Music education research in Australia 2012-14

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Abstract

This report captures the variety of music education research between 2012-2014.

Key words: research events, research topics, BAMER database

Music education research captured in this report covers a range of topics and events such as ISME 2012, ASME 2013 and ANZARME 2014. Hints of the research range are in this short sample: (i) Baker, W. (2013). Questioning assumptions. Vivienne: a case study of e-learning in music education, *AJME* (1) 13-22. (ii) Bartleet, B., Bennett, D., Power, A. and Sunderland, N. (2014) *Enhancing Indigenous Content in arts curricula through service learning with Indigenous communities* Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265510773_Enhancing_Indigenous_content_in_arts_curricula_through_service_learning_with_Indigenous_communities#share (iii) Bennett, D. E. 2014. "Creativity beyond the notes: exploring future lives in music to develop self-concept and salient identity." In P. Burnard (Ed.) *Developing creativities in higher music education*, 234-244. Abingdon and New York: Routledge; (iv) Blom, D., Rowley, J., Bennett, D., Hitchcock, M. and Dunbar-Hall, P. (2014), 'Knowledge sharing : exploring institutional policy and educator practice through eportfolios in music and writing', *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 12, (2) , 138 – 148; (v) Cleaver, D. and Ballantyne, J. (2014) Teachers' views of constructivist theory: a qualitative study illuminating relationships between epistemological understanding and music teaching practice. *International Journal of Music Education*, *32* (2) 228-241; (vi) Forrest, D. & Watson, A. (2012). Music in Essential Learning Frameworks in Australian Schools. *IJME*; (vii) Harrison, S. D. and O'Bryan, J. Eds. (2014)*Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*. Dordrecht: Springer; (viii) K. Hartwig (Ed.) (2014) *Research Methodologies in Music Education*, published by Cambridge Scholars; (ix) Hughes, D., Keith, S., Morrow, G., Evans, M., & Crowdy, D. (2013). What constitutes artist success in the Australian music industries? International Journal of Music Business Research (IJMBR), *2*(2):61-80. Available at http://musicbusinessresearch.wordpress.com/international-journal-of-music-business-research-ijmbr/ (x) Joseph, D. & Southcott, J. (2013). So much more than just the music. Australian pre-service music education teacher attitudes to artists-in-schools. IJME 31, (3) 243-256; (xi) McPherson, G. E., Davidson, J. W., & Faulkner, R. (2012).*Music in our lives: Rethinking musical ability, development and identity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; (xii) Russell-Bowie, D. (2013), Mission impossible or possible mission? Changing confidence and attitudes of primary preservice music education students using Kolb's

Experiential Learning Theory, *AJME*, no 2 , 46 – 63; (xiii) Rowley, J., Dunbar-Hall, P. (2013). Enhancing Music Students' Learning and Pedagogic Understandings through Cultural Exchange. In Claus Nygaard, Nigel Courtney, Paul Bartholomew (Eds.), *Quality Enhancement of University Teaching and Learning*, (pp. 69-86). Faringdon, UK: Libri Publishing. And this list is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive of the researchers included in the sample.

The 2013 printout of citations in the Bibliography of Australian Music Education Research (BAMER) was published on http://australian-music-ed.info/BAMER/BAMER_printout_(11-05-13).pdf. The number of completed research studies on the BAMER database in May 2013 was 567. The MSA Australia and New Zealand Postgraduate Music Thesis Register was last updated in June 2013 and contains 3106 records. These databases are fully searchable resources.

Additions to the BAMER database with a completion date of 2012 or later are listed below:

Effective professional development in music for early childhood teachers

by Lucia Gaye Bainger

PhD thesis, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Victoria, 2012.
Supervisor(s): Assoc Prof Jane Southcott and Dr Peter De Vries

Summary: This study explores the experiences of three early childhood teachers in a year-long music collaboration. The aim of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of how best to provide practical professional development in music by listening to how the participant educators perceived and identified their needs throughout the collaboration. The aim of the collaboration was to increase the participant's music skills and confidence through a collaborative model of professional development, to instigate long-term changes to music teaching practice. In this longitudinal, phenomenological study, the researcher acted as a consultant and mentor to the participant educators, offering materials, suggestions, guidance and expertise. Data was collected through a series of semi-structured formal interviews, regular observations of the participant's working, followed by informal discussions. In addition, each participant kept a reflective journal which contributed to the data. This study does not attempt to generalise, but rather to gain a deep understanding of a small group of teachers in the hope of identifying the essential aspects of an effective collaboration model of professional development in music, finding directions that may prove to be applicable to early childhood teachers as a whole. The study makes practical recommendations for a more systematic and effective implementation of professional development in music to improve the provision of music in early childhood education in Australia. This study found that a collaborative model of professional development, when conducted over a twelve-month period and located in the educator's working context, was efficacious in improving and establishing the participant educators' music skills, understandings and confidence, resulting in sustained improvements in teaching practice. To meet the educator's needs, a music collaboration needs to address eighteen specific understandings, described here as the 'Group of Music Confidences'. The first and key step was to identify and interrogate educators' negative self-beliefs around musicality.

Internet address (if published online): http://arrow.monash.edu.au/hdl/1959.1/574736

"Thrown in the deep end": Informal learning in a primary music classroom

by Flora Benson

BMus(MusEd)(Hons) thesis, Syndey Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, New South Wales, 2012.
Page length: 78 pp.

Summary: In recent years an increasing number of music educators have drawn attention to the dichotomy between in- and out-of-school learning, and studies exploring the range of informal learning outside schools and institutions have resulted in the identification of implications for classroom teaching practice. Green's Informal Learning approach aims to foster student agency by immersing secondary school learners in the informal practices of popular musicians. Conducted as an ethnographic case study, this project explored the implementation of Green's Informal Learning approach in a primary school in the South- West of Sydney. Thirty children aged 10 to 12 years took part in ten researcher-led music lessons which were based on Green's five Informal Learning principles and data were collected through researcher observation, focus group interviews and audio-visual recordings of student activities whilst engaged in the project. Children responded to the pedagogy's inherent learner agency in an enthusiastic manner and all friendship groups were observed to be positively engaged in a range of meaningful music making activities. The data revealed that pedagogy of this nature provides teachers with an opportunity to "connect the contexts" between children's music learning at home and at school. The results of this study support the need for teacher reconsideration of the place of informal learning approaches in primary school music.

Internet address (if published online): http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/8857

Lying on the floor: young peoples' approaches to creativity in the music classroom

by Rosemary Boyle

Summary: In recent times, the importance of fostering creativity in music education has been at the forefront of discussion and writing about music curricula. By asking students to explore their creativity in the music classroom we allow them to investigate their originality and help them to become more expressive, self-assured, and independent individuals. However, adolescents are often inhibited in their quest for self-expression. Although there are studies looking at the processes involved in creative music activities for kindergarten, primary and tertiary students, less attention has been paid to fostering creativity in secondary students. And because the notion of creativity has many interpretations, this study includes a review of literature exploring perceptions of this concept. As my pedagogy is situated in student centered music education, it also traces the growth of this movement.

The aim of the study is to explore the inhibiting factors that impinge on adolescents who are asked to produce creative musical responses. The setting is a unique rural school, with a mixed population of Australian and international students, that offers education leading to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. This action research involves semi-structured interviews, students' reflections on these music activities as well as my participant observations. The analysis of the data is used to review current classroom practices and inform new teaching directions.

Music, Marimbas and Children

by Susan Buchan

Summary: This is a study of the meaning that a group of Year 4 primary school children made of their participation in playing marimbas and "wacky" instruments with Artist-In-Residence,

Jon Madin. The approach to music-making of the Artist-In-Residence is one which is participatory, inclusive and accessible, and which places value on children's active engagement in music-making.

Many children in Australian Government primary schools do not have access to classroom music education programs, and for some children their participation in Artist-In-Residence programs may be one of the few music education experiences in which they can actively participate. It is important to know the meaning that children make of their participation.

Data from the children's participation provides rich insights into the children's experience of music-making and the meaning that they derived from it.

The findings suggest that some of the children derived significant personal meaning from their participation in music-making. The findings also revealed apprehension amongst children from a school situated in an area of low socio-economic status about active involvement in music-making. The meaning that children made of their involvement suggests that in addition to promoting children's participation in making music of high artistic merit for presentation to others, there may be value in promoting approaches to music education which focus more on the processes of participation. Such approaches may be less likely to cause apprehension amongst children and may have benefits for children's development and well-being.

What are the knowledge and skills that new piano teachers need to teach a quality music program successfully in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia?

by Siew Yong Cheah

MEd research project, RMIT University, Victoria, 2012.

Page length: 140 pp.
Supervisor(s): Prof David Forrest

Summary: In Kuala Lumpur, the piano teacher population ranges from unqualified to qualified teachers. They may possess certification from the examining boards in United Kingdom, while others may be qualified holding Music degrees from local or overseas universities. Private piano teachers encounter problems in their daily work and there are many unanswered questions.

The research question that guided the research was: What are the knowledge and skills that new piano teachers need to teach a quality music program successfully in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia? Following this main research question was a secondary question that asked: What might an introductory guidebook for novice teachers look like?

A survey was administered to discover some areas that teachers and students need focus and attention. Face-to face interviews were conducted with experienced piano teachers to obtain deeper insight into piano teaching. The findings from my research indicated there were areas of piano pedagogy that needed addressing.

The aim of this research was to find answers and solutions to guide new beginner teachers start their teaching career, to teach beginner students learn to play the piano appropriately. The main outcome of the research was the development of a guidebook entitled Searching for answers in piano teaching for beginner studio teachers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

This guidebook would be suitable to assist practicing and prospective private piano teachers. It covers an array of issues and problems on teaching. Problems and issues of a generic nature were discussed alongside those specific to instrumental teaching, providing ideas, concepts and viewpoints on various methods and approaches in private piano studio teaching.

The chapters from this introductory guidebook for new graduate piano teachers include the

following topics: studio teaching; importance of building good groundwork by establishing appropriate essentials and avoiding and addressing faults; teacher knowledge and skills; ways to encourage practice; focusing on the significance of sight-reading; developing musicianship skills; the benefits of group learning and pros and cons of music examination.

Internet address (if published online): http://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:160109

An Investigation of Primary Music Education in Victorian Schools: A Single Case Study

by Wei Cosaitis

PhD Faculty of Education, Monash University, Victoria, 2012.
Page length: 317 pp.
Supervisor(s): Assoc Prof Jane Southcott

Summary: This phenomenological research has employed a qualitative case study approach and investigates what practices are required in successful music curriculum development and quality music teaching within and without the music classroom in state-supported (government) primary schools in Victoria, Australia. To contextualize the study, issues involving the history of music education in Victorian government primary schools, current national and state music curricula, particular music teaching approaches of Kodály and Orff, school choral and instrumental instructions, and music advocacy were also discussed at length. The data in the study was obtained through a number of semi-structured interviews with the music specialist in the selected school, several semi-structured interviews with numerous individuals involved in the school's music program, and a series of observations of various music teaching episodes. Research findings of this study suggest that a number of practices are required in the successful operation of a music programs in Victorian primary schools under the current state-supported educational system. It is indicated that a successful music curriculum should be comprehensive, sequential, balanced, literacy-oriented, and enjoyment-based. Findings also recommend that the music teacher devise the curriculum for the purposes of serving students' needs and levels of progression, incorporating the school's culture, taking into consideration the nature of the local community. In terms of implementing teacher efficacy, skills in developing school music advocacy, maintaining quality classroom teaching, and organizing and managing choral and instrumental activities are essential for successful music programs. The research also indicates that an effective school music program requires a specialist who is a highly qualified, experienced music teacher as well as an accomplished musician, and is, hence, a recognizably successful music specialist.

Internet address (if published online): http://arrow.monash.edu.au/hdl/1959.1/734658

Introducing instrumental students to improvisation

by Mark Fairlie Dipnall

MEd thesis, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 2012.
Page length: 74 pp.

Summary: Improvisation has been an integral component of music practice throughout a variety of world musics, such as the Indonesian Gamelan, Japanese Kabuki Theatre, African drumming, Australian Indigenous music, Klezmer music, the Indian Raga, Jazz and Popular music. Instrumental tuition, within the present system of Western Education, on the other hand, tends to emphasise an early and ongoing commitment to the reading of notated music. Some of the literature in the area suggests that the emphasis for instrumental tuition should be concerned with improvisation thus producing opportunities to achieve a more personalised and independent

result with music expression. By including improvisation within regular tuition the student instrumentalist could feel more at one with his or her own voice and imagination, rather than attempting to take on the role of reproducing the character and style of another person's notation.

This thesis focussed on the development and provision of improvised music activities with high school students from Years 10 and 11. Consideration was given to how these improvised music activities might have impacted not only their improvisational skills but also broader attitudes to music. The study included a specifically designed curriculum emphasising improvisational techniques. It was constructed and implemented over a ten-week period with accompanying interviews, questionnaire and video. The aim of the study was to assess the impact of the implementation of this curriculum and how it could assist the learning and teaching of improvisation.

The study's performance-ensemble consisted of rhythm and lead instrumentalists where all participants had the opportunity to engage with specific instrumental techniques that assisted the expression of improvisation.

Simultaneously, all participants had the liberty of managing the lesson-content with original extemporised melody and composition. The results showed the participants experienced increased confidence with improvisation. The conclusion suggests that improvisation be viewed as an integral component within the teaching and learning of instrumental music.

Internet address (if published online): http://dtl.unimelb.edu.au:286407

The inclusion of aural comprehension in the Victorian Certificate of Education music performance study design

by Robert Jacob

Summary: This research is principally concerned with the introduction of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). This curriculum was trialed in 1987 and was fully implemented in 1992. The political and educational context of this change as well as the role of aural comprehension in this music curriculum compared with the dominant Higher School Certificate (HSC) (Group 1) it immediately replaced will also be investigated. An examination of the teaching of aural comprehension skills in the VCE music classroom also forms part of this research. The researcher has had an abiding interest in this area since beginning his career, which has been concurrent with the introduction and development of the VCE. The impact of this curriculum reform on the critical area of aural comprehension has been dramatic and for this reason this research examines the area of aural comprehension from the perspective of what is asked of the students and how teachers currently address this area in the classroom.

In order to examine these matters, a multifaceted research approach is taken utilising a variety of data sources and appropriate data analysis techniques within the context of a multiple case study. The approach employed will be described and placed in a methodological framework.

This approach will provide a detailed picture of the introduction of the VCE Music Performance study design (initially called Music Craft) and the significant differences between this curriculum and the most frequently undertaken music credential immediately prior to this, the Higher School Certificate (HSC) Group 1 subject Music A. The political and educational context of this curriculum change and an examination of current teaching practice with respect to aural comprehension skills in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Unit 3 and 4 Music Performance (Group) and Music Performance (Solo) will also be described and explained.

Internet address (if published online): http://arrow.monash.edu.au/hdl/1959.1/732957

Shared Concerns: Investigating the ways that instrumental teachers learn to teach

by Eleanor A. Mcphee

PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, New South Wales, 2014
Supervisor(s): Associate Professor Diana Blom, Associate Professor Anne Power, Dr Maria Angel

Summary: Instrumental teachers are generally highly trained and skilled performers who are self-taught educators, a situation further complicated in Australia by the lack of mandatory formal studio-teacher accreditation. Research from Australia, and other countries with a similar lack of studio teacher training, suggests that this results in teachers who are focused on transmitting musical skills following a master/apprentice conception of teaching and learning and who teach following the model that they were exposed to with little reflection. The research for this thesis contributes to the debate by seeking information on the processes by which instrumental teachers learn to teach. It also investigates the personal learning networks that teachers build for themselves in order to learn to be effective through auto-didactic means.

The study finds the idea of the isolated instrumental teacher who teaches as he or she was taught to be an oversimplification of the studio-teaching paradigm and as such, investigates the field through the lens of theories of informal learning that are social in origin. These theories include constructivism, lifelong learning, theories of experiential learning and the reflective practices that they incorporate, situated learning and communities of practice and transformative learning. The data was collected through 33 in-depth semi-structured interviews, two asynchronous web forums and a focus group, in order to investigate the ways in which instrumental teachers have learnt to teach from the perspectives of teachers of three stages of experience, novice, experienced and expert.

Findings belied the view suggested by previous research, that a lack of formal teacher training creates a strongly held belief in the effectiveness of teaching following the model of teaching as one was taught. Instead, this theory represented only a starting point for the participants who quickly recognised that effective teaching depends upon a variety of exemplars beyond that initial model and built self-learning strategies that ranged from highly formal and accredited qualifications to informal autodidactic practices.

The study saw three distinct profiles of teacher experience and, in contrast to previous research, saw a student-centred and creative approach taken by both the novice and expert groups with the novice group focusing on creative practices such as composition with an overarching philosophy that learning must be fun whereas the experienced group focused on building efficient and broadly transferable systems to build effective technique. The expert group were the least generalisable however this group's individually distinct approaches were designed to unite both a student-centred and creative approach with a systematic and technique building approach and these two prongs informed a distinctly individual teaching philosophy. The acquisition of expertise for participants at all levels of experience depended on reflecting on heightened experiences that

involved an element of risk serving as a trigger for transformative learning.

Conclusions drawn from the research findings have implications for the studio teaching profession because this research finds that instrumental teachers learn to teach through a spectrum of ways. Indeed, this research categorises those ways on a continuum ranging from several informal approaches to formal courses. Through doing so, this research provides a classification that teachers can reflect upon and build upon in their own practices. The findings on the development of expertise and transformative learning provide a description of a journey built from teacher reflection and experiences rather than solely teacher action. Thus the research in this thesis provides an alternate view of professional development for instrumental teachers.

An investigation into the factors that influence a music teacher's approach to teaching

by Alexandra Felicity Morton

BA(Hons) thesis, University of Canberra, Canberra, 2012.
Page length: 226 pp.
Supervisor(s): Anita Collins

Summary: Why do teachers adopt a particular approach to teaching? In an attempt to explore this question, researchers have investigated teachers' thinking styles, beliefs and personalities and the influence these factors have on an individual's approach. Studies have explored how these elements affect student outcomes in a range of academic fields. Much of this research has been conducted outside of Australia and little research has focused on these elements in the area of secondary music education.

This thesis investigates the factors that influence a music teacher's approach to planning and classroom practice in order to establish which factors are most significant. This research focuses on the influence of thinking styles, apprenticeship of observation, professional knowledge and personal learning preferences. These factors were identified through analysis of previous research. Results revealed a range of factors that teachers view as influential and effective.

This study used a qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews. Four currently practicing secondary music teachers were selected, all having completed their teacher training in the last five years. Participants completed a Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument test to assess their dominant thinking styles. They also engaged in a semi-structured interview during which they were asked to rank the influences of 'apprenticeship of observation', 'university' and 'personal teaching preference' in their planning and classroom practice. The interview data was analysed using text analytics, through the Leximancer Program, and thematic analysis with the use of Framework tables.

The results have implications for universities, teachers and students. While participants ranked university training as being the highest influence, apprenticeship of observation was also seen as a significant factor in a teacher's approach; both school students and university students model their approaches on observed behaviours of their teachers. Teachers were found to adapt to a given situation despite what their thinking style had initially suggested. This finding indicates that a teacher's dominant thinking style does not dictate their approach to planning and classroom practice; instead, an individual's background and given teaching environment moulds his/her approach.

The results also emphasise the importance of face-to-face teaching thus questioning the apparent preference, driven by economic pressures, for online rather than the more traditional face-to-face teaching models at university. It suggests that students model their practices through observing other teachers

and that a lack of direct contact with teachers will limit the knowledge and skills students can observe and iterate. Therefore, online teaching may compromise the ability to deliver effective teaching for student learning.

In addition, the data highlights the need for ongoing professional development for practising teachers. This includes the observation of other teachers' planning and classroom practices, and ongoing professional conversations, as participants all commented positively on the influence of observing others in their current teaching position. The results highlight issues important in teacher education that require further investigation in a larger subsequent study. Improvement of teacher education and professional development courses will better prepare teachers and, by extension, will further benefit student outcomes in the classroom.

Attaining Proximal Simulation in multicultural music education

by Nishantha Rohan Nethsinghe

PhD thesis, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Victoria, 2012.
Page length: 361 pp.
Supervisor(s): Assoc Prof Jane Southcott and Dr Peter De Vries

Summary: The doctoral research study entitled Attaining Proximal Simulation in Multicultural Music Education, enquires authentic multicultural musicking practices including authentic transmission approaches (teaching and learning) and also explores strategies used by Victorian school music programs to engender effective multicultural music education. This study is a continuation of research conducted for my Honours Degree of Bachelor of Education which investigated my own (multicultural) music teaching practice as a community artist in residence. This doctoral thesis is structured in the format of a Thesis by Publication and includes seven journal articles. To conduct a sequence of

research studies that formulated this doctoral research project, a variety of qualitative methods were employed including a mixed method online survey. The academic research articles prepared for this research project are harnessed and joined via a thematic cohesive continuity, methodological connection and a theoretical underpinning that encapsulates the study as a whole. Four major themes emerged as the key phenomenological findings: The importance of multicultural music education; The engagement of artist in residence (to teach multicultural music in schools) as a most effective strategy; Transferring (and recontextualising) multicultural music; and Attaining proximal authenticity in multicultural musicking practices. Contributing to the knowledge, transferrable concepts such as Inter-contextualisation, Intra-contextualisation and Proximal Simulation that can be used beyond the researched field were introduced addressing the identified gaps.

This study confirmed the employment of expert culture bearers/artists in residence as the most effective approach to provide multicultural music education in schools that answered the Australian governmental policy expectations for the formation of future citizens who are tolerant, caring, compassionate and fair.

Internet address (if published online): http://arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/monash:110831?queryType=vitalDismax&query=+nethsinghe

An interdisciplinary appraoch: The potential of the Orff-Schulwerk approach as a pedagogical tool for the effective teaching of Italian to upper primary students in Western Australia

by Annamaria Paolino

PhD thesis, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia, 2012.
Page length: 395 pp.
Supervisor(s): Dr Geoffrey W. Lummis and Dr Geoffrey M. Lowe

Summary: Since the second half of the twentieth century, Italian has been the second language spoken in Western Australia. In the primary school sector, there are over two hundred Italian teachers engaged with primary students. This research examines the extent that music/song is used in primary Italian classes and how they are used. It also explores; the interconnectedness of music/song and langauges; the benefit of music/song in second language acquisition and the benefit of music/song in neurological development. The second part of the research centres on the use of the Orff-Schulwerk approach as an integrated music approach to teaching Italian. The research examines the success of a trialled intervention with a group of upper primary Italian languages teachers, as well as exploring the support that is required to support Italian as a second language specific to upper primary contexts.

What Makes Good Music Programs in Schools? A Study of School Music Across Australia and a Comparison With England and Russia

by Irina E. Petrova

PhD thesis, Faculty of English, Media and Performing Arts, University of New South Wales, New South Wales, 2012.
Supervisor(s): Media and Performing Arts Faculty of English

Summary: This thesis examines the provision of classroom music education in Australia and compares the situation here with those in England and Russia. In order to do this, I examine the National Review of School Music Education (2005) to gain an understanding of the current state of music education in Australia. Secondly, I review the literature published since 1967 that focuses on the state of school music education, teacher training and support in music, to understand how the issue has been dealt with over the years across Australia, in comparison to England and Russia. The empirical part of this thesis investigates further aspects which I believe the Review did not adequately address. For example, 62.74% primary and 33.78% secondary schools across Australia do not offer classroom music at all. In order to investigate in more depth the system in Australia, four major national surveys were prepared and carried out, involving 258 primary and 141 secondary school teachers who taught classroom music, 10 university lecturers from a number of Australian universities that provide pre-service training to primary school teacher trainees, and 12 teacher music advisors and consultants. The surveys identified such important matters as teachers' musical backgrounds, formal qualifications and pedagogical training, and linked these to their perceived confidence in teaching music. It is confirmed that teachers' musical qualifications is the major factor impacting the quality of music programs. Perceptions of pre-service and in-service training and curriculum support were also investigated. Finally, a further inquiry was made into what resources for teaching music are available in each Australian state and territory, and comparisons made across government, Catholic, and independent schools.

Based on the historical and international data and the results of the surveys, suggestions are made which might enhance the delivery of music education.

Principles for designing an effective, post-compulsory Music curriculum suitable for Western Australia

by Andrew Thomas Sutherland

MEd thesis, School of Education, Faculty of Education and Arts, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia, 2012.

Summary: A new post-compulsory Music course known as the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Music course was recently introduced into Year 11 and 12 in Western

Australian (WA) schools. Following a convoluted process of creation, its implementation into classrooms has been problematic. Given criticism levelled at its process of creation and implementation, the researcher questions whether the WACE Music course embodies effective, recognised principles to support the effective teaching and learning of music. This study investigates the principles which should form the basis of an effective, post-compulsory music curriculum, suitable for WA. It involved a literature review which sought to produce a set of principles for teaching and learning frameworks based upon international best practice in music education, and applicable in the unique geographical, historical and multicultural WA context. In addition, the study employed a researcher–designed survey instrument to examine whether Western Australian music teachers perceived these principles to be evident in their practical experiences of the new WACE music course. With the subsequent publishing of a draft Australian National Arts Curriculum, it is an appropriate time to review the principles which should underpin an effective Music curriculum for senior secondary students in the WA context because, without a clear set of guiding principles that are understood by curriculum writers, there is a possibility that following courses could be fundamentally flawed and not serve the best interests of students.

The map is not the territory: reconsidering music improvisation education

by Michael Edmund Wallace

Summary: This paper examines contemporary theory on music improvisation learning and teaching. It highlights how music improvisation education is being reconsidered, and the implications of this reconsideration for academic practice. The aim of the research is to emancipate. In this sense the topic engages critical theory to evaluate literature so as to provide a way forward for music improvisation education. The inductive document analysis undertaken examines a variety of document forms to seek recurring themes and thematic relationships.

This qualitative investigation is framed by ecological systems theory/methodology (Borgo, 2007; Clarke, 2005), which sees knowledge as embodied, situated and distributed. Music education centres on the performance of repertoire, often neglecting the creative processes of improvisation and composition. This study finds the dominant improvisation education methods which stem from jazz as limited in scope. Jazz improvisation education commonly centres on patterns and models and a harmonic imperative (chord–scale theory).

Such approaches do not holistically embrace the immediacy, preparation, embodiment and social interaction of the improvisation process, which ecological systems theory seeks to acknowledge. In a broader setting, the Dalcroze, Kodály and Orff early childhood methods centre on improvisation as play, perhaps reflecting Piaget's concrete operational stage. Subsequent levels of music education, perhaps viewing play as immature, neglect the embodied, situated and distributed elements of ecological improvisation. Paynter and Schafer, through their Cagean prioritisation of critical listening, exhibit some elements of ecological systems thinking. I conclude that the educational methods utilised by free improvisers, such as Stevens, Dove, Dresser and Bennink, engage the learner holistically through embodied, situated and distributed practice. It is recommended that such educational methods, which involve community practice, be introduced into music academies to reflect the ecological nature of improvisation.

English language development in remote Indigenous Australian children: Song making, music software, text production and community

by Nolan Woolley

MEd thesis, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 2012.

Summary: In a remote Australian Homeland Learning Centre for Indigenous children the lone teacher conducted a qualitative investigation of how music authoring software can be used to generate student interest in writing texts for songs.

Working against odds that included limited or no electricity, no internet connection, fluctuating student attendance rates and lack of equipment, the teacher used his own MacBook computer and Garage Band software to encourage students to sing the texts/lyrics they had written and ultimately mix them down with pre-recorded music samples.

This qualitative study presents an ethnographical investigation of the school and its children, and an autoethnographical narrative of the researcher's experiences. In doing so it documents teaching and literacy learning sessions during one school term. Data were collected as samples of written text, my own annotated notes and journal entries, and mp3 files of student songs amongst other items. The study showed two key things:

First, apparently disengaged students can produce meaningful and sustained written text as long as the curriculum is structured around teaching and learning strategies that cultivate student collaboration.

Second, multimedia has the power to promote student engagement, improve attendance and foster a sense of student wellbeing if used in culturally appropriate ways.

Taking a broader view, purposeful, expressive and culturally appropriate writing activities combined with multimodal text production were shown, in this case, to affect a positive change in student attitude and literacy development.