presenting new empirical results, this paper revisits the dataset of an earlier study of media texts published by Swedish teachers' unions and a national music teacher association (Larsson, 2025) to conceptualize this policy technology as a contribution to ongoing research discussions of how discursive mechanisms operate within the field of music education policy. Although Larsson (2025) focused on broader discursive formations, the analysis revealed a particular policy technology that fell outside the scope of the study. Thus, in this paper, I aim to present a policy technology through which textual actors are equipped with discursive resources that legitimize and position the claims, assertions, or problematizations ascribed to them – concerning music teaching in relation to research – as trustworthy, thereby enhancing their status as informed policy statements.

Theoretical and Analytical Points of Departure

Drawing on the analytical experience of a previous study of media texts published by Swedish teacher organizations (Larsson, 2025), this paper adopts a post-structural perspective and situates itself within the field of critical policy sociology in education (Ozga, 2021). Textual actions are therefore not regarded as revealing pre-existing ideologies held by certain individuals. Rather, the material allows for an examination of “what is seen as possible, or the production and positioning of subjects” (Anderson & Holloway, 2020, p. 203). Furthermore, policy is understood as texts, ‘things’, and discourses done by, to, and through policy actors who (re)produce, interpret, translate, or enact policy within a network of different policy sites (Ball et al., 2012; Ball, 2016). In more formal views of policy, the governmental entities of a nation-state, such as juridical and executive bodies, are regarded as the primary agents of policy influence. However, a multitude of stakeholders and actors beyond governmental bodies or domestic boundaries also influence the public policy system (Mitra, 2017). Since policymaking, among other things, involves the assessment of needs and the (re)distribution of influence and agency, organizations publishing professional-political media texts on behalf of Swedish teachers and music teachers can be considered policy actors that shape both public and professional understandings of what research-informed music teaching entails.

In this paper, the term ‘policy technology’ refers to a specific linguistic strategy employed to establish or enhance the policy status of textual actions within texts. Aligning with Bacchi’s (2000) appeal to “recognize the non-innocence of how ‘problems’ get framed within policy proposals, how the frames will affect what can be thought about and how this affects possibilities for action” (p. 50), discursive struggles and negotiations in published texts are regarded as political actions. Thus, policy distributes power not only through formal decisions or policy documents but also through the situated and contingent ‘regimes of truth’ currently active in different arenas of the education policy space (Richerme, 2019). Finally, drawing on a ‘post-Westphalian’ view of policy research (Regmi, 2019)—that is, the understanding that policy does not stop at national borders—policy work affecting the Swedish music-teaching profession is considered part of the global travelling and borrowing of policy, rather than a national issue per se (Ringarp & Waldow, 2016).

The Policy Technology of Designated Experts

Building upon the analytical framework of a prior study (Larsson, 2025), this paper introduces the concept of *designated experts* to describe a specific policy technology. This technology establishes textual subjects as policy messengers by constructing them as credible, comprehensible, and knowledgeable figures who either problematize or propose solutions to

issues concerning the legitimacy and status of music teaching in relation to research. The designated experts appear in various capacities in the texts: sometimes as the author of an opinion piece, at other times as interviewees, or as persons referred to in the third person by those given voice in the text. Regardless of their role, the technology functions to discursively position them as credible spokespersons, thereby setting them up to make or shape policy within the texts. The notion of designated experts is proposed in the same analytical spirit as Ball et al.'s (2012) gallery of policy subjects, such as policy enthusiasts, translators, entrepreneurs, and critics, as a way to discuss how expertise functions as a discursive resource in the production of policy. In the next section, I provide a few empirical examples to illustrate this technology.

Figure 1 presents an initial illustrative example of this technology, utilizing a de-identified model of an enclosed author-bio box (derived from the empirical material of my earlier study (Larsson, 2025)). This example is selected not because bylines represent the most prevalent form of the described policy technology, but because it visually elucidates how textual actors are attributed scientific expertise, thereby enhancing their legitimacy to recontextualize or implement policy with scientific credibility.

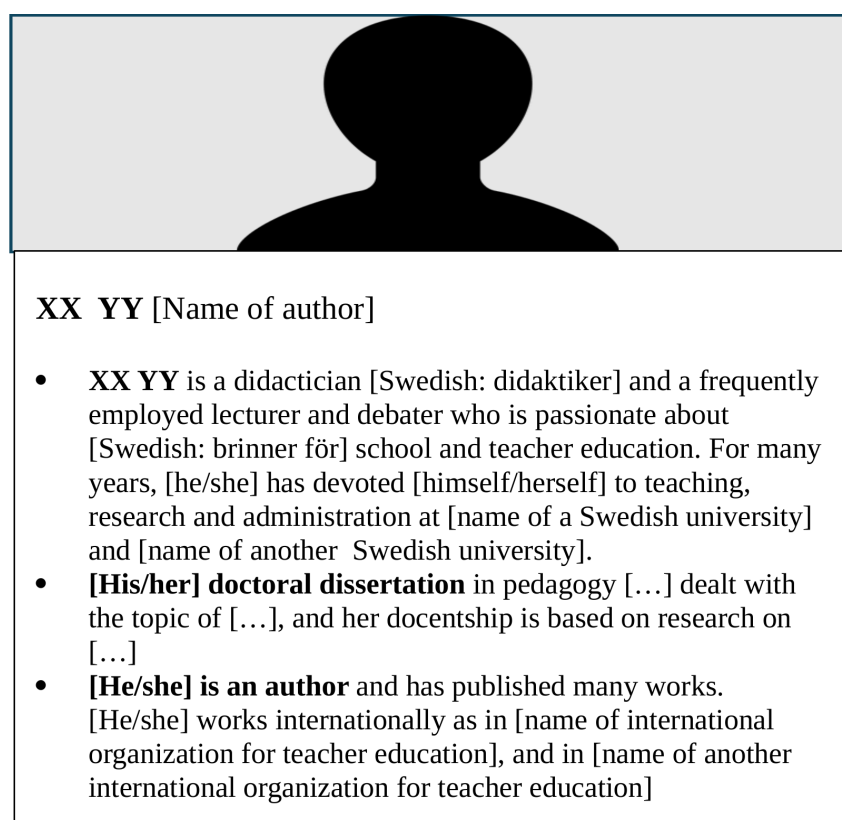


Figure 1. Reproduction of anonymized byline box

As illustrated in the author-bio above (Figure 1), the author of a blog post published by one of the unions is presented as a sought-after expert in didactics engaged in assignments both nationally and internationally. The author's publications, including a dissertation thesis, are

highlighted, and “soft merits” are also used to legitimize the actor, such as passion and long-standing commitment to educational issues. Across the material, a broad palette of discursive resources was employed to construct legitimacy. These may include academic titles, affiliations with prestigious research institutions, positions of trust in educational organizations or NGOs, and enumerations of talks, lectures, publications, or media appearances. When deploying the policy technique of designated experts, the publishing organizations utilize discursive resources that serve to establish and enhance the credibility and authority of the subjects that are employed to speak about music teaching and its scientific foundation. Once the subjects’ accounts of expertise are established, they can be mobilized as policy resources to assert certain ‘truths’ or perspectives within the texts. Thus, the concept of designated experts differs from that of formal policy experts (cf. Lingard, 2016), and the subjects given voice in the texts are not to be regarded as active policy actors but rather as megaphones temporarily lent by those who disseminate the texts — that is, the three Swedish organizations publishing them. Being the final conveyors of the analyzed material, these organizations are understood as agentic actors enacting policy, for instance by orchestrating this particular discursive technology. The extent of the legitimizing accounts varies—from brief designations such as “the researcher” to extended descriptions resembling excerpts from a CV, as in the following presentation of an interviewee:

“[Name of interviewee] is a professor of [subject domain] and [subject domain] at [name of university A]. [She] is a [research domain] researcher and co-founder of [name of research center C] at [name of university B] in Stockholm. Since last summer, [she] has also been the chair of [Institute D]’s scientific council. The institute, financed by the Ministry of Education and the Swedish Arts Council, works, among other things, to ensure that [...]”

In another example, the designated expert is legitimized only by her persistence, as illustrated in the following introduction of the author of a text that problematizes children’s declining singing abilities in Swedish schools:

[...] But the number of children unable to sing is growing, and protests against the disarmament of music and song in the school seem to fall on deaf ears. However, there are those who do not give up and who, unlike many decision-makers, lean towards research. [...]

As these two examples illustrate, the expert account sometimes implicates that the designated expert is a knowledgeable and well-educated subject in relation to the claims made while other times, engagement and persistence, backed by supposed scientific literacy, are the only ‘credentials’ legitimizing the subject’s authority to make claims about music teaching in relation to research.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

An intriguing tendency that emerges when the policy technology of designated experts can be discerned in the analyzed texts is that the subjects delivering critique or problematizations of the

qualities of music teaching are most often positioned as experts within the fields of music or arts education research. Hence, critical views or calls for action concerning the quality of music teaching in schools are almost always formulated from a music or arts education research perspective. In contrast, positive appraisals of music as unambiguously beneficial—due to its assumed external effects on pupils, citizens, or society at large—are predominantly articulated by textual subjects positioned as experts outside the field of music or arts education research. This is also true for statements that present the values of music as well-known evidence-based facts. Schmidt (2009) points to the “multiple viewpoints, challenges, constituencies, influences, and desires” (p. 40) involved when policy influencing the music teaching profession is enacted. In such accounts, policy defines who is considered a contributor and who is not in society, as well as what is regarded as “common sense” and which categories are used to make sense of different educational enterprises (Schmidt, 2009). This has implications for the democratic dimensions of education policy, since education is inherently political and “the appropriation of common sense is at the center of democratic dissolution” (p. 41). In an American research context, Shaw (2020; 2021) points out that arts education policy often results indirectly from neoliberal agendas prioritizing other educational areas, a tendency consistent with the neoliberal hegemony shaping global education policy in recent decades. Even when policy developments explicitly prioritize arts education in schools, the articulated rationales typically relate to learning or policy agendas outside the arts themselves, for example, in tested subjects such as mathematics or language teaching. This may help explain why positive appraisals of music teaching in the analyzed texts are mostly voiced by designated experts drawing on arguments formulated outside the realm of music education. However, Williams (2015) argues that aesthetic and utilitarian perspectives on music as a curricular subject could be regarded as potentially synergistic rather than oppositional binaries. He is more concerned with positivist stances that fail to acknowledge the political and positional nature of epistemological claims and instead build their claims to knowledge on “the belief that positivist approaches are ‘value free’” (p. 23; cf. Bacchi, 2012), thereby concealing the power relations involved and who defines and determines matters of fact, for example, the rationales for music education in schools. Williams (2015) nuances his caution by acknowledging that communicating the perceived utilitarian benefits of music education can be valuable provided that the colonizing aspects of positivist pursuits are simultaneously challenged.

Policy is a tool for agency and action, and thus, policy actions by organizations concerned with music teachers and music teaching can aid in “creating the conditions for the practices we think matter most” (Schmidt, 2020b, p. 26). Schmidt (2020a) conceptualizes this kind of professional understanding as policy know-how, that is, “the capacity to understand, speak, and act with a policy frame of mind that is relevant to teachers, their programs, and their work” (p. 4). Here, policy actors speaking about music teaching not only have to understand the gist of proposed policies and decide whether they should applaud or challenge them. Since policy contributes to the production of meaning and power dynamics, they also need to be aware of the ways in which policy takes part in the discursive production of music teachers, making sense of them and what or who they are supposed to be (Ball et al., 2012; Schmidt, 2020b). With heightened awareness in these areas, policy actors speaking on behalf of music teachers’ professional interests are better equipped to hold governing policymakers accountable for the consequences of their decisions (Aguilar & Richerme, 2016).

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Music Education under Late Capitalism: Reexamining Norms, Desire, and Commodification

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Abstract

This research begins from a simple but uneasy question: what has become of music education that has been shaped by late capitalism? Despite decades of reform and innovation, much of today's educational practice still carries the rationalist spirit of the nineteenth-century Western scientific Enlightenment, a spirit obsessed with order, measurement, and efficiency. These ideals, once useful for organizing learning, now often narrow our sense of what it means to make and experience music. From early childhood to adulthood, music education programs in Japan tend to rely on developmental psychology and similar frameworks that classify learning into measurable stages and abilities. Such systems promise clarity and fairness, but in practice they strip away the complex, relational, and ontological dimensions of how people, especially children, actually encounter sound. The living, breathing experience of listening and creating is replaced by graphs, rubrics, and test scores. This research therefore investigated: (1) how music education reproduces social norms and desires in late capitalist society, and (2) how music education is effectively commodified within a consumer economy. To address these research questions, this study first employed textual analysis as its methodology. Drawing on René Girard's concept of mimetic desire, it analyzed how music education functions as an apparatus for reproducing social desires and norms. Next, drawing on Jean Baudrillard's concept of sign-value consumption, it analyzed the tendency for music education to aim at acquiring commodified images (e.g., competition rankings). Finally, through action research grounded in R. Murray Schafer's concepts of soundscape and sound education, it examined cases where children engage with sound not as a technical object but as a relational and ecological phenomenon. The results revealed that children are not vessels for measurable abilities but

beings who engage with the world through sound as a medium. Public music education should shift away from teaching performance skills in specific musical genres and instead become a practice of opening the ear. This study concluded by presenting a concrete vision for theory, practice, and evaluation to liberate music education toward a more ontological and relational dimension, countering the lineage of scientific Enlightenment.

Keywords: *Mimetic Desire, Sign Consumption, Relational Engagement, Sound Education, Late Capitalism*

Introduction

The anime *Orb: On the Movements of the Earth* (Uoto, 2020) is set in medieval Europe, a period in which the geocentric model and religious authority were upheld as absolute truths. The narrative centers on heretics who seek to relativize the epistemic norms and power structures of their time through precise astronomical observation and mathematical calculation, as well as on inquisitors who function as guardians of the prevailing episteme, suppressing such transgressions through torture and execution.

In the third arc of the story, the protagonist, Draka—a daughter of a Romani family—does not believe in God but comes to recognize that the force of people’s faith can be converted into monetary value. While her presence anticipates what is often imagined as the “light” of scientific enlightenment following antiquity and the Middle Ages, the money she accumulates is ultimately stained with her own blood when she is killed by the inquisitor Novak. This scene offers a striking allegory: the age of capitalism that follows the so-called darkness is not, in fact, illuminated, but marked by its own forms of violence and contradiction.

“Reason” refers to logical thought constituted through language, including numerical expression. Those who possess such forms of thought are generally referred to as “intellectuals.” Raymond Williams (1976/2015, pp. 121–125) examines how the term *intellectual* was used from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, particularly in England, across a range of contexts. These usages include distinctions of ability expressed in phrases such as “the more intelligent” or “the most intelligent,” its employment as a near-synonym for rationalism, and its association with the mental realm in Cartesian mind–body dualism. In more modern contexts, the term has also been linked to social status, education, and elite identity. Such developments point to a convergence toward the reduction of reason to a measurable capacity, thereby legitimizing its generalization through indices such as IQ.

Concepts associated with the “intellectual”—including reason, intellect, logic, and rationality—are collectively subsumed under the philosophical notion of *logos*. While *logos* has been in use since ancient Greece, it was most strongly institutionalized as “reason” during the period of European scientific enlightenment, often referred to as the “Age of Reason.” This era,

encompassing the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, is characterized by positivism, scientism, and rationalism. Reflecting on the historical specificity of this modern concept, Kojin Karatani (1989, pp. 259–260) writes: “What the term ‘modern’ in fact refers to is the nineteenth century of the West, that century which extended Western culture throughout the world and reorganized world history on a Eurocentric basis.”

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative methodology combining philosophical text analysis with action research. The philosophical component critically examines key theoretical concepts—particularly desire, consumption, and sound—as they shape prevailing understandings of music education, while also generating conceptual tools for its reconfiguration. The action research component involves collaborative practices with students in school settings, including soundwalks, collective listening, and improvisation, designed to engage sound as a relational and ecological phenomenon. Data were collected through field notes, student reflections, and audio recordings. This combined approach enables a reciprocal movement between theory and practice: philosophical critique informs pedagogical design, while empirical engagement tests and refines its implications. In this way, the methodology bridges abstract analysis and practical transformation.

The European Scientific Enlightenment

The scientific enlightenment of the eighteenth century served as a catalyst for the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, ultimately contributing to the formation of a global market grounded in European imperialism. The notion that “the most industrialized nation is the most advanced” reflects the logic of “survival of the fittest,” another defining idea of this period. Through social Darwinism and eugenics, attempts were made to apply so-called natural laws to human society, giving rise to racial hierarchies, forced sterilization policies, and ultimately the ideological justification of the Holocaust. The emergence of social Darwinism in the late nineteenth century reinterpreted evolutionary theory as a principle of social organization, promoting the view that competition and inequality are natural and inevitable (Bowler, 2009). Eugenics further institutionalized these ideas by claiming that human qualities could be improved through selective breeding and state intervention. The Nazi regime appropriated such theories to rationalize genocide, demonstrating the catastrophic consequences of misapplied scientific ideologies (Proctor, 1988).

At the same time, Charles Darwin (1859/2003), in *On the Origin of Species*, did not center the concept of “evolution” as a teleological process but instead described species as undergoing continuous processes of transmutation and modification without fixed directionality. Concurrently, the modern concept of art—today widely understood simply as *art*—was also established alongside the emergence of this global market.

Against this historical and epistemological background, contemporary music education can be understood as deeply embedded within the socio-economic and epistemological conditions of late capitalism. These conditions are not merely external constraints but actively shape the goals, practices, and underlying assumptions of educational systems. One of the most persistent influences is the legacy of nineteenth-century Western Enlightenment thought, which privileged rationality, measurability, and scientific objectivity. Within music education, this legacy manifests as an emphasis on the acquisition of discrete, measurable skills and competencies, often framed through developmental psychology and standardized assessment.

From early childhood through adulthood, learners are frequently evaluated according to predefined stages and abilities. Such frameworks assume that musical development can be objectively measured and compared, thereby aligning music education with broader systems of efficiency, accountability, and productivity. However, this orientation risks reducing music to a set of technical proficiencies, neglecting the experiential, relational, and ontological dimensions of engagement with sound.

Mimetic Desire and Educational Conformity

The concept of mimetic desire provides a critical lens for understanding how desires are formed and reproduced within educational contexts. According to René Girard (1966), desire is not autonomous but mediated through others; individuals learn to desire objects by observing the desires of others. This process leads to patterns of imitation, competition, and rivalry. In music education, mimetic desire manifests in the emphasis on performance standards, rankings, and normative models of success. Students are encouraged to emulate exemplary performers or to achieve externally defined benchmarks, often leading to competitive dynamics. Such structures do not merely assess ability; they actively shape what students come to value. Musical engagement becomes oriented toward achieving recognition within established hierarchies rather than exploring sound as a relational and expressive medium. This dynamic reinforces conformity, as students internalize dominant norms of musical excellence. The diversity of sonic experience is thereby constrained, and alternative forms of engagement are marginalized. Mimetic desire thus reveals how educational systems produce not only knowledge but also subjects aligned with prevailing social expectations. This tendency is also evident in contemporary music education. Children often perform while implicitly or explicitly imitating the desires of others —teachers, adjudicators, and society at large. Their musical actions are guided not only by their own interests, but by what they perceive to be valued by those in positions of authority or evaluation. In this sense, musical performance becomes a site where external desires are internalized and enacted. Moreover, the culture of competitions institutionalizes chains of mimetic desire. Events such as choir competitions and wind band contests can be understood not merely as opportunities for musical presentation, but as structured systems that organize and reproduce hierarchical relations of desire. Within these systems,

recognition, ranking, and evaluation function as visible markers of value, encouraging participants to orient themselves toward externally defined standards of success.

From this perspective, such competitions may be conceptualized as forming a “pyramid of desire,” in which participants are positioned within stratified layers of recognition and aspiration. At each level, individuals model their desires on those above them, perpetuating a cycle of imitation and competition. This structure not only shapes musical practice but also reinforces broader social logics of hierarchy, evaluation, and conformity.

Sign Consumption and the Commodification of Learning

Jean Baudrillard’s (1983) theory of sign consumption further illuminates the transformation of music education under late capitalism. In consumer societies, value is increasingly detached from use and instead associated with symbolic meaning. Objects are consumed not for their intrinsic qualities but for the signs they represent.

Applied to music education, this perspective suggests that learning is often oriented toward the acquisition of symbolic markers such as grades, certificates, and competition awards. These markers function as signs of achievement, signaling competence and status within institutional frameworks. The process of learning thus becomes a form of consumption, in which the primary goal is not engagement with sound but the accumulation of recognizable credentials.

This shift has profound implications. It redefines musical experience as a means to an end, subordinating intrinsic engagement to external validation. Moreover, it aligns music education with broader capitalist logics of commodification, where value is measured through exchange and representation rather than lived experience.

From a Baudrillardian perspective, this transformation can be understood as the simulacralization of music. In such a condition, representations of musical value come to precede and determine the experience itself. Competitions, in particular, tend to privilege evaluation, ranking, and verbalized judgment over the act of performance as such. What is valued is not the immediacy of musical expression, but its conformity to pre-existing criteria that can be articulated, compared, and circulated as signs.

Within this framework, children do not engage primarily with music as sound, but rather with the image of “good performance.” Their task becomes the reproduction of recognizable forms of excellence—forms that are already coded within institutional and social expectations. Musical practice is thus oriented toward the simulation of competence rather than the exploration of sonic experience.

Consequently, music education shifts from a site of engaging with “the real” to a field in which imitated signs are produced, exchanged, and evaluated. To “play well” increasingly becomes equivalent to “appearing to play well,” as judged through socially mediated criteria. In this sense, education is drawn into a cycle of sign consumption, in which representations of musical value are continuously reproduced and consumed, further reinforcing the underlying structures of commodification.

Within contemporary music education, competition culture directs attention away from the affective experience of music itself and toward the consumption of its associated symbols—awards, rankings, and narratives of achievement. What is valued is no longer the immediacy of musical engagement, but the signs that signify success within institutional frameworks. In this context, music education ceases to function as a space for creative exploration and instead operates as a training apparatus for conformity. Chains of imitation, driven by mimetic desire, become self-perpetuating ends, generating a cyclical and ultimately hollow economy of desire. Learners do not simply make music; they reproduce models of what is recognized as “successful” music-making. As a result, the orientation of musical practice undergoes a fundamental shift: from music as an end in itself to the acquisition of evaluative recognition through music. Accordingly, the locus of value is inverted, moving from internal, experiential engagement to external, representational validation. This transformation raises a fundamental question: is it possible to resist or reconfigure these conditions? One possible response lies in the reconsideration of sound education as an alternative pedagogical framework.

Toward an Exit from Mimetic Desire and Sign Consumption: Schafer’s Perspective

The critiques of mimetic desire and sign consumption reveal that music education under late capitalism is structured by cycles of imitation, competition, and symbolic accumulation. Within such conditions, learners are oriented toward externally defined models of success, while musical experience is reduced to the reproduction of recognizable forms and the consumption of evaluative signs. To move beyond these conditions requires not merely a reform of content, but a fundamental reorientation of how sound itself is understood. A critical point of departure can be found in R. Murray Schafer’s critique of music education. Schafer (1965) argues that one cannot understand the function of music through an education that demands silent submission before dead composers.

From the perspective of sound education, as developed by Schafer, sound is not a fixed object or a pre-given musical work, but an experience that emerges through relationships among environment, body, and others. Sound education, further elaborated by the author (Schafer & Imada, 2009), proposes a pedagogical framework grounded in the ecological reciprocity between children and their sonic environment. This framework can be understood as consisting of three interrelated layers. First, at the level of attentive listening, learners engage with environmental sounds through practices such as soundwalks, sharpening their perception and awareness.

Second, at the level of shared exploration, sounds are collectively examined and interpreted—for example, through graphic notation (which Schafer (1977) termed *sonography*)—allowing participants to negotiate meaning and possibility in a collaborative manner. Third, at the level of creation, learners generate new sonic experiences, forming musical expressions that are not bound by pre-existing standards or evaluative criteria, often using everyday materials or the body itself as sources of sound.

These practices point toward a form of music-making that is not oriented toward imitation or evaluation, but toward relational engagement and co-creation. The role of the teacher shifts accordingly, from an authority who transmits correct models to a facilitator who participates with learners in processes of discovering, interpreting, and creating sound. What is shared is not the outcome, but the process itself, in which participants respond to one another's expressions. Schafer's broader critique of modern sound environments further clarifies the stakes of this approach. He contrasts the "hi-fi" soundscape—an environment in which subtle sounds can be perceived with clarity—with the "lo-fi" conditions produced by industrialization and electrification, where sonic density obscures distinction (Schafer, 1977). Drawing on literary references such as Hermann Hesse, he also identifies the phenomenon of *schizophonia*, the splitting of sound from its source through technologies such as recording and broadcasting, as a form of disintegration within the acoustic community. Schafer characterizes these developments as a kind of "sonic imperialism," in which sound is detached, replicated, and circulated in ways that reinforce alienation and control.

Extending this critique to education, Schafer (2005) offers a sharp indictment of contemporary music education: it privileges foreign music over local sonic practices; values music created by others over the creative agency of learners; demands advanced technical proficiency that distances children from the intrinsic joy of music-making; prioritizes expensive instruments while neglecting accessible and everyday sound materials; limits understanding of music to concert-based forms, excluding everyday sonic experience; isolates music from science, other arts, and the environment; and leaves teachers largely powerless in the face of the entertainment industry. Taken together, these tendencies reveal an educational system that reinforces hierarchy, dependence, and alienation, rather than fostering exploratory and relational engagement with sound. From this perspective, contemporary music education can be understood as participating in similar dynamics: the reproduction of detached, codified, and commodified forms of sound that align with the logics of late capitalism. Schafer's critique resonates with the analyses of mimetic desire and sign consumption, offering not only a diagnosis but also a practical alternative. Sound education, therefore, does not simply introduce new activities; it reconfigures the conditions of musical experience itself. By situating sound within lived environments and relational processes, it interrupts the cycles of imitation and commodification that dominate contemporary music education. In doing so, it opens a space in which learners can engage with

sound as a mode of being, co-creating musical worlds that are not predetermined by external standards but emerge through shared, embodied experience.

Conclusion

This study has examined music education under late capitalism through two central questions: (1) how it reproduces social norms and desires, and (2) how it becomes commodified within a consumer economy.

Regarding the first question, the analysis demonstrates that music education functions as a mechanism for the reproduction of mimetic desire and normative conformity. Through systems of evaluation, competition, and hierarchical recognition, learners are oriented toward externally defined models of success. In this process, musical practice becomes structured by imitation, as students internalize the desires of others—teachers, adjudicators, and institutional standards—thereby reinforcing dominant social norms rather than cultivating diverse, relational forms of engagement with sound.

Regarding the second question, the study shows that music education is increasingly organized around processes of sign consumption. Learning is reconfigured as the accumulation of symbolic markers such as grades, rankings, and credentials, which function as indicators of value within institutional and social systems. As a result, musical experience is commodified: its meaning is displaced from lived, experiential engagement to external representation and exchange. To “play well” becomes inseparable from “appearing to play well,” as evaluated through socially mediated criteria.

Taken together, these findings reveal a fundamental transformation in the orientation of music education. Music shifts from being an end in itself to a means for acquiring recognition, resulting in an inversion of value from internal, experiential engagement to external, representational validation. In this sense, contemporary music education operates as a site where desire and value are continuously reproduced in accordance with the logics of late capitalism.

In response to these conditions, this study has proposed sound education as an alternative framework. By reconceptualizing sound not as an object to be mastered but as a relational and ecological experience, sound education interrupts the cycles of imitation and commodification. It repositions learners as participants in sonic environments, engaging in processes of listening, sharing, and creating that are not governed by predefined standards or evaluative hierarchies.

Thus, the significance of this study lies not only in its critique of existing educational structures, but in its articulation of a practical and conceptual pathway beyond them. Sound education offers a means to reorient music education toward relational engagement, opening a space in which

music can once again be encountered as a lived and meaningful experience rather than as a vehicle for evaluation.

Future research should further investigate how such approaches can be sustained within institutional contexts, and how they might contribute to broader transformations in educational policy and practice beyond the logics of late capitalism.

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Democratization and School Music Education in Postwar Japan: The Impact of Social Transformation on Cultural Equity in Music Education

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Abstract

This study examines how postwar political transformation in Japan reshaped school music education and its implications for cultural equity. Before 1945, music education functioned as a political and moral instrument, fostering loyalty to the Emperor and collective obedience through the singing of *shōka* (school songs). After the war, the Civil Information and Education Section

(CIE) of the General Headquarters (GHQ) introduced reforms based on American democratic ideals. The 1947 and 1951 *Tentative Courses of Study for Music* redefined the aims and structure of music education.

Drawing on curriculum documents, CIE records, and materials from the Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Educational Policy Research, this study analyzes how democratic ideals were reflected in curriculum design. The findings show that while postwar reforms promoted self-expression, creativity, and cooperation, they also institutionalized Western music as the normative framework. Japanese and Asian traditions were included but positioned as subordinate, reproducing cultural hierarchies. This study argues that democratization occurred within a Western-centered framework, leaving issues of cultural equity unresolved and highlighting the need to reconsider its role in music education policy and practice.

Keywords: *Cultural Equity, Democratization, Japan, Music Education Policy, Postwar Education, Social Transformation*

Introduction

This paper examines how postwar Japan, under the Occupation of the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ), redefined the function of school music education as the nation shifted from imperial militarism to a democratic system of governance. Before 1945, music in Japanese schools served political and moral purposes by cultivating loyalty to the Emperor and reinforcing collective conformity through the singing of *shōka* (school songs). After the end of the Pacific War, the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of the GHQ promoted educational reforms aimed at democratizing Japan's social and cultural institutions. As part of this large-scale reform, the 1947 *Tentative Course of Study for Music* became a symbolic document of cultural reconstruction. It shifted the focus of music education from obedience and nationalism toward self-expression, creativity, and cooperation. Yet, while advocating democratic ideals, the curriculum simultaneously reproduced a hierarchical structure derived from Western cultural frameworks. This study analyzes how the CIE's educational philosophy—rooted in American progressivism and John Dewey's thought—intersected with Japan's own efforts to reconstruct its cultural identity through schooling, thereby revealing the ambivalence inherent in this process.

The study has two main aims. First, it traces the ideological and policy shifts that shaped music education under the Occupation. Second, it investigates how these changes sought to reconcile the problem of cultural equality within a Westernized framework. By reading the *Tentative Course of Study* alongside CIE records, as well as publicly available materials from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER), this paper explores how the democratization of music education was articulated in both its philosophy and curriculum design. The analytical framework adopts the concept of cultural equity, which has recently been discussed internationally in relation to education and social justice, as a lens for re-examining postwar educational reform.

Historical Context: From Militarism to Democratization

The following overview draws on the Ministry of Education's official publication *A Hundred-Year History of the School System*. Before 1945, Japanese music education was deeply embedded in the ideological structure of the state. Under the 1941 National School Order, music

was incorporated into the *Geinōka* (Arts and Handicrafts Course), which combined music, calligraphy, drawing and manual arts, sewing, and home economics. According to the *National School Order Enforcement Regulations* issued by the Ministry of Education (1941), the purpose of the *Geinōka* is to train students in artistic skills essential to the people, to refine their emotions, and to contribute to the enrichment of national life. Within this framework, music education emphasized collective conformity, diligence, and obedience, serving as a means of fostering group discipline and devotion to the Emperor. Singing patriotic songs was considered a moral act that strengthened emotional attachment to the nation. By 1943, many school activities had been redirected toward labor mobilization and military support, and music became a means of fostering collective spirit and obedience.

After 1945, the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of GHQ assumed responsibility for reconstructing Japan's educational system. Its mission was explicit: to establish a democratic foundation for citizens as a repudiation of militarism. Guided by American progressivism and John Dewey's educational philosophy, the CIE emphasized experiential learning, coeducation, and local autonomy. The 1946 Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan served as a blueprint for reform and led directly to the enactment of the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law. These changes represented not merely a political shift but also a cultural re-orientation. Music education was redefined from a tool of national discipline into a medium for personal expression and social cooperation. The ideal of "education for democracy" extended to the arts, linking aesthetic experience with the cultivation of peaceful and ethical citizenship. Within this context, the *Tentative Course of Study for Music* was formulated as Japan's first national curriculum guideline in cooperation with the United States Education Mission to Japan.

Although both the 1947 and 1951 editions were provisional, the 1947 version marked a decisive shift in educational philosophy—from militarism to democracy, from collectivism to individuality, and from moral instruction to aesthetic cultivation. In the 1951 revision, the term "*aesthetic experience*" was replaced, yet the overall framework of objectives, content, and teaching materials established in these tentative versions laid the foundation for Japan's current *Course of Study*, which continues to be revised approximately every ten years. The following chapter examines these versions in greater detail.

Postwar Music-Education Reform and the Formation of a Western-Centered Structure

The *Tentative Course of Study for Music* issued by the Ministry of Education in 1947 was a symbolic document marking the transition from militaristic to democratic education. It was primarily drafted by Moroi Saburō (1903-1977), an inspector in the Ministry's Social Education Bureau, and is believed to have been written almost single-handedly. Moroi, who graduated from the Department of Aesthetics and Art History at the University of Tokyo, initially aspired to become a pianist, studying piano under several prominent performers while teaching himself composition. From 1932 to 1934, he studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, an experience that profoundly influenced his artistic ideals. Moroi sought to liberate music education from its former role as an instrument of loyalty and control, reconstructing it instead as "aesthetic education."

The 1947 version aimed to cultivate aesthetic sensitivity through the acquisition of musical knowledge and skills and through the appreciation of musical beauty. It introduced not only singing but also listening, instrumental practice, and composition, emphasizing that “making music” itself was the most essential act. Since prewar music education had focused almost exclusively on singing, this shift represented a conscious effort to move beyond vocal training. The new curriculum also reflected active efforts by educators to introduce instrumental music education as an integral part of school music, recognizing its potential to foster individual creativity and democratic participation through performance. In contrast to the prewar *Geinōka*, which promoted moral discipline through group activity, the new plan positioned aesthetic experience as a means of developing social order and emotional balance within democratic life.

During the reform process, debates also arose within the CIE over the cultural foundation of school music. At a meeting of the SCAP Textbooks and Curriculum Office on 13 September 1946, the following discussion was recorded: “Considerable discussion of a very basic problem was held: What of the conflict between Western and traditional music? The difficulty lies in the fact that Japanese music uses the quarter tone system. This problems of learning enter in a good deal[sic]. From the viewpoint of the musician the argument is to eliminate Japanese music from the school and give only Western music. However, this is tantamount to deciding that a whole segment of Japanese culture, very much still alive, will not be considered part of the heritage which the school should pass on. Cdr. Trainor pointed out that such a problem should not be decided arbitrarily by the *Monbushō* because more was involved than the problem of music alone.” (Ezaki, 2003, p. 27.)

This record indicates that the issue of how to position Japanese traditional music within the school curriculum had already become a central question in the early Occupation period. Notably, tensions emerged within the CIE between those who sought to base education on Western music and those who emphasized the preservation of Japan’s own musical traditions.

The revised 1951 edition inherited the ideals of the 1947 version but presented them in a more systematic form. In elementary schools, five learning areas—singing, instrumental music, listening, creative expression, and rhythmic response—were established to foster sensitivity, creativity, and cooperation through diverse musical experiences. Learning was organized around practical activities, and understanding music through one’s own experience was emphasized.

The stated aim of music education was “to build a rich life through music,” linking musical learning with everyday living and social participation. However, the content remained largely based on European art-music systems, structured around historical periods such as “Classical, Romantic, Modern, and Contemporary” and theoretical concepts like “sonata form” and “rondo form.” While the listening area included the goal of “deepening international understanding through the music of various nations,” Western music still served as the central reference point.

In the secondary-school version, published the same year, the purpose of education was defined as “the cultivation of well-balanced individuals who love truth and justice and can contribute to the formation of a peaceful and democratic society.” Within this framework, music was positioned not merely as emotional training but as a practice for nurturing democratic

citizenship. Section I, “The Improvement of Social and Civic Qualities through Music,” set forth the following principles:

1. Music contributes to the cultivation of the spirit of freedom.
2. Music helps foster respect for one’s own and others’ personality.
3. Musical experience teaches the fulfillment of responsibility.
4. Music develops harmony of mind and cooperative spirit.
5. Music promotes meaningful democratic life experiences.
6. Understanding one’s role and duties in the local community through music.
7. Cultivating service and understanding of others through music.
8. Learning wholesome ways of spending leisure time through group musical activity.

Instructional content was organized into four areas—expression (singing and instruments), listening, composition, and understanding. In the listening domain, students were encouraged to appreciate the distinctive beauty of Japanese and other Asian music “in relation to Western music (especially folk music), focusing on unique structures, performance styles, and instruments.” Nevertheless, the underlying orientation remained Western-centered.

The 1947 *Tentative Course of Study for Music* marked a turning point in postwar Japanese music education, embodying the ideological shift from “collective obedience to democratic cooperation.” Yet its process of democratization unfolded within the framework of Western values, leaving unresolved issues regarding cultural equity. The 1951 revision further clarified the aims of experiential learning and civic formation, but it also maintained a Western-oriented theoretical base. Thus, while the curriculum positioned music as a medium for learning freedom, cooperation, and public spirit, it simultaneously institutionalized a Western-centered structure that reflected the broader contradictions of Japan’s postwar cultural reconstruction. These unresolved issues surrounding cultural equity call for a deeper examination of how Western-centered ideals shaped postwar notions of democracy and artistic value in Japan. The following chapter explores these contradictions by analyzing the complexities inherent in the concept of cultural equity.

Cultural Equity and its Contradictions

The concept of cultural equity refers not only to equal access to education but also to the equal recognition and valuation of diverse cultural expressions. From this perspective, postwar music curricula in Japan cannot be said to have achieved true equity. Although Japanese folk songs and regional music were acknowledged, they were treated merely as supplementary materials to the Western musical system rather than as possessing equal artistic value. Consequently, a hierarchical cultural structure was embedded within a framework that ostensibly promoted democratic education. This phenomenon parallels what Edward Said (1978) described in *Orientalism* as the internalization of Eurocentric hierarchies, through which Western cultural dominance became embedded in Japan’s postwar conception of music and democracy.

The postwar emphasis on musical experience can be interpreted as an attempt to reconstruct music as a democratic social practice. Yet, because Western music continued to serve as the standard of musical quality, the potential for genuine social transformation remained limited. Such contradictions were not limited to educational methodology but also reached into the

ideological foundations of education itself. GHQ's cultural policies sought to re-educate Japan through democracy and international understanding, with music education serving as one of the key instruments for this goal. Nevertheless, the seeds of cultural equity were not entirely absent. The inclusion of creative, improvisational, and listening activities provided opportunities to reconceptualize music as a living social act. From today's perspective, these contradictions in postwar reforms invite us to reconsider what cultural equity truly means within music education policy.

Japan's postwar case reveals the risk that democratization, when pursued through a Western paradigm, may generate new hierarchies. Thus, the legacy of GHQ-led educational reform is not one-dimensional. While it democratized access to music education, it also restricted the framework of cultural expression. As seen in CIE meeting records, debates over the exclusion of Japanese music often hinged on structural differences—such as the tetrachord system—which were considered incompatible with Western theoretical frameworks. This view reflected the belief that learning Western musical structures was essential for modernization, thereby positioning Japanese music as a problematic form of knowledge. Traditional Japanese music, shaped by strict master-apprentice relationships and an emphasis on *kata* (form), stood in contrast to Western notions of free self-expression. Educational materials grounded in democratic ideals of the West were thus made possible precisely because they centered on Western classical music. The problem lies in the fact that these cultural backgrounds and values were not adequately explored or respected, resulting in the persistent positioning of Western music at the top of the hierarchy.

At the same time, Japan's postwar reconstruction was indeed propelled by educators trained in Western classical traditions. Institutions such as Toho Conservatory and the Tokyo University of the Arts and Music played leading roles in professional music education. International achievements, such as Hiroko Nakamura's second prize at the 1965 Chopin Competition, reinforced the belief that mastering Western classical music symbolized Japan's reentry into the global community. Likewise, the 1955 Suzuki Talent Education concert at Tokyo Gymnasium, where one thousand children performed Bach's concertos, became a symbol of national recovery and was widely reported worldwide.

Achieving cultural equity remains a challenge, particularly in many Asian contexts where cultural hierarchies are deeply rooted. To prevent the reproduction of such hierarchies, it is crucial not only to diversify teaching materials but also to rethink how they are used and how they are taught. As Alexandra Kertz-Welzel (2021) argues in *Rethinking Music Education and Social Change*, music education should be reimagined as a form of social praxis—a practice capable of contributing to democratic transformation. From this perspective, reflecting critically on what we teach, how we teach it, and how education interacts with society offers an important lens for contemporary discussions on decolonization, diversity, and equity in global music education. Japan's postwar case provides valuable insight into these ongoing international debates.

From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that achieving cultural equity in music education requires more than the inclusion of diverse musical materials. It calls for a critical reconsideration of the epistemological and cultural assumptions that have structured music

education. In particular, the continued privileging of Western art music as a universal standard should be reexamined in relation to local musical traditions and practices. Future curriculum policies should therefore aim to construct pluralistic frameworks in which multiple musical cultures are recognized as equally legitimate forms of knowledge. Such an approach is essential for fostering genuinely democratic and culturally equitable music education.

Conclusion

The analysis of postwar Japanese music education reveals a complex interplay between democratization, Westernization, and the pursuit of cultural equity. While reforms under the GHQ and CIE redefined music education as a means of cultivating freedom, cooperation, and moral responsibility, they simultaneously institutionalized European art music as the normative framework of musical knowledge. This dual process demonstrates that the democratization of music education in Japan was not a linear transition from control to freedom, but rather a reconfiguration of cultural hierarchies within a new ideological context.

From the perspective of cultural equity, this study has shown that the inclusion of diverse musical materials alone does not necessarily lead to equitable educational practice. Although Japanese and Asian musical traditions were incorporated into the curriculum, they were positioned in relation to Western music and did not fundamentally challenge its epistemological dominance. As a result, music education after the war reproduced a hierarchical structure in which Western music functioned as the universal standard, even within a framework that ostensibly promoted democratic values.

From a policy perspective, these findings indicate that addressing cultural equity in music education requires more than curricular diversification. It necessitates a critical reexamination of the underlying assumptions that structure musical knowledge and learning. In particular, the continued privileging of Western art music should be reconsidered in relation to local musical traditions and practices. Future curriculum policies should therefore aim to construct pluralistic frameworks in which multiple musical cultures are recognized as equally legitimate forms of knowledge, rather than hierarchically organized around a single normative center.

At the same time, the case of postwar Japan suggests that democratization through education is not a universal or neutral process, but one shaped by specific cultural and historical conditions. In Japan, the adoption of Western musical frameworks contributed to international recognition and supported cultural reconstruction after the war. However, it also produced new forms of inequality by positioning Western music as the dominant standard. This dual outcome highlights the ambivalent nature of postwar reform. It suggests the need to reconsider how concepts such as democracy, equity, and cultural inclusion are defined and put into practice within different educational contexts.

The following questions emerge from this analysis and are intended to stimulate further international dialogue on music education policy:

1. In contexts where Western classical music continues to dominate school curricula, should this situation be understood as a form of cultural inequity, or has it become locally reinterpreted and thus culturally legitimate?

2. To what extent is Western music indispensable to the cultivation of democratic values, and can alternative musical and cultural frameworks equally support such aims?
 3. How might music education be conceptualized and practiced in societies where democratic principles are not the primary organizing framework of education?
- These questions extend beyond the historical case of Japan and invite broader reconsideration of the relationship between music education, policy, and cultural identity in a global context.

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Appendix

Chronological Timeline: Political, Social, and Educational Context in Japan (1931–1951)

Year	Key Political / Social Events	Educational and Musical Developments
1931	Manchurian Incident marks the beginning of Japan's militaristic expansion.	Nationalistic education policies strengthen; school songs (<i>shōka</i>) used to promote patriotism.
1937	Outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.	National School system emphasizes moral and physical training; patriotic songs serve moral instruction.
1941	National School Order (Kokumin Gakkōrei) issued by the Ministry of Education.	Establishment of <i>Geinōka</i> (Arts and Handicrafts Course) combining music, calligraphy, drawing, sewing, and home economics; music education aims to cultivate diligence, loyalty, and devotion to the Emperor.
1943	Intensification of total war; student labor mobilization.	Schools reorganized for war support; music classes focus on group singing and military songs.
1945	End of the Pacific War; beginning of Allied Occupation under GHQ.	Ministry of Education reorganized under GHQ supervision; militaristic songs banned.
1946	Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan submitted to GHQ.	Serves as blueprint for democratization; debates arise over Western versus traditional music.
1947	Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law enacted.	<i>Tentative Course of Study for Music</i> (1947) issued—the first national curriculum guideline formulated with the CIE and U.S. Education Mission; music education redefined as aesthetic education emphasizing creativity and cooperation.
1948–1950	Postwar reconstruction and democratization policies continue; Cold War begins.	Teacher-training and curriculum experimentation expand; school instrumental practice grew.
1951	San Francisco Peace Treaty signed; Occupation reforms near completion.	<i>Second Tentative Course of Study for Music</i> (1951) published, systematizing the 1947 version and emphasizing experiential learning; the term “aesthetic experience” replaced, but its structure lays the foundation for modern <i>Courses of Study</i> revised about every ten years.

Young Musicians in a Community Venue: The Big Impact of a Small Policy

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Abstract

In Aotearoa New Zealand, national and local arts and culture policy is inconsistent in addressing the needs of children and young people, despite growing recognition of the arts as a vital space for youth development. Opportunities to perform outside of school and to build community connections are important for the development of young musicians. This paper explores the experiences of young musicians in Baycourt Community & Arts Centre, a council-owned performing arts centre in Tauranga, NZ. A two-phase qualitative research design was used to

explore the role the venue plays in shaping young musicians' performance identities and enabling cultural participation. In phase one, adults were surveyed (n=76) and interviewed (n=13) about their memories in the venue; and in phase two drawing was used to elicit conversations with children aged 5- to 12-years old (n=19) about their recent experiences. Thematic analysis of the data identified key themes: developing performance identities; a sense of belonging; lasting impact; schools as pathways to performance opportunities; and accessibility. Findings show that the venue acts as a site for the development of cultural citizenship, enabling young musicians to develop their performance identities, form social bonds, and experience belonging in a public cultural space. The venue's pricing policy enables schools and organisations that produce music events for children and young people to access the venue, thus facilitating opportunities for young musicians to perform to and connect with the wider community. We argue that even modest policies - such as venue hire discounts - can have significant implications for equitable access to the arts and the development of cultural citizenship. This study calls for a greater recognition of children and young people in local arts and cultural policy and highlights the importance of community venues in enabling participation and engagement in the arts.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Policy Implementation, Social Justice, Other*

Music Education and a New Social Order

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Abstract

This paper examines the interconnections between politics, policy, and the practical level of music teaching, holding that as music teachers we need to see ourselves as educators. In this capacity we need to recognize that it triggers several levels of responsibility and kinds of potential to make an impact on the social conditions under which we must operate. Presently this is about an emerging new social order in terms of the meeting between the existing Neoliberal way of organizing society and its competitors of Post-liberalism and Post-neoliberalism that grow in strength. A major challenge is that many of the priorities that music education traditionally tries to promote, such as sustainability, equity, and multiculturalism are about to being directly counteracted by Post-liberal and Post-neoliberal politics and policies. This challenges music educators as well as music teacher educators to reinspect their basic values in the meeting with these 'new' politics and policies which are far more explicit about values than is the case with Neoliberalism. Can we find ways to operate in our daily work that function well in the interplay between the political, policy-, and everyday practical level within this new societal order? Among possible concepts and conceptualizations that may be helpful, the notion of subject profile is discussed.

Keywords: *Musical Values, Policy, Politics, Responsibility, Subject Profile*

Introduction

Examining the interconnections of policy, politics, and the daily work of music teachers in light of the global and local challenges they face requires us to consider music teachers as not only teachers, but also educators. As part of their responsibilities as educators they deal with issues such as equity, accessibility, censorship, political hegemony, conflicting cultural practices, and rapid technological advancements. They do so in explicit as well as implicit ways, sometimes even in terms of hidden curricula (Johansen, 2021a). This reveals that the educational responsibilities in question reach wider than what a narrower focus on teaching and learning music would enable us to conceive. Education is “not only about knowledge, skills, and dispositions but has to do with the ways in which, through education, we become part of existing social, cultural, and political practices and traditions” Gert Biesta (2013, p. 128) reminds us. In addition to the somewhat reproductive function indicated by the term ‘existing’, education also “has a duty to resist. Education needs to be obstinate, not for the sake of being difficult, but in order to make sure that it can contribute to emancipation and democratisation” (Biesta, 2019). These perspectives also clarify the responsibility of music education to participate in creating the society of tomorrow (Johansen, 2024).

Levels

Emerging on the national as well as international scene today are *political* forces influencing music education that enable or disable certain *policy* work as well as the agency and room for action among music educators in their everyday educational *practices*. This raises the question whether there is such a thing as apolitical music education or if we should rather direct our interest towards to what extent and in what ways our music teaching, in terms of educating, *is* political, and how our everyday music educating is, or can be, supporting or opposing certain political-philosophical priorities.

There is a reciprocal interdependence between politics and policy. Overfocusing on policy in social analyses of music education will not suffice. We rather need to scrutinize how our shaping or being shaped by politics enables some and disables other policy decisions and, in turn, actions that music educators, music teacher educators and other stakeholders may consider when carrying out their professional agency within the room for action they define for themselves.

Responsibility

Three dimensions of responsibility operate in these contexts. The first one is given; it is there. The second is about being willing to accept that it is so. Then the third is about consequences, “how we take responsibility for our responsibility”, as Zygmund Baumann expressed it (Biesta, 2013, p. 22). In Emanuel Levinas’ (1981) terms, taking music teacher educators as our example, they have a responsibility for the other, as well as the other’s other, which point to the student music teachers as well as to the future students of these student music teachers as they enter the professional working life as music educators. So, what is there about the political impact on music education and music education policy that raises challenges in these matters? My answer would be: A lot.

Among studies addressing the political impact on music education and music education policy, some years ago music educators living in different countries reported in the ACT journal from their research studies of the impact of Neoliberalism on their music education practices (Goble,

2021). They attended to how Neoliberal priorities influenced music education, how music educators can resist Neoliberalism, and the likelihood that still music education may advance Neoliberal rationalities (Johansen, forthcoming). Among their findings were that the Neoliberal impact reinforced social segregation, and promoted an individualistic mindset in addition to objecting students to the ways in which society is stratified by standardized, quantitative measures. Under the banner of Neoliberalism, music education programs are subjected to relentless measurement practices, Lise C. Vageois (2019, p. 32) added, whilst Lauren Kapalka Richerme (2022) addressed the hidden neoliberalism of a social emotional learning framework and found that the proponents of the framework understood failure as a personal, rather than societal, problem.

A New Societal Order

Since then, other macro level philosophies and theories of what a good society is and should be, have entered the scene in addition to Neoliberalism, and are about to gain increasing importance in the public debate on society as well as the societal order wherein music education policies and practices have to operate. What these philosophies and theories have in common is opposition and critique of Neoliberal as well as Liberal priorities. Neoliberalism failed in “deliver[ing] meaningful freedom to most people” Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz (2024, p. 215) holds. Patrick Deneen (2019), on his side, contributes with a similar critique towards Liberalism. He holds that Liberalism has failed because it has introduced a radically new definition of Liberty to the benefit of priorities such as sexual autonomy and fluid sexual identity (p. 62), endeavors to conquer nature (p. 41) and jeopardizing the natural relationship between men and women and the natural family hierarchy. As “superficially self-maximizing [and] socially destructive” it has caused “liberation from all forms of associations and relationships, from family to church, from schools to village and community, that exerted control over behavior through informal and habituated expectations and norms” (p. 38). Deneen (2019) calls for a turn to post-liberalism, his vision is «“[t]he advent of postliberal practice and [...] a new birth of theory” (p. 191). This needed political turn includes principles that comes close to the priorities of the Maga movement in the US that demands of higher education that it terminates such programs as those of sustainability, equity, and gender studies. In addition to Deneen’s (2019) post-liberalist position, Davies and Gaine (2021, p. 3) speak of a Post-*neoliberalism* that promotes many of the same values as the post-liberalists, positioning Post-*neoliberalism* as «considering challenges to the neoliberal order that have come [...] from the political right». Quinn Slobodian (2025) suggests that among the messengers of this new societal order are some who simplifies old neoliberal priorities, calling them Hayek’s bastards. Thereby he indicates that despite of the contest from Post-liberalists and Post-*neoliberalists* we will still have to cope with well-known Neoliberal priorities.

Challenges

A major challenge for music educators in this new situation is that many of the priorities that music education traditionally tries to promote, such as sustainability, equity, and multiculturalism are about to being directly counteracted by Post-liberal and Post-*neoliberal* politics and policies and subsequent cut-downs on funding. This is documented in papers on several levels including president orders and their execution in the US. For example, in the president order 14168 of January 20, 2025[i] President Donald Trump ordered to immediately rescind the Department of Education's guidance documents including the education toolkit “Creating Inclusive and

Nondiscriminatory School Environments for LGBTQI+ Students” and those about “Supporting LGBTQI+ Youth and Families in School”, “Supporting Intersex Students: A Resource for Students, Families, and Educators”, and “Supporting Transgender Youth in School”. In European countries from Hungary and Russia to Scandinavia similar priorities are getting increasing attention. For example, in Hungary gender studies are forbidden.

What About Music Education?

So, how should we navigate these contours of a potential new social order? Or, more precisely, “Where does music fit in? Where does music *education* fit in? In times like these, the music educator is likely to ask herself, to what extent does my work impact the school I teach in and the larger problems I see around me? What remedy, if any, might I offer? Where can I do good”, Randall Everett Alsup (2007) asked in the Editorial to the special number of *Music Education Research* on Music Education, Equity, and Social Justice.

First of all, the new situation is more value oriented in explicit ways than the social order dominated by Neoliberalism was. This unleashes increased challenges and responsibilities since we music educators are in the capacity to support the new priorities as well as counteract them. And, in a democracy which has not yet turned from a liberal one into a post-liberal wherein Liberal values and standards may become not as self-evident as they were, we are free to encourage and campaign for every political philosophy and value ground we might want to support. For now. Our choices may include supporting the ‘tradwife movement’ as well as feminism, heteronormative ideals as well as queer and trans theory, the repatriation of immigrants as well as multiculturalism and critical race theory. After all, history has brought examples of how music educators have supported Nazism and Communism as well as Left wing priorities of peace politics and anti-nuclear plant movements.

Political, Apolitical, and the Notion of a Subject Profile

What then about the apolitical in music education? German music educator Jürgen Vogt (2021, p. 218) suggests that “Perhaps the main focus of music education should be on what Adorno called the capacity for experiences. In that respect, music education can teach how to become and remain open, curious, and responsive to unfamiliar and new people and musics. If this is true, then music education might be most political when it is not political at all”, Vogt suggests.

So what about the link between politics, policy, and this possibly apolitical side of music education? I suggest that this can be found by attending to the notion of a ‘subject profile’, and the ways in which such a profile takes shape in the reciprocal relationship between categories such as our aims and goals, frame factors such as teaching material, equipment, and curricula, our educational content such as repertoire, our students’ prerequisites of learning including their music cultural and social background, the teaching methods we choose and their relationship with student learning, and our assessment strategies.

Looking back and rephrasing Bennett Rimer’s thought that teaching music is practicing your personal philosophy of music education, and in cases where this personal philosophy is influenced by the music educator’s responsible reflection and navigation within the emerging contours of a new societal order, we might suggest that the notion of ‘subject profile’ is

connected with how this personal philosophy affect and influences our choices and decisions on all these areas and, most important, the reciprocal relationship between them.

For example, when a school music educator give priority to Vogt's (2018) "how to become and remain open, curious, and responsive to unfamiliar and new people and musics", it demonstrates a subject profile of school music as a liberal educational subject. Such a subject profile may face critique for jeopardizing the ideals of Post-liberalism and Post-neoliberalism, countering the higher education ideals of the American administration that The National Science Foundation overlook by attending to their list of 'forbidden words' [ii]. On the primary or secondary level, it may be in conflict with the American Library Association's list of 'banned books' [iii] or the criteria of the Save our Ohio Children Coalition[iv].

If we agree with sociologist Ulrich Beck (1994, p. 3) that social change takes place on "cat's paws" because "[t]he [apparent] insignificance, familiarity [...] of the changes conceal their society changing scope" (p. 4), a wide variety of apparently neutral, subtle and conspicuous actions that music educators and other stakeholders use may, if studied a little closer, prove to carry out a kind of obstinate education (Biesta, 2019) that influence and shape policy as well as, in the long run, even politics.

Our Everyday Work

By paying deliberate attention to the non-verbal values of the craft dimensions of music teaching, music teaching may release its potential to nurture students' aural-motor ways of knowing the world that constitutes an integral part of human recognition which is often overlooked by other school subjects as well as education in general, but are inherent in music. Indirectly opposing this visual-verbal dominance in school, such an approach may contribute, not to music education changing the world, but to a counterhegemonic mosaic aiming at constructive social change (Johansen, 2021b).

Whilst Post-liberalism as well as Post-neoliberalism maintain the Neoliberal core principle of competition (Foucault, 2008) which has also impacted parts of music education in terms of a wide variety of competitions, music education has also a large potential of working in non-competitive ways. This can be done by drawing on project oriented ways of working, from a school music project of putting on a musical to working with classroom composition, to mention some. Both are genuine and inherent ways of working with music that may serve as anti-competitive strategies within the frames of an anti-competitive subject profile.

Music is a field of basically unmeasurable values. This enables music education to contributing in making some small cracks in the surface of the ways in which society is stratified by standardized, quantitative measures (Goble, 2021). This becomes clear if we move our attention from the rich variety of non-musical outcomes that we music educators and other stakeholders draw on from time to time in our efforts to justify our, and our subject's existence, and instead attend to the intrinsic values of the human musical experience.

Attending to non-verbal values and anti-competition strategies together with the intrinsic values of the human musical experience may be helpful as thinking tools in moving from the level of the studio or classroom floor to the levels of policy and politics and back. As such they can

contribute in unfolding music education as obstinate education within an emerging, new societal order.

Promoting these values together with continuing our engagement with issues such as sustainability, equity, and multiculturalism repositions music education into an oppositional position wherein the defense of these values are seen as part of our educational responsibility in the post-neoliberal society.

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[i] Federal Register (2025). *Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*. Executive Order 14168 of January 20, 2025. Link: [Federal Register :: Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#)

[ii] [The List of Trump's Forbidden Words That Will Get Your Paper Flagged at NSF](#)

[iii] [Book Ban Data | Banned Books](#)

[iv] https://protectohiochildren.net/?fbclid=IwAR24u3moEzypmG6QZ3b0etAXTZD5noiinrCRAwu_a1dt8pbC3X3lW01d3F0

Simplifying Music Education and Empowerment in Africa's Evolving Landscape

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Abstract

African musicians face significant barriers, including limited music-business education, weak policy enforcement, and inadequate technological tools that hinder their ability to thrive in the industry. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing surveys, interviews, document analysis, and Spatial AI mapping to explore how education, policy, and technology can empower artists across Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. By examining high-profile cases such as Mercy Chinwo vs. EeZee Tee, Nyashinski and Cedo, and Sauti Sol, the study highlights systemic challenges in contract disputes, royalty management, and cultural representation. The primary aim of this study was to identify gaps in music-business literacy, policy enforcement, and royalty distribution. The findings indicate that integrating robust educational programs, enforceable policies, and technology-enabled monitoring can enhance transparency, accountability, and sustainability within the music industry. This study demonstrates how education serves as a fundamental tool to equip musicians with the necessary skills to navigate the evolving landscape and underscores the political dimensions of music education, exploring how government policies and copyright laws directly impact artists' rights and earnings. This research emphasizes the political aspects of technology and education, empowering mechanisms that provide musicians with the tools needed to advocate for themselves. Spatial AI technology has emerged as a neutral but effective resource for monitoring industry dynamics and ensuring equitable treatment. Moreover, the role of music in social and political contexts cannot be ignored. As discussed by Moyo (2017) in "The Contribution Made by African Musicians towards the Social, Economic and Political Upkeep of Africa," music has historically served as a communication tool for political messages, fostering unity and resilience among communities during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. Musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo and Simon Chimbetu used their art to inspire and mobilize the populace against colonial rule, showcasing how music can act as a vehicle for political change. Additionally, the book *Music Education in Africa: Concept, Process, and Practice*, edited by Emily Achieng' Akuno (2019), highlights the complexities of music

education across the continent, emphasizing the need for structured curricula that reflect the diverse cultural contexts in which they operate. This underscores the importance of integrating local music traditions into educational frameworks to foster relevance and engagement among students in the future. Ultimately, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how artists can adapt to global trends while protecting their cultural heritage. The implications of these findings extend beyond individual cases, offering insights into how music education can evolve in a rapidly changing world influenced by digital streaming and globalization. By advocating for the integration of music-business education into curricula and strengthening policy enforcement, this study aims to foster a more equitable and sustainable environment for African musicians in the music industry.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Policy Implementation, Social Justice*

Lifelong Learning and Leisure: The Search for Music Classes Among Adults

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Abstract

This paper discusses music education as lifelong learning and leisure, based on the analysis of two public cultural spaces. These cultural centers—one administered by the state and the other by the municipality—offer free music classes for adults in a capital city of Northeastern Brazil, recognized for having the highest social inequality index among Brazilian capitals. We understand that such initiatives constitute public policies of Lifelong Learning (LLL), as proposed by Unesco (2022), by providing continued educational opportunities for people who previously lacked access to formal music education.

This discussion derives from a broader study whose general objective was to understand what music means to adults (or older adults) engaged in other professions or activities who, by their own initiative and motivation, seek some form of music instruction with the aim of learning to play an instrument or to sing. The specific objectives were to: (a) identify the profile of these learners and their motivations for pursuing musical study or practice at this stage of life; (b) analyze the personal and subjective relationship they establish with music at this moment in their lives; (c) identify their conceptions of musicality; (d) examine how their current studies relate to their previous musical experiences; and (e) assess how they engage with the pedagogical approaches implemented in the institutions where they study.

A qualitative methodology was adopted, based on autobiographical narrative interviews with seven participants in each institution, conducted between September 2021 and August 2025. The narratives were examined through a three-temporal analysis method, revealing significant

experiences and pedagogical potentialities for music education. The main results indicate that these public and free educational spaces enable adults to learn to play instruments or to sing. As they do not follow rigid curricula, such non-formal education contexts are more flexible and better suited to the interests of those who pursue music as leisure or personal development. This group tends to demonstrate greater clarity about their goals and autonomy to choose – or abandon – activities that do not meet their expectations.

It can be concluded that initiatives of this kind play a fundamental social role: they democratize access to music education, welcome interrupted learning trajectories, and constitute effective LLL policies. Thus, they represent alternatives to traditional music education, aligned with Bowman's (2018) perspective on the ethical, formative, and inclusive character of music education.

Keywords: *Lifelong Learning Policy, Education Policy, Adult Music Education, Music As Leisure, Policy Implementation*

Introduction

This study presents a discussion about music education, lifelong learning and leisure. The basis for this discussion was the research developed in João Pessoa, capital of the Northeastern Brazilian state of Paraíba, about adults who seek music lessons developed by the Research Group Music, Education and Culture, from the Universidade Federal da Paraíba/UFPB (Federal University of Paraíba), between September 2021 and August 2025. Even though the main research goal was not specifically the discussion of music education policies, the undertaken analysis allowed us to understand the search for music lessons as leisure and also linked to the proposal of lifelong learning (LLL) by Unesco.

In parallel, we consider that a state arts center and a city cultural center that offer free music lessons comprised public policies. These education spaces not only supply interests of a public not usually contemplated by traditional music schools, but they also can encompass different educational practices

It is relevant to mention that, despite João Pessoa having become “one of the most sought-after destinations in the world, a reference in quality of life and natural beauties”, the social indicators for a great part of its population show a different reality. It is the capital with the largest income concentration in Brazil, according to 2023 data research, from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), about poverty and income in Paraíba (Silva, 2024)

The Research and its Methodology

The main reason for this research came from the confirmation of a search for music lessons by adults in several educational spaces city-wide. We excluded from our research the participants that sought music classes aiming for professional formation, such as undergraduate students in Music or even the ones who, by any means, would not be having classes by one's own choice.

Thus, we determined 35 years-old for the participants of this research, considering at that point in life there is usually a definition of their professional careers or other life projects. We did not treat seniors participants as a different category.

In order to investigate and discuss this issue, the general objective of this study was: to understand the meaning of music for adults established in another profession that sought music lessons by their own free will aiming to play an instrument or to sing. The specific objectives were: (a) to know these students' profile and their motivations to seek music lessons at this moment of their lives; (b) to analyse the personal and subjective relationship they established with music; (c) to identify their conceptions of musicality; (d) to analyse how these lessons relate to their previous musical experience; (e) to verify how they relate to the pedagogical approach applied in the educational space they study.

The research adopted a qualitative approach with the data gathered through narrative interviews, which have the inherent feature of expressing the participants' subjectivity and personal experience associated with music. Such interviews, therefore, have an autobiographical character, radically differing from the quantitative research based on interviews treated statistically – like surveys, for instance – which heuristic possibilities are totally distinct.

In a previous work (Penna, 2021), we have already discussed the heuristic possibilities of the narrative interview – considered by Flick (2004, p. 110) as a method – to the music education field. Its specificity over other types of interviews is found in its connection with the autobiographical memory: when we work with narratives related to the “evoking of personal events”, we are not searching for facts per se, but the subjective experience lived by who narrates and how it was incorporated into memory meaningfully. Telling a personal story is linked to biographical memory and to the way it gives meaning to one's own experience (Silva Jr., 2018, pp. 174-178). With this in mind, the narratives accomplish the phenomenological proposal of focusing on the perspective of each individual about events in their lives and how reality is perceived (Yin, 2016, pp. 7–8). And that is the essence of qualitative research, as opposed to positivists and/or quantitative approaches.

Therefore, the narrative interview was considered appropriate to our research for the possibility of accessing the subjective content and the participants' musical memory. Two narrative interviews were conducted with each participant, the first one being based on a generative question rather wide, asking the participant to talk about their experience with any sort of music, in various spaces, until that very moment of music lessons (Penna & Silva, 2025, p. 13). This broad question aimed “to stimulate the main narrative of the interviewed” concerning their relationships with music throughout life (Flick, 2004, p. 110). The second interview – based on a flexible series of questions, however still keeping the narrative character – aimed to bring back and deepen topics of the previous report, targeting to contemplate the research objectives. Both interviews were audio recorded, with the consent of participants, and transcribed, making use of the standard written language.^[1]

The participants of our research were music students at 35 or older, without a maximum age, who studied music in a specific space for at least one school semester and not more than three years – a time span referring to the current moment, because they could have had another musical experience in previous life phases. The data gathering took place between 2021 and 2025, by students majoring in the teaching license for Music at UFPB under the academic orientation of the first author^[2]. During this time, various educational spaces in the city were

contemplated: a state arts center and a cultural city center that offered music lessons and of other artistic languages; a Non-Governmental Organization focused on the preservation of traditional regional music; the state music school – traditionally recognized as the city music “conservatory” –; extension courses offered by UFPB; church schools; private music schools; besides popular culture spaces – a *capoeira angola* school and a group of percussionist women that participate in the city carnival and offer workshops to new members.

In spite of the number of participants we worked with along these years, they all were volunteers; hence, a probabilistic sample was not intended. The intention was to contemplate a variety of profiles and possibilities of music education lessons in which adults were included, becoming aware of participant’s personal experiences with music. People were recruited for the research in the spaces they attended music lessons – following the specific context of each students’ scientific initiation’s work programme. They were all invited to take part in the research from contact with the teachers that taught the lessons or the coordinators of the referred music activities. After the research proposal presentation, the participant would sign a consent form^[3].

After the transcription, the narratives were followed by an analysis of interpretative character, as typical of qualitative research. We adopted a three times procedure involving: (1) elaboration the chronology of narrated experiences; (2) thematic analysis, related to their musical experiences and their personal meanings; (3) discussion of these previous elements establishing relations to other studies or theoretical approaches – *i.e.*, that is the moment we more intensely relate theory and empirical data.

Thus, a previous theoretical framework was not adopted: the various themes brought up in the narrative (second time of analysis) led to the bibliographical and theoretical sources that were necessary to discuss them (third time), in a process directed by the proposed objectives. To this extent, relative questions were discussed, for instance, musical experiences within the family, in childhood, and its strong connection to the meaning music has to these adult students and in the composition of their musical taste. The bond between music and religion was approached as well, even when the adults did not go to church schools, making the multiple social functions of music evident. Several music teaching contexts made the socializing function of music clear, especially when developed collaboratively.

Within this text, we will specifically concentrate on matters related to the study of music linked to lifelong learning and leisure. We will also focus, in this discussion, the state arts center and the city cultural center. Data was collected between September 2021 and August 2025, with seven adults in each space. Hence, we highlight once again that our data were directed at each participants’ musical experiences, in their subjectivity, from childhood to that moment they attended those music classes. Our participants did not represent the total group of students in these educational spaces, but their narratives expressed actual experiences and possibilities for music education.

The state arts center – in its headquarters downtown – offers a diversity of free six-monthly courses in various artistic languages, such as dance, visual arts, drama, literature and music. In the music field, courses range between: singing (popular, lyrical, choir, or yet, vocal technique),

recorder; drums, keyboard, guitar (popular or classical), saxophone, acoustic double bass, accordion; harmony and improvisation; music theory. At the time data was gathered, the institution served around 2500 students, from babies to seniors.

Located in a large popular neighborhood, the city cultural center offers a series of activities, like theater plays, music concerts, dancing presentations and plastic arts expositions. Moreover, it provides workshops and artistic formation courses, in visual arts, ballet, popular dances, among others. In music, percussion courses, keyboard, trumpet, guitar and Brazilian *cavaquinho* – according to the list of courses for the second semester in 2025. In these two spaces, music lessons are completely free of charge.

Lifelong Learning and Leisure

The concept of Lifelong Learning (LLL) refers to the ongoing process of human formation, based on the comprehension that education is not restricted to education institutions, but it is present in several environments and contexts. With this in mind, this conception has led Unesco publications since the 1990s, at least, being spread before the need to adapt to a world in rapid transformation and the challenges of the new century. As discussed by Rodrigues (2009, p. 13), arguments defending this perspective point to how it represents an educational proposal that promotes respect to individual needs and democratization of education for all. However, there are critics to this view, as it demands the workers to constantly update in a highly competitive process (Oliveira & Saraiva, 2024).

In most recent publishing – a handbook dated from 2022 – we see the presentations of “five elements that support a comprehensive understanding of the Unesco definition of LLL”: all ages groups; all levels of education; all learning modalities; all learning spheres and spaces; a variety of purposes, once LLL “is both people-centred and human rights-based” (UNESCO 2022, pp. 17–18).

At this point, LLL and the discussions about leisure find each other, since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ONU, 2015) establishes, in its Article 24, that: “Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay”. Nevertheless, defining leisure is not easy, since, as indicated Gelpi (1983, p. 125), “leisure is strictly connected to the idea of freedom”, beyond the contradiction that, currently, “we also work to buy leisure”.

Then, we can recur to Joffre Dumazedier, a French sociologist considered a precursor of leisure sociology:

Leisure is a collection of occupations to which the individual can give oneself in free will, be it for resting, be it for having fun, recreate and entertain or even to develop one’s information or disinterested formation [...] after getting rid or untangling from family and social obligations. (Dumazedier, 2000, p. 34)

There is, as a result, a clear opposition between work and obligation *versus* leisure. In this sense, the participants of our research that attended both the cultural city center and the state arts school moved away from musical activities after adolescence, due to the need of working to provide for

themselves and/or their families. As low-income workers, they did not have time to dedicate to music, since they depended on their salary to survive. However, as the financial conditions improved and family demand lowered, they got back to their relationship with music, since it is meaningful to them.

Therefore, it is in the non-work space – and six (among fourteen) participants were retired – that music classes feature as leisure – opportunity to relax and calm down. Or even as “disinterested formation” – in Dumazedier terms, since it is not destined to professional exercise –, what we understand as corresponding to one of LLL goals: “to provide people with opportunities to develop their capabilities and reach their potential throughout life” (UNESCO, 2022, p. 18), included their projects in relation to music.

In this fashion, as pointed out by Alheit e Dausien (2006, p. 189), LLL can come from the need to accomplish personal projects previously uncompleted, such as the interruption of their relationship with music due to bad financial conditions or life necessities – for many of the participants, learning to play an instrument was a never accomplished childhood dream.

Non-formal Environments and LLL Policy

At the state arts center and the city cultural center, public spaces in which music classes are free of charge, the adult participants of our research found the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument or sing. As a result, we understand that these two centers are actions of lifelong learning policy, as defined by the Unesco (2022, p. 18) document, from both government levels.

According to this same document, both can be considered as non-formal learning environments, not leading to recognized qualifications (UNESCO, 2022, p. 17). Pedagogical practices in music teaching are the most diverse ones: lessons of popular music instruments are also offered, classes are most times collective (or in pairs or small groups). In this case, there is more interaction between the students, with groups that can gather people of different ages, which serves, by the way, the interest of adults that expect music classes to provide them with socializing opportunities.

It is relevant to compare with the centenarian music school, traditionally recognized as the city’s music “conservatory” – also public, funded by the state and offering free courses. Currently, this school offers technical professionalizing courses, and those called regular courses; in both of them, the performance in the instrument (or singing) is always linked to the study of music theory, because the reading of score is a pre-requisite for individual instrument classes that follow a tutorial model.

Since they are not restricted to pre-established curriculums for a certification, spaces of non-formal education are usually more flexible in their educational proposals, catering more directly to the interests of adults with other occupations who are looking for music lessons. Generally speaking, this public usually knows clearly what they want and the type of class that satisfies them; and in the same way, can abandon what does not correspond to their expectations.

In João Pessoa’s context and its great social inequality, the state arts center and the city cultural center are actions of a LLL policy that help to broaden the opportunities of access to arts and music. On the other hand, they are also workspaces for artists without formal certification, including musicians of popular formation. The great matter regarding this is that most of the

teachers/educators are service providers, without stability or employment rights – which public school teachers (with appropriate certification and hired by public selection) would have.

The state arts center, due to its long working years, has a more consolidated teachers' staff, and all the music teachers are graduated (bachelors, licensed teachers or in correlated areas); a few of the teachers are permanent staff of the Education State Secretary. At the city cultural center, created in 2016, all teachers are service providers, and most of them do not have a degree. Regardless, a public selection for the educators that work in both spaces is not available, which allows some unfair practices based on social relationships.

Final Considerations

Our research's participants – adults with other occupations that seek music lessons – revealed, in their narratives, the search for self-accomplishment through their relationship with music, learning an instrument or singing. Facing life difficulties – such as time restrictions and work demands –, they looked for opportunities of LLL.

The importance of non-formal learning environments that value adults' journeys and experiences and offer practices that recognize their characteristics and needs is clear. It is necessary to consider this potential public, without intending to impose traditional teaching practices – that are considered more like “training” than as “education”, according to Bowman's position on “social and ethical significance of music and music education”. Music lessons as leisure and LLL differ clearly from mere musical training. Thus, we finish with Bowman's words (2018, p. 8):

Music Education, in contrast to mere training, is preparation for citizenship – what kind of person it is good to be, and what kind of societies we hope to forge through our (musical) actions. To important ends like these, certain musical and instructional practices are clearly better suited than others.

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^[1] Ever since 2023, we started using platforms with artificial intelligence – such as Riverside – to help with the transcription.

^[2] Resulting works from this research were presented in Brazil in congresses of the music and education field, besides an article published in an academic periodic (Penna et al, 2025). Some students that participated in data collection as granted or as volunteers of the Institutional Program of Scientific Initiation (CNPq/UFPB) accomplished their Course Completion Papers related to this research.

^[3] According to the Brazilian norms for research involving human beings, the project was submitted to the Ethics Committee through *Plataforma Brasil*, under protocol CAAE 45851021.0.0000.5188, and appropriately approved. During 2021/2022, the interviews were online, as a consequence of restrictions following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Through the Lens of Conflict: Affirmative Policies, Decoloniality, and Inclusion in Brazilian Music Education

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Abstract

This study examines the tensions between legislation and curricular implementation in the field of Special Music Education within the broader framework of Inclusive Education in Brazil, drawing on a decolonial perspective and affirmative action policies. The discussion is grounded in Gadotti's (2003) concept of a pedagogy of conflict, which understands conflict as an inherent and productive dimension of the educational process, capable of generating critical awareness and social transformation. In this view, conflict becomes a space of ethical-political dialogue, where educators and students recognize themselves as historically situated subjects engaged in the contradictions of their contexts. Inclusion is approached from a decolonial standpoint, aligned with Queiroz (2017), as a process that surpasses mere institutional and curricular access. It requires dismantling power structures that silence difference, perpetuate epistemicides, and render marginalized musical knowledge invisible. Inclusion is thus understood as a political act of re-existence — one that legitimizes diverse sonorities, ways of knowing, and modes of being in musical learning environments. The aim of this study is to elucidate the conflicts arising between Brazilian inclusive education legislation and the pedagogical practices of Music Education, questioning how affirmative policies and normative guidelines align — or fail to align — with teacher training programs and professional practice. This contrast highlights ongoing discrepancies between the discourse of inclusion and its concrete realization. Methodologically, the study employs document review and analysis, drawing on legal frameworks (such as Law no. 9.394/1996, Law no. 13.146/2015, and the National Curriculum Guidelines for Music Education), as well as academic literature on teacher education and inclusion. Findings indicate that tensions in legal interpretation and curricular enactment shape both pedagogical practice and the formulation of educational documents. Conflict emerges foremost at the level of discourse — often more in policy texts than in classroom practice — underscoring the need for critical, context-sensitive approaches to achieving genuinely inclusive and decolonial Music Education.

Keywords: *Education Policy*

The Voices in Our Heads: Interrogating and Unsettling Internalized Ableism in/for Music Education

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Abstract

In August 2023, it became progressively harder to walk and I became chronically hunched over when standing or walking. The hardest aspect is not what I am experiencing, but what I perceive that I look like to others when I stagger the 300 steps from my parking spot to my building bent over at 90 degrees or walk across the classroom to check on students. Somehow, I have internalized that it is not okay to look the way that I do, perhaps because I have been told to stand up straight since age three and I can't. Even though it shocked me, I realized I understand my inability to stand up straight as a moral failing. Me—the person who routinely engages with disability in my work and has taught disability studies at my institution since 2019—believes that my unruly body is not acceptable. These feelings are embarrassing and I am ashamed I feel this way when I am embedded in disability studies. The fact I feel this way, however, has taught me how deep ableism goes. In this paper, tease out the dynamics that contribute to internalized ableism in the hopes that disabled folx as well as temporarily able-bodied folx will love our disabled bodies unconditionally. I examine key factors that foster internalized ableism, as well as possibilities for mitigating this internalized oppression including in and through music education. I define my terms and elaborate how society socializes individuals to think about disability. I subsequently grapple with neoliberalism and its imperative of productivity on socialization. I argue that the default societal stance toward disability is exclusion, which compels a drive toward the “normative”. To make this case, I historicize legal exclusions (Schweik 2009) and engage with Foucault's (1978, 1994, 2004) work on biopower, alongside a politics of disposability (Giroux 2006), as they relate to disability. These factors all contribute to internalized ableism. Ultimately, I consider how unlearning these tendencies toward exclusion, shame, and ableism can occur through music education. Considering the ISME CFP, I engage with policy changes that disrupt ableism in ways that might also interrupt internalized ableism. I suggest changes to attendance policies, the bureaucracy involved in receiving accommodations, as well as changes in physical/building/classroom accessibility.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Social Change, Social Justice*

LIGHTNING TALKS AND POSTERS

Professional Practice of Later-life Music Education Through Socio-Political Lenses in Finland and China

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Abstract

This lightning talk argues for identifying new directions for sustainable development in and through lifelong music education amid global demographic changes. While there is a growing body of research centering on older learners (e.g., Varvarigou et al., 2013) demonstrating that later-life music education promotes health, well-being, and quality of life (e.g., McQuade & O’Sullivan, 2024), there remains an urgent need for a more complex social-political understanding of the interconnections between later-life music education and broader sustainability goals (Laes, 2023; Laes & Creech, 2023). In line with this need, music education must “co-evolve as a part of the society” and contribute to new evaluative criteria for public value, positioning itself as a crucial component of inclusive and sustainable socio-political systems (Väkevä et al., 2017, p.135). Using an instrumental case study design, this research unpacks the professional practice of music educators working within institutional and policy contexts of later-life music education in two countries. The material for this study was generated through questionnaires and interviews with 13 music educators, comprising 6 from Finland and 7 from China, with at least one year of substantial experience in later-life music education. Grounded in the theory of practice architecture (Mahon et al., 2017), the analysis of professional practice among Finnish and Chinese educators delineates how meanings, pedagogical practice, and institutional relations form, and how policies are translated into enmeshed cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that govern what later-life music education can actually be in practice. Later-life music education is understood as a dynamic site of continuities and transitions across the lifecourse, where generational relations, temporal experiences, and the social constructions of aging intersect. Tensions around (un)sustainability, (un)reasonableness, and (in)justice dialectically emerge within the current fragile socio-political systems and generate global insights on the possibilities of lifelong learning as part of sustainable futures. This lightning talk calls for policymakers and practitioners to respond to rapid population aging (Komp-Leukkunen, 2021) by fostering environments that support older adults in navigating later life through a balanced interplay of personal agency, social interaction, institutional support, and cultural values (Haarni et al., 2014), highlighting pathways for transformative music professionalism with a political impact that can advance broader sustainability, justice, and continuity.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Policy Development, Social Change, Social Justice*

Equitable Access to Comprehensive Elementary Music Education in Ontario: A Critical Policy Analysis

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Abstract

Equitable Access to Comprehensive Elementary Music Education in Ontario: A Critical Policy Analysis Abstract In Ontario, Canada, music has been a mandated subject for students in grades 1-8 since 1998. However, despite the existence of provincial policies designed to promote equitable access—including curriculum mandates, ministry directives, and local board initiatives—significant disparities persist. In 2024, People for Education reported that over half of Ontario's elementary schools lacked access to a dedicated music teacher. In this study, I examine the extent to which current music curriculum and policy documents in Ontario operationalize, specify, or omit equitable access. Drawing on critical policy theory and equity literacy, I employ a cross-referential matrix to analyze the music strands of the Ontario Elementary Arts Curriculum (2009), Ministry memoranda (PM119 on Equity and Inclusive Education, 2013), and district equity plans (TDSB Equity and Access Plan, 2025). The analysis focuses on three domains: structural access (staffing, funding, specialist vs. generalist roles), pedagogical access (CRRP, anti-oppressive), and accountability mechanisms (monitoring, transparency in reporting)—to identify gaps and describe patterns in policy language that undermine stated intentions for equity of access to comprehensive elementary music education in Ontario. The poster project and lighting talk will illustrate key findings and actionable recommendations to strengthen policy research, design, and implementation, and to contribute to wider discourse on equitable access to music education within a global context.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Social Justice*

Guidelines for Promoting Orchestras as Lifelong Music Learning Resources in Thailand

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Abstract

In the contemporary cultural landscape, the role of orchestras is evolving beyond mere performance, presenting significant potential as sustainable lifelong music learning resources.

Recognizing this potential within the Thai context, this research was initiated to address the gap between the perceived role of orchestras as performance ensembles and their capacity as educational centers. The primary aim of this study was to investigate and formulate comprehensive guidelines for effectively promoting orchestras as accessible and dynamic lifelong music learning centers throughout Thailand. To achieve this, a qualitative research methodology was adopted to ensure an in-depth exploration of the complex factors involved. The research was structured in two main phases. The initial phase employed documentary research to comprehensively assess the current state of orchestras in Thailand, focusing specifically on their existing educational outreach and community participation initiatives. This analysis involved a meticulous examination of the primary websites, seasonal performance programs, annual reports, and other relevant published documents from a sample of 33 selected orchestras. Data from this phase was systematically gathered using a structured Documentary Analysis Form to identify prevailing practices and gaps. The second phase involved semi-structured interviews designed to explore prospective guidelines for development. A total of 15 key informants were selected through purposive sampling. This expert cohort comprised seasoned orchestra administrators, conductors, music educators, and cultural policymakers, ensuring a diversity of professional perspectives. The qualitative data derived from these interviews was subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurrent themes and actionable strategies. The synthesis of data from both the documentary analysis and the expert interviews yielded nine key guidelines essential for fostering orchestras as lifelong music classrooms in Thailand. These guidelines highlight the need for systemic change: 1) Thai orchestras require capable and visionary music directors who champion education. 2) Clearly defined organizational objectives are crucial for determining the orchestra's educational direction and establishing its identity. 3) Developing clear and efficient orchestra management is fundamental. 4) Orchestras must strategically balance their business, artistic, and educational dimensions. 5) Orchestras need to seek diverse funding and momentum from various organizations. 6) Fostering formal collaboration between orchestras and educational institutions is essential. 7) Educational institutions, in turn, should prioritize music education to build audiences and future musicians. 8) Stakeholders must promote the decentralization of orchestras to regional levels and emphasize a diversity of orchestra types, thereby creating wider markets and career opportunities. 9) Finally, robust collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential for driving the long-term sustainability of Thai orchestras. This study concludes that transforming Thai orchestras into vibrant lifelong learning centers requires a concerted, multi-pronged approach involving strategic leadership, financial diversification, and deep systemic collaboration between cultural and educational sectors. These findings provide a crucial framework for policymakers, orchestra administrators, and educators aiming to unlock the full educational potential of orchestras in Thailand.

Keywords: *Policy Development*

From Autonomy to Assessment: Music Education in Finland on the Road to the Matriculation Examination

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Abstract

In Finnish education, teachers have considerable autonomy to make independent decisions regarding the content and methods of teaching, based on the national core curricula (Sahlberg, 2011). In music education, this means that students are taught different things (Juntunen, 2011, 2017). The study (Juntunen & Arvonen, in print) presented in this light talk/poster examined the content and repertoire choices made by music teachers in lower secondary school music education in relation to the national core curriculum in music (FNAE, 2014), as well as the reasoning behind these choices. Teachers were approached as autonomous actors (Lennert da Silva & Mølsted, 2020; Shamsuddinova & un Nisa, 2021) who make pedagogical decisions based on both the core curriculum and their professional expertise and judgment. The data consisted of survey responses (N = 66) and interviews with five music teachers, analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The study shows that teachers aim to follow the core curriculum conscientiously: teaching is diverse, focusing on collaborative music-making as the primary mode of working. The most important criteria for repertoire selection involved enabling and motivating student participation, the suitability of the repertoire in relation to students' age, skill level, and school environment, and repertoire diversity—particularly to broaden students' musical knowledge. In collaborative music-making, the repertoire focused mainly on popular music, while musical diversity was primarily realized through listening materials. Religious content was generally avoided. Since the national core curriculum grants teachers considerable autonomy in content selection, the content of teaching varies between teachers. This finding is in line with findings from previous research (Juntunen, 2011; Muukkonen, 2010, 2011). This presentation draws attention to the implications of such variation for the comparability of students' learning outcomes. The issue is particularly topical in the current Finnish context, where music—along with visual arts and physical education—will, for the first time, be included in Finland's national matriculation examination (MEC, n.d.) in 2029. The matriculation examination is a high-stakes assessment that has long structured the hierarchy of school subjects and carries significant weight in university admissions. The presentation highlights how this policy shift marks a substantial repositioning of music not only within upper secondary education but also throughout the entire comprehensive education system, potentially limiting teacher autonomy (see, Erss, 2017), which has traditionally been considered a key quality criterion in (music) education in Finnish schools.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation*

Publicness and Morality in Music Education: A Deweyan Framework Reinterpreted by Paul Woodford

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Abstract

Contemporary music education is increasingly circumscribed by standardization and performativity, pushing publicness and morality to the margins: system-level emphases on knowledge and skills attenuate democratic concern and ethical formation. Grounded in John Dewey's political philosophy, this paper treats democracy as a way of life and advances two core claims: first, publicness is not a pre-given place but a relational form constituted as people mutually affect one another and address shared problems; second, morality is not inculcation but practical growth through experience and reflective action. Within this frame, the paper turns to Paul Woodford (2005; 2019), whose sustained Deweyan reinterpretation stresses educators' and institutions' ethical-historical responsibilities and critiques both aesthetic formalism and neoliberal standardization. Read through Dewey, Woodford's position recasts musical practice as a site for generating publicness and cultivating moral agency, rather than a value-neutral craft or a vehicle of ideology. The study proposes publicness-morality as political-philosophical coordinates for music education, examining how policy texts and practice discourses distribute voice, delimit values, and demarcate community. On this basis, it outlines directions for reconstruction: prioritizing experience and reflection, juxtaposing diverse musical traditions, and sustaining awareness of power and history. These moves detach music education from institutional narratives of neutrality and reorient it toward the reconstruction of democratic life. Thus, music education is no longer framed solely as aesthetic or technical training but as a political practice that shapes publics and forms ethical subjects.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Social Change*

Whose Stage Is It? Tracing Private and Social Sector Involvement in Ontario Music Festivals, 1945-2025

Sophia Wang, University of Toronto, Canada

Abstract

In Canada, the development of music education in public schools has a long history of involvement from both private entities, such as corporations, and social economy organizations (SEOs), such as advocacy groups and professional associations (Green & Vogan, 1991;

Woodford, 2009). Within this context, music festivals—that is, events at which school ensembles perform and are adjudicated by professionals—offer a vantage point for studying the complex political economy of education. As events deeply embedded in Canadian public education yet often run by not-for-profit organizations and sponsored by private entities, music festivals warrant particular attention as sites at which the interests of public education, private entities, and SEOs compete. To examine the involvement of private entities and SEOs in Canadian public education, I focus my attention to music festivals in Ontario, Canada. I ask: How have private entities and SEOs been involved in the development and institutionalization of music festivals as part of public education in Ontario since the end of World War II? How has private and social sector involvement in public education been represented in the academic literature? Guided by these questions, I conduct a literature review of secondary sources providing historical accounts about music festivals in the context of public education in Ontario between 1945-2025, paying particular attention to mentions of private entities and SEOs involved. Conceptually, I employ Ball & Junemann's (2012) notion of network governance to analyze the relationships between public, private, and social sector actors involved. I also frame my analysis in relation to historical and contemporary shifts in the political economy of education in Canada, drawing upon Rollwagen's (2016) investigation of practical education in the post-World War II period and Winton's (2022) examination of educational privatization in recent decades. I read with two analytical aims: First, I compare what scholars have already said about the involvement of private entities and SEOs, such as their roles (as organizers, sponsors, promoters, etc.), actions, impact, and changes in these aspects over time. Second, I compare how scholars have framed and discussed the involvement of non-public sector actors in public education. Taken together, I present a synthesized perspective of how private and social sector involvement in public music education has been understood and portrayed in the existing scholarship and consider the implications for contemporary music education policy discourse.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Other*

Policy Practice through Systems Reflexivity for Gender Equality in Music Education

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Abstract

To achieve gender equality, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasises the need for structural transformation in society (United Nations, 2015) and the empowerment of girls through education, guided by transformative thinking and action (UNESCO, 2019). UNESCO's education frameworks further stress that education systems must promote gender equality through national policies and planning, teacher recruitment and training, curricula and learning materials, and the overall learning environment (UNESCO, 2019).

However, the [country]’s national policies recognise that, given the country’s diverse socio-cultural, geographical, and economic contexts, implementing national education policies for gender inclusion in response to [country]’s commitment to these international frameworks remains challenging. Therefore, this study aims to understand what kind of policy practice is needed to address gender inclusion in the diverse and complex [country] music education system. It conceptualises policy practice as a reflexive and dialogic process that brings together diverse perspectives, fosters critical debate (Schmidt, 2020), and ultimately leads to meaningful propositions for inclusive policy implementation. Drawing on the theoretical lens of systems thinking, the study proposes a conceptual model of policy practice that continuously interrogates underlying assumptions, power relations, and cultural hierarchies shaping how gender-related policies are interpreted and enacted. Through this lens, policy practice becomes not only a mechanism for institutional change but also a means of creating gender-responsive music education in schools that reflects and sustains equity, diversity, and social transformation.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Social Change*

Preventative Policing Through Pop? The Role of Music in Shaping Youth-Police Relations in Queensland

Alexis Kallio, Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, Australia

Abstract

Music is widely recognised as a powerful resource for adolescent identity development, social connectedness, and wellbeing, with over 562 identified social, emotional, psychological, cognitive, and cultural benefits (Bartleet et al. 2023). Drawing on such potentials, music programs are proliferating in youth detentions around the world, offering young people opportunities to process trauma; build confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment; learn professional skills; develop a sense of autonomy; improve self-control and emotional regulation; enhance educational engagement; generate a sense of hope and goals for the future; and build interpersonal trust (Kallio 2022). However, while emerging research suggests that such programs have important roles in promoting desistance from future offending (Kallio 2024), punitive measures such as detention are increasingly recognised as ineffective and “particularly unhelpful” at meeting the trauma-related and developmental needs of youth (IRYD 2017, p. 4; Motz et al. 2020). As such, attentions are shifting from the role of music in youth detention facilities to its potentials as part of early intervention and primary prevention initiatives. This presentation reports the preliminary findings of a study examining how police-affiliated music programs shape potentials for wellbeing among youth participants and the relations between police and young people in Queensland, Australia. Both police music facilitators and young participants between the ages of 16 and 20 years of age were interviewed about program aims, structure, repertoire, pedagogical approach, successes and challenges. Data generated through

these interviews were then approached through a factional story approach, crafting composite, first-person narratives by “combining narrative threads, highlighting similarities and incorporating dissent” (Kallio 2015, p. 8) in addition to introducing a degree of “productive ambiguity” (Barone & Eisner 2012, p. 118) to raise questions that arose or highlight issues that remained unclear. Factional stories were shared with participants approximately 1 week before a second interview, inviting them to co-construct meaning through participating in the data analysis process in these second and final discussions. Findings hold implications not only for youth justice and policing policies and program development but also music education, in considering how music programs can engage vulnerable young people in ways that can address social tensions and divisions in culturally sensitive and empowering ways.

Keywords: *Decolonization, Policy Development, Social Change, Social Justice*

The Role of Music Education in Addressing Right-Wing Extremist and Populist Music

Julian Vorst, University of Münster, Germany

Abstract

The rise of right-wing populism and extremist movements across Europe and beyond has not left music untouched. Music increasingly serves as a medium through which right-wing ideologies, emotions, and identities are articulated and disseminated, playing an important role as a radicalizing factor (e.g., Möller & Mischler, 2021). The widely circulated “Sylt video” from Germany, which became famous as a meme in Europe, illustrates how popular music and digital culture are mobilized to create a sense of belonging, spread political messages, and normalize exclusionary worldviews (e.g., Meiß & Ziegler, 2025). These dynamics reveal the growing importance of music as both a cultural and political force in contemporary societies. Given music’s close connection to the everyday lives and identities of young people, such developments cannot be ignored in music education. Music classrooms are not isolated from societal change; they are part of it. This makes it essential for music educators to critically engage with the ways music expresses and circulates political ideas, including those rooted in extremism and populism. This poster and talk present insights from a research project that draws on a systematic literature review to transfer findings and (international) perspectives from social sciences, political science, and cultural studies into music education. The review examines how music is implicated in the dissemination of right-wing populism and extremist ideologies, and how these phenomena intersect with youth cultural practices and musical experiences. A brief engagement with key concepts - such as populism, right-wing extremism, and democracy (e.g., Mudde, 2020; Mouffe, 2000; Zick et al., 2011; Laclau, 2007) - clarifies the theoretical framework and supports critical reflection on pedagogical implications. Teachers face immense challenges in this context, balancing curricular expectations, personal beliefs, and the political

realities that enter classrooms through music and media. Their perspectives are therefore central to understanding how democratic and critical competencies can be fostered through music education. By situating these questions within an interdisciplinary framework, the paper contributes to a broader discussion on how music education can function as a space for democratic formation, critical awareness, and ethical engagement in times of political polarization. Furthermore, it outlines how this field is planned to be further explored through qualitative-empirical research, highlighting future directions for investigating teacher practices, student experiences, and the pedagogical potential of music in addressing political and ideological phenomena.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Media Policy, Social Change, Other*

Agribusiness, Education, and Culture: Symbolic Strategies and Their Implications for Music Education in Brazil

Mário André Wanderley Oliveira, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil

Abstract

This paper discusses the implications of agribusiness interventions in the cultural and educational spheres for Music Education in Brazil. It examines how this powerful economic sector, beyond its political and financial influence, operates symbolically to shape values, identities, and perceptions of reality. By associating the countryside with progress, modernity, and national pride, agribusiness has occupied cultural and educational spaces, influencing how people—especially youth—perceive rurality, work, and development. The study adopts a qualitative approach based on documentary and bibliographic analysis. Three main axes organize the investigation: (1) music videos and repertoires from the sertanejo subgenre known as *agronejo*; (2) educational initiatives such as Programa Agrinho and De Olho no Material Escolar; and (3) institutional publications from entities like the Brazilian Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock (CNA) and the Brazilian Agribusiness Association (ABAG). These materials were examined through content analysis (Bardin, 2011) to identify recurring themes and strategies that construct a positive and homogeneous image of agribusiness. The literature reveals that agribusiness operates as an economic and cultural force. As noted by Chã (2016), Cordeiro (2022), and Nannini and Marcusso (2021), the sector invests in symbolic persuasion through marketing, cultural sponsorships, and educational projects to sustain its hegemony. The rise of *agronejo* exemplifies this cultural occupation. According to Martins and Teixeira (2023), this subgenre of sertanejo music celebrates agribusiness, linking rural life to prosperity and patriotism while erasing conflicts over land, inequality, and environmental degradation. Songs like “País do Agro” and “A Roça Venceu” glorify machinery and productivity, turning the countryside into a triumphalist spectacle of modernization. In education, initiatives such as Agrinho and De Olho no Material Escolar reinforce agribusiness values by promoting efficiency,

entrepreneurship, and meritocracy while silencing alternative perspectives such as family farming, Indigenous knowledge, and environmental justice. Studies indicate that these programs and campaigns operate as ideological tools, influencing educational content and teacher autonomy. In light of this scenario, Music Education must cultivate critical listening and awareness of how music conveys power and ideology. Understanding music as a social and political construct allows educators to question whose interests and worldviews it serves. By fostering critical reflection, Music Education can contribute to cultural diversity, social justice, and sustainability, reaffirming its role in forming citizens capable of engaging with and transforming their realities.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Social Change*

Future of AI in Music Teacher Education: Integrating or Resisting Large Language Models

Daniel Hellman, Missouri State University, USA

Abstract

Large language models (LLMs) are reshaping how music educators search, write, plan, and reflect. In music education, they are already used for lesson planning, resource curation, assessment design, strategy, research and many other applications (Cheng, 2025; Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024). LLMs rapidly generate options at scale, reformulate text and other media and adapt to constraints in seconds. However, LLMs respond to training data, available resources and the precision, structure and content of language input. This paper/presentation explores the conception of large language models as conditional learning spaces that provide a means for co-constructed, visible and exploratory dialogue for music teachers. I do this to lay the groundwork for a policy analysis. First, I explore the structural and logical limitations of prompt behavior as revealed through research on prompt engineering (Bsharat et al., 2024; Bubeck et al., 2023; OpenAI, 2023, 2025; Sahoo et al., 2025), identifying strategies that enhance reasoning quality and consistency. Prompt behavior is considered from multiple perspectives, including producing desired outputs, questioning assumptions, providing affordances and limiting cognitive capacity, which is then contextualized to intellectual work in music education, i.e., curricular planning, materials developing, administrative work, brainstorming tasks, conceptual planning, etc.). Third, I root a policy problem (Barduch, 2024) in the contradiction that LLMs appear to have considerable potential for accelerating and enhancing music education work (Cheng, 2025); however, this may require overriding natural inclinations and default templates currently being built into technology applications. Additionally, I discuss impacts for human well-being and the environment (US GAO, 2025). Fourth, I develop two alternative visions, one in which LLMs are embedded into music teacher education to enhance teaching and learning and

another in which LLM use in music teacher education is discouraged. Fifth, I draw upon current LLM institutional guidelines (e.g., NAFME, 2025) to examine the discourses that may be meaningful for shaping thinking about these effects for music teacher education. As a whole, the paper seeks to deepen more intentional, equitable, forward-thinking and critical dialogue on large language models as part of music education professional practice.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Media Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Social Change*

Reviewing Revive: A Midway Evaluation of the Implementation of Australia's Cultural Policy

David Forrest, RMIT University, Australia

Abstract

This paper builds on Revive: The place of music and education in the Australian cultural policy presented at the ISME Commission on Policy Seminar in 2024. The question being address in this paper is where are we now three years into the implementation of this policy? What are the markers of success and what remains to be implemented? The initial questions guiding the investigation will be revisited and include Why was this policy developed? What are the links of the cultural policy to education (and in particular music education)? What are the anticipated benefits to the arts sector in Australia?The policy is a five-year plan built around five pillars: 1. First Nations First, 2. A Place for Every Story, 3. Centrality of the Artist, 4. Strong Cultural Infrastructure, 5. Engaging the Audience. This paper presents a content analysis and discussion of the policy through the lens of the arts, music and music education. Consideration is given on its introduction and the preliminary reports, along with reference to previous work undertaken. At this mid-point in its implementation particular attention directed to the cultural policy and its impact of music and arts education. This policy has been implemented in an ever-changing world and offers the opportunity to consider this through political and apolitical lenses.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation*

ROUNDTABLES

Diversifying and Democratizing Music Teacher Education in a Time of Political Unease

Richard Tilley, Nazareth University, USA

Abstract

In a time when music teacher preparation programs are increasingly instituting policies and curricular reforms toward a more diverse teacher workforce and inclusive pedagogies for P-12 music programs (Culp & Salvador 2021; Yi, 2025), many are concurrently confronting challenging political landscapes aimed at diminishing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in P-12 and higher education. Given the underrepresentation of students of color, students with differing abilities, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in secondary school music programs in the United States (Elpus & Abril, 2011, 2019; Knapp, Clauhs & Powell, 2023), many of these policies and curricular reforms are aimed at decreasing barriers and increasing access to participation in music education programs (Culp & Clauhs, 2020) through inclusive pedagogies, including culturally responsive teaching (McKoy & Lind, 2022), anti-racist practices (Hess, 2021; Kendi, 2019), universal design for learning, and trauma-informed education (Salvador & Culp, 2022). Despite these efforts, the underrepresentation of people of color continues to systemically extend into the profile of music teacher licensure candidates, which remains predominately White in the United States (Elpus, 2015). As music teacher educators and institutions of higher education continue to evolve their pre-service music education curricula, academic guidelines, and admissions policies, they are often facing political landscapes and policy mandates that inhibit this work toward more diverse, inclusive, and democratic practices. The purpose of this roundtable is to provide a forum for participants to engage in dialogue about the political influences and policies impacting their ability to diversify and democratize music teacher education from both local and global perspectives. This moderated discussion will provide participants the opportunity to share their own experiences and collectively generate strategies toward more inclusive and accessible music teacher education programs in the current political climate. The session will include questions and prompts focused on the following: 1) The diversity of political and policy landscapes experienced by participants, 2) broader themes impacting P-12 and music teacher education programs globally, and 3) generating strategies for a path forward toward continued diversification and democratization of music teacher education.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Other*

Philanthropy Influencing Public Music Education Policy: A Case Study of Ireland's Music Generation

Patricia Flynn, Dublin City University, Ireland

Abstract

This is a case study of Music Generation, Ireland's publicly funded Performance Music Education. Such a service was resisted by the Government Department of Education since the revisions to the vocational act of 1930 made provision for it. The concerns were financial in seeing such a development as a drain on the public purse in the context of an economically underdeveloped country. They were also structural in the context of a highly centralised government structure focused on the capital city. Assumptions on privilege and access to such cultural capital also coloured thinking at that time. Continued advocacy to put such a service in place was plagued with short-term pilot projects. While a system of publicly accessible music schools were being established in other European countries, Ireland, despite its reputation as a musical country, lagged behind. It was only finally set up on a limited basis in 2010 because of a philanthropic intervention by the Irish Rock band U2 and the US based philanthropic organisation, The Ireland Funds. This gave rise to 11 locally based Music Education Partnerships led by a statutorily funded local organisation. The paper first reviews thinking on the potentially disruptive force of philanthropic intervention into Government policy, before documenting how this particular intervention enabled something that was in fact desired but thought not feasible. Coincidentally this occurred at a time when there was a seismic change in Irish government thinking on the place of the arts, not as a drain on the public purse but an asset in promoting Ireland as a place to live and work, in attracting inward investment and projecting the country as a thriving modern economy where it's people excel in the arts and participate in a thriving creative arts industry. Based on the work already done by Music Generation in making it's case, a new policy emerged which facilitated establishing Music Education Partnerships in all 32 local administrative areas of the country, based on the model established in the original philanthropic funding. This gave rise not to a classically conservatoire oriented system of music schools as in the early 20th century European model, but a locally designed bespoke model in each location, incorporating an array of approaches relevant to multiple music genres, engaging local expertise, events and festivals. The disruptive power of philanthropy was instrumental in a new articulation of arts and cultural policy in Ireland 2040 and the Creative Ireland initiative.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation*

Diversifying the Workforce: Opportunities for Secondary General Music

Carla Aguilar, Metropolitan State University of Denver, USA

Abstract

Both the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education (UNESCO, 2024) and the National Association for Music Education (USA) (Confredo, Abril, & Adderly, 2023) call for the diversification of the teaching workforce. The UNESCO Framework specifically calls to diversify the teaching profession and to ensure “that it embodies the rich cultural diversity within societies, by including living heritage bearers, artists and other cultural professionals” (p. 8). The Blueprint (Confredo, Abril, & Adderly, 2023) references barriers to participating in music, especially at the secondary level, which may be barriers to individuals entering the music teaching profession. One barrier was the narrow focus on traditional ensembles and Western notation of music education (p. 16). General music at the secondary level, especially in high school, may be one way to support diversifying the workforce in the United States. Secondary general music opportunities may provide an entry point to study and engage in music that includes and is not limited to ensemble performance. General music education has limited offerings in secondary schools in the United States (Eplus, 2022). Data indicates that high school music offerings tend to focus on ensemble performance (band and choir at 65%) with a smaller percentage of high schools offering courses in orchestra (18%). While Music Theory (29%) and General Music (27%) are offered at a greater rate than orchestra, these courses are offered at less than 30% of the high schools in the United States. The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to propose that increasing the number of secondary general music opportunities—ways to engage with music that may not be directly tied to ensemble performance—both before and during music degree programs may support in diversifying the workforce in the United States. The goals are to: Identify US state-based policies that influence secondary general music opportunities; Describe current university level curriculum and course work related to secondary general music; Discuss policy-solutions that could increase opportunities for secondary general music, especially in high school and in teacher preparation.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development*

The Influence of Social-Political Transformations on the Curriculum of Estonian Music Schools

Kaisa Johanna Vähi, University of the Arts Helsinki, Estonia

Abstract

Estonia regained its independence from Soviet occupation in 1991, resulting in substantial societal changes that were reflected in various reforms across all aspects of life, including the arts and culture. The formerly state-owned music school system underwent decentralisation, shifting the responsibility for music education to local municipalities and allowing individual schools to design their own curricula. Consequently, the implementation of the latest reform which emphasises students' rounded development rather than the technical mastery-focused aims inherited from the Soviet curricula may vary across schools. This presentation introduces a study that explores the adaption of curricula in Estonian music schools in light of national policy reforms. To begin with, a reflexive thematic analysis was conducted on 126 violin curricula from 76 Estonian music schools, using Self-Determination Theory as a framework to examine how these curricula reflect national guidelines that support students' basic psychological needs--crucial for fostering intrinsic motivation and wellbeing within the realm of violin instruction. The findings from this analysis indicate that the curricula predominantly focus on the enhancement of technical skills designed to prepare students for possible professional careers in music, rather than facilitating their rounded development as individuals. This reveals a gap between the aims of national policies and the goals of music schools. Second, to understand the underlying reasons for this gap and explore opportunities for bridging it, Systems Leadership and Theory of Change were applied in a theoretical analysis of the Estonian music school system as a social system. The insights gained from this phase indicate a deficiency in preparedness among music school leaders and principals regarding policy translation and curriculum design--a challenge similarly reflected in the attitudes of general education teachers in Estonia, which perpetuates the institutions' status quo along with its Soviet legacy, thereby hindering the educational innovation envisioned at the national level. The study suggests that encouraging systems leadership among both principals and teachers in the music school system may promote a more future-oriented curriculum thinking, allowing for the translation of national reforms into local policies. Such a shift could aid in revising the aims and methods of instrumental tuition to be consistent with student-centred principles in general education, thereby supporting students' basic psychological needs and enhancing their wellbeing in music schools.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Policy Development, Policy Implementation, Social Change, Other*

Attempts To Erase Me Does Not Change My Identity: Policy, 2slgbtqia+ Resistance, and Music Education

Beth Tuinstra, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Abstract

Policy directly impacts the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ (two-spirit; lesbian; gay; bisexual/bi; transgender/trans; queer; intersex; asexual/ace; and other sexual and gender identities) people within music education. From in-class practices to national legislation, policies determine who is welcomed in or shut out of music education contexts. When policies fail to affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ people—or even actively excludes them—the result is a learning environment that is fundamentally unsafe for and violent against 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The exclusionary nature of some policies not only negatively impacts 2SLGBTQIA+ students, but 2SLGBTQIA+ educators as well. There are many structures within music education which are implicitly or explicitly exclusionary of 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and these structures are directly tied to the policies that regulate them and operate within them. Many of these policies are heteronormative and cisnormative, attempting to force 2SLGBTQIA+ people to adhere to norms which actively seek to subjugate and erase them. Specific to music education, 2SLGBTQIA+ exclusionary practices can include heteronormative, cisnormative, and patriarchal repertoire and behavioural expectations; gendered language, dress codes, and ensembles; ensemble structures; gendered spaces; censorship and exclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ music; and outright bullying by teachers or fellow students. Exclusionary practices go on to be replicated throughout music education, as these practices are established as “norms” and serve as barriers to 2SLGBTQIA+ people becoming music educators. Music education programs do not operate in isolation, as they exist within larger structures—which include schools, school boards, regional and/or national ministries of education, and regional and national legislation. These larger structures can directly impact the manner in which music education programs operate and the safety of 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Although the policies that negatively impact 2SLGBTQIA+ people are insidious and wide ranging, some examples include the criminalization of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, the withholding of 2SLGBTQIA+ health care, bathroom bans, legislation restricting teachers from acknowledging students’ gender identities without parental consent, 2SLGBTQIA+ exclusionary curricula, and the silencing and punishment of 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming educators. In the face of exclusionary policies within music education, 2SLGBTQIA+ people enact various forms of resistance to those policies. Resistance by 2SLGBTQIA+ people is enacted in a range of ways, but resistance can take the form of public protest, a lack of engagement during music classes, or exiting formal music education altogether. In this presentation, I will analyze various policies that exclude 2SLGBTQIA+ people within music education and the 2SLGBTQIA+ resistance that results from those policies.

Keywords: *Cultural Policy, Education Policy, Social Justice, Other*

Gendered Polarization In A Late Capitalist Democracy: How Does It Relate To Music Education?

Camilla Kvaal, University of Inland Norway, Norway

Abstract

This project takes as point of departure the increasingly gendered voting pattern among young people in Norway, in which young men tend to vote for the far right and young women lean towards the left (Hesstvedt, 2025). Drawing on previous research on gender and music education, as well as theories on late capitalism (Mbembe, 2019; Povinelli, 2021; Reckwitz, 2021), I explore potential implications of this polarization for music education. The intersection between gender and political ideology hints at a wide range of disagreements on issues such as economics, family values, gender roles, immigration, global and environmental concerns as well as art, culture and education. As such, it relates to both local and global concerns. Statistical analyses suggest a gendered achievement gap in Norwegian schools, strengthening a narrative that the educational system is failing boys. At the same time, school wellbeing seems to be gendered in disfavour of girls. In response to the alarming situation, the government has proposed more practical and aesthetic approaches in education. Advocates for music education might view this as an opportunity to strengthen the position of music in schools. However, it begs a further question of gendered norms and expectations, as well as how they are inscribed within a binary matrix. Music education and music education research is entangled in gender related hierarchies that intersect with global issues. With the “Brahmin left” as driving force in contemporary music education research in the Nordic countries (Varkøy & Dyndahl, 2022), pedagogies based on feminist, queer, post-colonial and posthuman theories are gaining momentum. These approaches generally converge in an understanding of the white, heterosexual male as a pivot of persistent unequal power relations, responsible for exploitation of human and non-human worlds. Polarization is often attributed to the far right (accused of denying harmful structures) by the left (focusing on exposing harmful structures). However, constituting one of the poles, the left cannot be extracted from the equation. It is necessary to look at how the whole system works towards division. Addressing systemic polarization may require a shift from demonization of individuals to attending to complex and entangled forces of late capitalism that jeopardise democracy. Foregrounding the case of Norway, I argue that music education and policies must come to terms with the polarizing forces embedded in gendered antagonisms that threaten to perpetuate late capitalist atrocities and injustices at home and on a planetary scale.

Keywords: *Education Policy, Other; Polarization; Gender; Late Capitalism; Music Education*
