



PROCEEDINGS

Special Music Education and Music Therapy Online Pre-Conference Seminar

Music for All, Music with All: Equity and Diversity in
Special Music Education and Music Therapy

Edited by Kimberly VanWeelden, Matthew Breaden, and Giorgos Tsirir

In collaboration with

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Commissioners 2018-2020

Matthew Breaden, Australia

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About the Commission

Mission Statement

The Commission on Special Music Education and Music Therapy strives to contribute to any field of practice that examines the relationship between music, education, health, and well-being through the promotion of inter-disciplinary dialogue and exchange between practitioners and scholars.

History

The Commission was established in 1974 in order to support and shape the development of special music education and music therapy internationally. Originally named the Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy, and Music Medicine, the Commission formally changed to the current iteration in 2014.

Core Values

The Commission aims to promote the role of music to foster physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being across the lifespan by:

- providing an international forum for the exchange of ideas within special music education, music, therapy, and other related professional fields, and their place within different cultural contexts;
- increasing the visibility of research and best practice within special music education, music therapy and other related professional fields;
- stimulating international research networking and the initiation of international practice and education projects between commission members;
- sharing contemporary technologies, equipment, and methodologies that enhance the musical lives of children and adults requiring special support;
- providing support via networking for music educators, music therapists, and others in related professional fields; and
- informing funders and policy makers and advocating about the role of music for children and adults requiring special support.

Vision

The Commission's vision is to:

- promote understanding of the unique roles and scope of special music education and music therapy in different countries and regions of the world;

- improve professional training and education of practitioners working in special music education and music therapy;
- promote the interdisciplinary exchange of how to best meet the music, education, and health needs of children and adults requiring special support;
- share international perspectives on the current research in special music education, music therapy, and other related professional fields;
- to promote the educational, therapeutic, and health benefits of music across the lifespan;
- nurture musical talent in children and adults requiring special support by sharing international practice, research, and training initiatives;
- promote and advocate for students requiring special support to ensure they are afforded the same quality music education and access to music more generally as that of typically developing students; and
- share international practice, research, and training initiatives around special music education, music therapy, and other related professional fields.

Editorial Note

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The 2020 ISME pre-conference seminar on Special Music Education and Music Therapy took place in July 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Fulfilling the Commission's commitment to foster a forum for dialogue and exchange, while attempting to respond creatively to the challenges posed by the pandemic, we re-designed the seminar to an online event. The seminar included 30 presentations, 23 live question and answer sessions, as well as social and musical events which involved broadcasting 27 pre-recorded music videos. The recordings of some presentations remain freely available online as ongoing educational resources. Overall, there were 134 delegates from 33 countries. Most represented countries included USA (32%), UK (9%), Finland (7%) and Australia (6%). In terms of discipline, most delegates were working in music education (63%), many in music therapy (24%) and some in other related disciplines (13%).

The online format of the seminar was an important contributing factor to both the wider geographical spread of delegates and the overall larger delegate numbers, when compared with previous Commission seminars. Most importantly, the dialogues which took place during the seminar highlighted the value of this coming together of practitioners and scholars to share practice and research, as well as questions, dilemmas, and areas for innovation. This became even more important considering the implications of the pandemic in terms of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of music services for people in different education, health, and care settings.

In addition to COVID-19, our communities have been affected in recent times by diverse natural, social, and political crises, which have urged us to shift our relationships with others, the world around us, and ourselves. We have been challenged to pause and reflect and, in many cases, re-consider – and hopefully improve – our ways of living and relating. In these times of change, the seminar's focus on how music can promote equity and diversity gained additional meanings and perspectives.

Some of the dialogues and topics developed in the seminar are reflected in the proceedings. The keynote address of Tuulikki Laes, which is included more or less in its original presentation format, opens the proceedings bringing to the fore critical considerations regarding disability and the politics of inclusion in music education. Laes' address reflects the spirit of the seminar and is followed by four papers building on the authors' respective presentations. These papers cover an array of topics such as school ensembles for students with special needs in USA and arts provisions for homeless people in Uganda. In line with the Commission's vision, the proceedings reflect the voices of practitioners and scholars from varied areas within and around the fields of special music education and music therapy. They also promote interdisciplinary and cross-cultural exchange regarding music's role in fostering well-being across the lifespan.

Responding to the discussions that took place during the seminar as well as delegates' evaluation feedback, the Commission will work towards the formation of working groups around specific areas, such as assistive technology and policy-making in the field. The Commission will be taking these streams of work forward during the next two years. At this point, we would like to warmly thank our outgoing commissioners: Michelle Hairston (USA) and Wei-Chun Wang (Taiwan) and our outgoing chair Giorgos Tsiris (UK). We also welcome our new Commissioners: Milton Wabyona (Uganda), Emma Lines (Scotland), and Mark Belfast (USA).

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2022 ISME pre-conference seminar in Australia.

Keynote Address

Disability and the Complex Politics of Inclusion in Music Education

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Abstract

In music education, attention to matters of disability often takes place within therapy or special education contexts while in more general contexts students assigned in the category of having special needs are perceived as a problem, demanding more resources, more ideas, and more compromises. In recent educational scholarship and practices, the inclusion principle is increasingly criticized for supporting special education policies and practices rather than actively moving away from student labeling. In this talk, I will examine how and why disability could be (re)considered in music education through the conceptual ideas of performativity, intersectionality, and complexity. In hopes to offer new critical insights, I invite you to discuss and imagine together with me on how to continue challenging and troubling the ‘center’ of music education.

Keywords: disability, inclusion, performativity

Introduction

The discourse of diversity has thus far divided the social world into distinct categories such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, language, and ability. While disability has been rather absent in the early conceptualizations of diversity, in these times where neoliberalism drives understandings of economic, physical, and mental weaknesses as human deficiencies that prevent the construction of a competitive and wealthy society, a broader conceptualization of diversity than the one limited to *multiculturalism* is certainly needed more than ever. Hence, although emphasizing that disability is not the only identity available for people given such a medicalized assignment, I attend to disability as stated by Alice-Ann Darrow, an “often forgotten, dismissed or overlooked as an important part of what we consider to be diversity” (p. 204).

In this talk, I will argue that the stereotypic and stigmatizing views of disability have remained unchallenged in music education. There are only a few examples of independent and empowering teacher/student/musician stories of individuals assigned in the category of disability – examples that are *not* representations of *overcoming narratives*. Overcoming narratives are narratives with the undercover purpose of

communicating to the non-disabled majority a relief of their anxieties about experiencing a similar tragedy of being disabled. In the same vein, the music education field seems to have uncritically adopted the inclusive education agenda without deeper reflections about what it actually might mean. Hence, the disability culture remains located within the special education field without approaching it as a socially and culturally constructed concept and striving to challenge the hegemonies of music education and musicianship. I claim that the dynamics between special education and the new, more radical, and political forms of inclusive education have so far remained under-discussed in music education. As a result, no matter how well-intended, when continuing to divide students into the categories of *normal* and *special*, music education becomes a wider issue of "majority versus minority" – and hence a *political problem* (Bauman, 2012).

In aiming to seek alternatives for the ableist hegemonies that have thus far pervaded music education, I will first discuss disability from a performative aspect in music and music education, extending to the perspectives of music teacher education and teacher professionalism. Then, I will suggest a complex political view on inclusion that may help us envision how and why disability could be (re)considered in music education. Finally, through theorizations of inclusion and intersectional perspectives, I suggest problematizing the conceptual starting points of both inclusion and diversity. I draw from central theorists of inclusive education as well as from my earlier independent and co-authored works with my colleagues Warren Churchill (Churchill & Laes, 2020), Patrick Schmidt (Laes & Schmidt, 2016), and Heidi Westerlund (Laes & Westerlund, 2017).

Performativity

We can start examining the performativity aspect of disability in music education by discussing its connection to performance. In their book *Theorizing Disability in Music* (2006), Lerner and Strauss state that "a disability may remain invisible until it is performed" (p. 9). Koppers (2001) has contemplated the wavering role of the disabled performer on stage on the one hand as *invisible*, and on the other, as *hypervisible*:

The disabled performer is marginalised and invisible—relegated to borderlands, far outside the central area of cultural activity, into the discourse of medicine, therapy and victimhood. At the same time, people with physical impairments are also hypervisible, instantly defined in their physicality, the physically impaired performer has therefore to negotiate two areas of cultural meaning: invisibility as an active member in the public sphere, and hyper visibility and instant categorisation. (p. 25)

Koppers draws attention to the apparent *visible–invisible* paradox of disability. However, I would like to add that disability is often regarded as the *thing* that is performed as such. The "performance" is then often regarded as emerging from the individual who exhibits some form of marked difference. This may lead us to ask *how* is disability performed in music education contexts.

Music education scholars, such as Panos Kanellopoulos (2015), have criticized the *performativity-oriented music education model* that manifests itself through student selection and music criteria that define who is entitled to learn and perform music and what "real" musical agency or musicianship looks and sounds like. Based on my experiences as a teacher educator for music, dance, theatre, and visual art students, the performativity aspect in music is perhaps even more burdensome than in other art forms, and it spills beyond

the educational realms to socially constructed views on musicianship.

Between 2015–2017, I carried out an experiment together with Resonaari that already then had established a training program supporting professional musicianship for its music school students. This program entails that former students of Resonaari study and work as assistant teachers within the music school, as well as outside. We created a collaboration with the University of the Arts where two Resonaari’s musicians worked as visiting teachers in a course for the teacher students. This collaboration opened up new insights into the professionalism that challenged the traditional performativity-oriented perspectives in music education. The encounters between Resonaari’s professional musicians and future music educators at the Sibelius Academy allowed for new, diverse, non-hierarchical expert perspectives and positions, where those who are traditionally relegated to marginalized positions are taking the role of a teacher.

I want to note here, however, that challenging the performative aspect of disability through inclusive partnerships and collaboration between able-bodied and disabled individuals does not happen easily. Through my own experiences and negotiations of the roles, and of the choice and voice, and the spatial and academic demands within inclusive research processes, I have come to a realization that mere *participation* does not equate with inclusion. Bringing a person labeled in the category of disability into higher education context does not solve the broader issues of power and control, nor does it miraculously make the situation or the process of knowledge co-construction more inclusive. Here, complexity steps into the picture.

But before continuing to the questions and dynamics of inclusion in terms of complexity, I would like to share another example with you that has inspired me and many others in the field of music and arts to think about inclusion from an alternative perspective. *Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät* (PKN) is a punk band of four middle-aged men who met each other in Resonaari and later in a culture workshop for disabled individuals. They have released several albums and toured in Europe and North America, and their story has been the basis for two awarded documentary films: *The Punk Syndrome* and *The Punk Voyage*. In 2015, PKN was chosen to represent Finland in the Eurovision Song Contest, and was thrust into the international mass media spotlight. This resulted in widespread and controversial debates in social media, not only about PKN’s musical performance but also about prejudice and the rights of persons with disabilities in society. The phenomenon as a whole unavoidably and forcefully framed shared reflections with regards to who decides who is entitled to be a performing musician and on what premises. Despite the criticism and wonderments of norms, definitions, rights, and limits, PKN simply continued doing what they wanted to do: punk. Later on, members of PKN have expanded their dedication to politics, activism, and visual arts. Today, they are operating a cultural space for outsider art, called *Pertti’s Choice*. Assembled from an art shop, gallery, and a production label, *Pertti’s Choice* is a forerunner as the first social enterprise in Finland entirely founded by disabled people. What makes the PKN an interesting case, is that they do not operate within the field that might have been traditionally assigned to them as disabled individuals. They do not only collaborate with caregiving institutions, disability organizations, or charities. They step straight into the center without apologizing or asking for permission. They collaborate with established institutions such as Eurovision, The Finnish Cultural Institute, international record labels, and a Finnish whiskey brand, to name a few.

Ruth Wright (2014) has illustrated the social production of pedagogical discourse on musical knowledge

where the *thinkable*, thus socially acceptable, becomes a process of transmitting hegemonic values. By contrast, the *unthinkable* remains a subcultural phenomenon that may cause occasional fluctuation in the field of discursive power, as PKN might be seen doing.

Complexity

In my earlier work, I have attempted to turn the discussion in our field from the ‘regimes of truth’ towards a more complex view by stating inclusion as an *impossibility* (Laes (2017)). What I suggest is that instead of asking how is inclusion *possible* within wider contexts than just in those for the ones who are interested in ”special” cases or developing new accessible teaching methods. For example, we should admit inclusion as a paradoxical concept per se and ask, what needs to be *changed* in our current practices and discourses in order to challenge the ”taken for granted” and continuously transform the scripted realities in music education, especially considered for those who are assigned to the category of disability or special needs.

Indeed, if we consider the common ideals of inclusion and diversity through the terms and understandings that the prevailing hegemonic discourses in music education offer us, they certainly seem impossible – or, within the same discursive reality, we could alternatively state that there is no problem whatsoever. This unproblematic view of inclusion suggests that once all people ‘are included’, democracy has been reached and becomes a normal condition of society. Rather than seeing inclusion as a process of bringing those in the margins to the center through allowing and restricting possibilities for participation, we might want to regard inclusion as a *sporadic* process where those who include and are included cannot be separated (Biesta, 2009). In other words, this type of problematizing perspective on inclusion not only allows for, but requires, reciprocal transformation and disagreement of the status quo in individual, social, and political dimensions. Hence, inclusion becomes a political project that does not aim to prove or disprove that all human beings are equal but to see what can be done differently under the current circumstances.

One example of this complexity is that if we reject seeing disabled bodies automatically invisible and powerless, do we then neglect the individual experience of disability and the potential need for care and support. Neither of these options is ‘correct’ or ‘the right way’; still, we more or less unintentionally exercise both views in our thinking and action – and everything in between. Indeed, acknowledging that education always involves the exertion of power makes it a political project, whether the question is about ‘opening up’ or ‘narrowing down’ educational spaces based on the individuals’ assumed disabilities or special needs. Hence, in trying to make sense of the complexity of inclusion as something that may be simultaneously existent and absent, it is crucial to aim to connect individual and shared experiences with political aims, meanings, and actions. With this respect, it is the reconsiderations of the inclusion directions rather than the outcomes that matter. In other words, inclusion must be seen as an ongoing process that cannot be realized through teaching future teachers how to *make* education more inclusive, but to open up spaces for an ongoing political project that does not have a clear, predetermined outcome.

PKN, indeed, has not had a clear, predetermined outcome. Their artistry and personalities have led to uncomfortable, surprising, sometimes unforgettably wonderful, and sometimes unforgettably disastrous

moments. The key is that they have been allowed to fail like anyone else. No attempt has been made to protect or guide them simply because they are disabled.

Envisioning education as a place for experimentation with the possibility of the impossible (Biesta, 2009) points in the direction of making more use of our imagination; beyond the normalized, prescriptive structures of teaching and learning music. With respect to disability, this must be understood as more than just designing new teaching methods that are based on a preconceived notion of what is ‘good’ for the students we consider as special.

Intersectionality

As I stated at the beginning of this talk, disability is still often considered as a single dimension of inequality that is scrutinized distinctively—partly because ‘disability’ per se tends to be more difficult to consolidate than racial, national, or gender-based identities. Not only is *disability* defined differently depending on language and cultural context, but it is also a concept that is given a different kind of subjectivity compared to other forms of diversity. Hence, it is important to consider that *the dynamics of intersectional identities*—including the disabled identity—are fragmented and fluctuating and manifest in individuals’ everyday lives in complex and entangled ways.

Taking into account the dynamics of the intersectionality of different categories of human diversity as hardly separable (Bradley, 2016), demands a much broader understanding of diversity and inclusion from us music educators in current neoliberal times. This entails contextual interrogation of the possibilities, and the restrictions, of gaining meaningful agency and citizenship within (and beyond) music education for everyone in ethical, structural, and political dimensions. There is no need to establish consensus with regards to what ‘real’ musical participation or agency looks like through abandoning or underlining differences. Instead, the constant troubling of power relations, false dichotomies, deficit categorizations, and traditional practices, policies, or politics as well as assuming inclusion as a political action rather than as a limited set of practices and policies, are imperative for reaching beyond the narrow and adverse understandings of disability.

Finally, I want to emphasize that writing or talking *about* the notion of disability from the position of an able-bodied person is not unproblematic. Even making this statement runs the risk of a social distinction between deviant and normative bodies. Nevertheless, to humbly consider myself ‘no more than temporarily able-bodied,’ either, does not take away the stigmatized notion of some bodies as perpetually excluded by dominant ideals and socially constructed understandings of ‘human being.’ Hence, an important question is *where* should we undertake these discussions, and *with*, or *by* whom?

In hopes to contribute to our shared effort of constructing a more socially just and democratic future for music education, I now invite you to imagine together with me: what might inclusion look like in our music educational contexts, considering the complexity of how is disability defined and performed within our dominant views and considerations.

In terms of music classroom practice or music teacher education, practicing this social imagination might require troubling the ableist *center* of music education by becoming more aware of how we might add to a co-

performance of dualistic identities (Churchill & Laes, 2020). As music educators, we have the advantage of drawing upon the positive political potentials of music as a means of forging new options and representations of (co-)performing disability, as the PKN example shows. This might inspire us to more actively resist music education paradigms that focus on teacher and musician performativity. In all of these ways, we might counter making disability invisible and instead engage in a political project of bridging the divide between ‘the center’ and ‘Others’ in music education.

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Papers

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Approaches That Affect Learning and Behavior in Students with Special Needs

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Abstract

This study examined U.S. music teachers' perceptions of inclusion approaches for student learning and behavior. Participants were U.S. K-12 music teachers ($N = 688$) from a large southern state who responded to a survey on their perceptions on the importance of specific inclusion approaches for the learning and behavior of students with special needs. Two additional survey questions asked participants about their special education preparation and Individualized Education Program (IEP) training. Results aligned with findings from prior studies indicating that music teachers are in need of better preparation to teach students with special needs, especially regarding inclusion laws, documents, and behavioral issues.

Keywords: inclusion, special education, disability, behavior, strategies, accommodations

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that school-aged children with disabilities be provided a free and appropriate public-school education (IDEA, 2004). According to the latest report by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (2019), 95% of students with disabilities are educated in regular classrooms and 64% of them remain in general education classes for the majority of the school day. IDEA (2004) also requires that schools are accountable so that children with disabilities are educated by highly qualified teachers. Thus, teachers of all subject areas, including music, are held responsible for helping students meet goals in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) – legally binding documents with academic goals and services for students with disabilities as defined in IDEA (2004). In practice, it has remained difficult for U.S. music teachers to properly implement the most appropriate music education for all learners, and this has been supported by different studies on music teachers' perceptions and attitudes (Darrow, 1999; Jellison & Taylor, 2007; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a; 2014b).

U.S. researchers in music education have examined music teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Darrow, 1999; Darrow & Gfeller, 1991; Jellison & Taylor, 2007). In Darrow's (1999) study, most music teachers felt that inclusion had a positive impact on students with and without disabilities, yet with a few reservations (e.g., students with disabilities get "left behind," students without disabilities resent students who impede lesson progress, etc.). Jellison and Taylor (2007) published a review of literature on music teacher attitudes toward inclusion from 1975 to 2005. One of their conclusions was that the most consistent of studies focused on how contact with individuals with disabilities positively changed music teacher attitudes toward inclusion (e.g., VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005). A study by Darrow and Gfeller (1991), included in the Jellison and Taylor (2007) review, examined music teachers' attitudes toward hearing impaired students in music class. Darrow and Gfeller discovered that appropriate curricula and experience were obstructions to successful inclusion in the schools. In the years following, researchers examined different aspects of preservice music teacher preparation, including music teachers' perceptions of their own training (Darrow, 1999; Gfeller, Darrow, & Hedden, 1990; Hammel, 2001; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a).

For nearly four decades, U.S. music teachers have expressed that they do not feel prepared to teach special learners and subsequent studies have shown only minor improvements regarding music teacher preparation for inclusion (Atterbury, 1986; Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Darrow, 1999; Gfeller et al., 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981; Hammel, 2001; McCord & Watts, 2010; Salvador, 2010; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a). In 1990, Gfeller et al. learned that their participants had had little coursework to teach students with special needs. In 2014, VanWeelden and Whipple conducted a similar investigation to the Gfeller et al. (1990) study. Though there were improved reports of successful student integration, students with certain disabilities were perceived as more difficult to teach than they were 20 years prior. While examining university curricula, Colwell and Thompson (2000) found that out of 171 music education programs, only 30 special education courses were music-content specific. Ten years later, Salvador (2010) discovered that of 109 NASM-accredited universities, 29.6% required a course in teaching music to special learners, 38.9% indicated that a special education course was available, and 59.8% claimed to incorporate special education lessons in other courses. An older study by Gilbert and Asmus (1981) examined music teachers' involvement with disabled students, their knowledge of disability law, and their needs for implementing inclusive music education programs. Like more recent studies (Hammel, 2001; McCord & Watts, 2010), they found that their respondents lacked special education preparation and IEP training.

For many years, music teachers have not felt involved in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process and expressed that they do not feel prepared to understand IEP's (Darrow, 1999; Gfeller et al., 1990; Hammel, 2001; McCord & Watts, 2010). In 2010, McCord and Watts specifically examined music educators' involvement in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and found that only 9% of participants considered themselves competent at understanding IEPs. In 2014, a nation-wide survey study found minimal improvements for music teachers in special education course offerings, professional development opportunities, and involvement in IEP processes (VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014b). Hammel (2001) shared how her participants lacked special education preparation and IEP training, and additionally, they felt underprepared to deal with behavioral management issues. Behavioral management is important for any classroom setting,

especially if it includes students with disabilities. (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Hourigan, 2007; Salvador, 2010; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005).

Though several studies have looked at issues of student behavior in music education (Brendell, 1996; Forsythe, 1977; Jellison, 2002; Yarbrough & Price, 1980), one article has specifically observed behavior issues in music students with disabilities (Draper, 2017). Beginning with Forsythe's 1977 study on elementary student attending behavior as a function of music class activities, researchers have examined various aspects of music classrooms that impact students' on- and off-task behaviors (Brendell, 1996; Forsythe, 1977; Yarbrough & Price, 1980). In 2002, Jellison assessed on-task behaviors of non-disabled students in inclusive settings. She found that on-task behavior was highest for non-disabled children when they were away from children with disabilities and that the type of disability impacted on-task participation. In 2017, Draper observed the behaviors of students with disabilities based on the objectives outlined in their IEPs. In her conclusion, Draper (2017) stressed the need for studies and comprehensive measures pertaining to behaviors of music students with disabilities.

The purpose of this study was to examine practicing music teachers' perceptions of inclusion approaches that impact both learning and behavior for students with special needs, including laws and legal documents. Specific research questions included:

1. What training and experiences have inservice music teachers had regarding special education and IEPs?
2. To what degree do inservice music teachers feel inclusion approaches are important for students with disabilities' learning?
3. To what degree do inservice music teachers feel inclusion approaches are important for students with disabilities' behavior?

Method

Participants

Participants were practicing music teachers in K-12 public schools within a large southern state. Music teachers ($N = 3501$) of all specialties (elementary/general, secondary/general, orchestra, band, choir, guitar, keyboard, and "other") were asked to participate through an email invitation with a link to a survey and there were no stipulations to participate. E-mail addresses for all music teachers were obtained through the state's department of education. While 934 started the survey, only 688 participants completed the full survey. This resulted in a 20% response rate.

Survey Instrument

The dependent measure was a survey created by the researcher. This instrument was designed to examine music teacher perceptions of approaches for both the learning and behavior of students with disabilities. The final version of the survey contained two demographic questions and two main sections with

items. Demographic questions asked if participants had any special education training and IEP training. If participants answered “yes” to either or both questions, a follow-up prompt asked them to please explain their experience in a short answer. The survey contained two main sections – Items for Learning and Items for Behavior – which contained the same 40 items divided within the same six categories: Learning Format, Instruction Features, Individualized Adaptations, Tools and Aids, Laws, and Contracts and Documents. Instructions asked participants to rate the individual items on a six-point Likert-type scale – “Not at All Important” to “Extremely Important.” No numbers were associated with Likert-type points and the endpoint descriptions – “Not at all Important” and “Extremely Important” – were provided for the endpoints of the scale.

Ideas for survey items came from the literature and the researcher’s experience. In the first overarching category, Learning Formats, items stem from Adamek and Darrow (2018) and Jellison et al. (1984). Items in the Lesson Features and Individualized Adaptations categories came primarily from Adamek and Darrow (2018) and Whipple and VanWeelden (2012). In the Tools and Aids category, items were found in Darrow (1999) and McCord and Watts (2010). The researcher thought of items in both the Laws and Contracts and Documents categories, and Draper (2017) inspired the idea to evaluate items for both student learning and student behavior.

Procedure

The survey was administered in electronic form using Qualtrics. All K-12 music teachers received an e-mail invitation to participate in the survey with a link to the survey at the bottom. The e-mail invitation gave a brief description of the study. After clicking the survey link, participants were presented with a cover page to the survey, which gave more information about the survey – its purpose, general structure, and approximate duration. Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and that they could stop taking the survey at any time with penalty. According to the duration report, the average completion time for the survey was 10 minutes.

Validity

Three professionals in music education agreed to serve on a content validity panel – two published researchers in the field of music education and one graduate student with experience in special music education. Per their suggestions, the survey was reworded and reformatted. It took them approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey and these data were not used in this study.

Results

All K-12 public school music teachers ($N = 3501$) within a large southern state were invited to participate in a survey on their perceptions of learning and behavioral approaches for teaching students with special needs. Of all invited music teachers, 688 completed the full survey making the return rate 20%. The data from these 688 participants were used for further analysis.

What special education training and experience have inservice music teachers had regarding special education and IEPs?

Of the 688 respondents, 392 music teachers (57%) indicated they had some type of special education training and specified their answers in a short answer response (see Table 1). Of the teachers who received special education training, 276 (70%) were trained outside of college and 43 (11%) received training in a college music education program. Regarding training for IEP's, 342 respondents (50%) said they had received some kind of preparation to read and understand these documents (see Table 1). Of those who received IEP training, 250 (73%) were trained outside of college and 11 (3%) received training in a college music education program. Participant answers were organized into different categories and some participants mentioned more than one training location, which is why the percentage does not sum to 100.

Different categories were formed based on participants' short answers. "Out of College" training included professional development opportunities (due to state requirements), work experience (both in and outside of music education), and personal experience (by working with family and friends with disabilities). Training through "College Music Education Programs" included specified answers mentioning coursework and/or field work experiences. "Different Career Training" refers to special education training toward a different career, which was most often music therapy. "College Unspecified" indicates responses that mentioned a "college course" but did not specify if it was through a music education program, and "College Not Mentioned" refers to answers that didn't indicate if training was in or outside of college.

Table 1

Sums and Percentages for Special Education and IEP Training

Training Location	Special Education Training (<i>n</i> = 392)		IEP Training (<i>n</i> = 342)	
	Σ	%	Σ	%
Out of College	276	70	256	75
Professional Development/Certification	275	70	256	75
Work Experience	21	5	13	4
Personal Experience	7	2	3	1
In College Music Education Programs	43	11	11	3
Courses	37	9	8	2
Field Work	9	2	0	0
Different Career Training	44	11	9	3
College Unspecified	68	17	20	6
College Not Mentioned	44	11	61	18

Note. Participants could mention more than one training location.

To what degree do inservice music teachers feel inclusion approaches are important for students with disabilities’ learning?

Means and standard deviations were calculated to gauge participants’ perceptions on the importance of inclusion approaches for student learning – first for the six categories and then for individual items. Of the categories impacting student learning (see Table 2), Contracts and Documents ($M = 5.34, SD = 1.01$) had the highest mean score followed by Laws ($M = 5.26, SD = 1.10$), and Learning Formats ($M = 4.90, SD = 1.17$) had the lowest mean score. Looking at individual items for the Learning Formats category (see Table 3), Individualized Instruction ($M = 5.34, SD = 0.95$) was rated of the highest importance, while Group Work ($M = 4.62, SD = 1.21$) was least important. From the Lesson Features category, Structured Environment ($M = 5.68, SD = 0.67$) had the highest mean score and Color Coding ($M = 4.41, SD = 1.29$) was scored lowest. Of the Individualized Adaptations category, Modifications for Physical Limitations was rated most important ($M = 05.65, SD = 0.68$) and Frequent Non-Verbal Reinforcement ($M = 4.70, SD = 1.28$) had the lowest mean score. For Tools and Aids, Consultation with Special Education Teacher(s) ($M = 5.44, SD = 0.93$) had the highest mean score for student learning, while Assistive Technology ($M = 4.96, SD = 1.12$) was considered least important. All items under Laws had mean scores over 5.00, with IDEA ($M = 5.37, SD = 1.02$) scoring highest and Section 504 ($M = 5.18, SD = 1.12$) scoring lowest. Everything under Contracts and Documents also received mean scores over 5.00 – the IEP ($M = 5.49, SD = 0.86$) had the highest mean score and the Behavior Contract ($M = 5.10, SD = 1.13$) had the lowest mean score for impacting the learning of students with disabilities.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Overarching Categories

	Learning		Behavior	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Learning Formats	4.90	1.17	5.01	1.13
Lesson Features	5.22	1.03	5.26	1.06
Individualized Adaptations	5.21	1.02	5.26	1.04
Tools and Aids	5.22	1.04	5.20	1.13
Laws	5.26	1.10	4.90	1.47
Contracts and Documents	5.34	1.01	5.32	1.10

To what degree do inservice music teachers feel inclusion approaches are important for students with disabilities’ behavior?

Means and standard deviations were also calculated to gauge participants’ perceptions on the importance of inclusion approaches for student behavior – first for the six categories and then for individual items. Of the

categories (see Table 2), Contracts and Documents ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.10$) had the highest mean score once again and Laws ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.47$) had the lowest mean score. Lesson Features ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.06$) and Individualized Adaptations ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.04$) tied with the second highest mean score. Looking at individual items from the Learning Formats category (see Table 3), Individualized Instruction was again rated highest ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 0.93$) and Group Work ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.19$) was again rated lowest. Regarding the Lesson Features category, Structured Environment ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 0.64$) was again considered most important for student behavior, while Color-Coding ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.41$) was again considered least important. All items under the Individualized Adaptations category received a mean score above 5.00 – Frequent Verbal Reinforcement ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 0.88$) was rated highest and Frequent Non-Verbal Reinforcement ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.21$) was again lowest. For Tools and Aids, Consultation with Special Education Teacher(s) ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 0.98$) was again rated the most important and Assistive Technology ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.24$) was again rated least important. All items under Laws now received scores under 5.00 with IDEA ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.45$) scoring highest again, and Section 504 ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.47$) and FERPA ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.49$) tying with the lowest mean score. Everything under the Contracts and Documents category again received scores over 5.00, the BIP ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.01$) rated highest and the 504 Plan ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.14$) was again rated lowest for its impact on the behaviors of students with special needs

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Individual Items

	Learning		Behavior	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Learning Formats				
Individualized Instruction	5.34	0.95	5.35	0.93
Peer Partners	4.96	1.03	5.09	1.02
Group Work	4.62	1.21	4.78	1.19
Whole-Class Instruction	4.66	1.31	4.80	1.25
Lesson Features				
Pacing	5.45	0.88	5.49	0.88
Structured Environment	5.68	0.67	5.73	0.64
Predictable Routines	5.61	0.71	5.69	0.65
Step-by-Step Instruction	5.55	0.74	5.53	0.79
Prepare Classmates for Inclusion	5.10	1.08	5.15	1.07
Focus on Student Strengths	5.34	0.89	5.43	0.85
Modeling	5.62	0.67	5.48	0.86
Echoing	5.21	0.96	5.11	1.11
Color-Coding	4.41	1.29	4.42	1.41

Table 3 - continued

Means and Standard Deviations for Individual Items

	Learning		Behavior	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Choice-Making Opportunities	4.87	1.09	4.97	1.18
Sensory Integration	5.03	1.05	5.03	1.11
Variety of Hands-On Experiences	5.36	0.90	5.33	0.95
Reward System	4.73	1.25	4.99	1.24
Individualized Adaptations				
Adapting Objectives/Goals	5.33	0.93	5.27	1.01
Modifications for Physical Limitations	5.65	0.68	5.44	0.92
Extra Time to Complete Tasks	5.26	0.91	5.15	1.09
Individualized Assessment	5.16	1.02	5.07	1.18
Preferential Seating	5.03	1.12	5.30	1.00
Additional Cues/Prompts	5.22	0.93	5.32	0.91
Frequent Verbal Reinforcement	5.35	0.87	5.47	0.88
Frequent Non-Verbal Reinforcement	4.70	1.28	5.05	1.21
Tools and Aids				
Use of Paraprofessionals	5.19	1.15	5.34	1.08
Assistive Technology	4.96	1.12	4.89	1.24
Visual Aids	5.36	0.87	5.13	1.15
Modified Instruments and Tools	5.14	1.07	5.00	1.22
Consultation with Special Educator	5.44	0.93	5.47	0.98
Consultation with General Educator	5.13	1.07	5.21	1.20
Consultation with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)	5.29	0.98	5.37	1.02
Laws				
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	5.37	1.02	4.96	1.45
Rehabilitation Act, Section 504 (Section 504)	5.18	1.12	4.86	1.47
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	5.30	1.10	4.91	1.46
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	5.19	1.14	4.86	1.49
Contracts and Documents				
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	5.49	0.86	5.31	1.09
504 Plan	5.38	0.97	5.23	1.14
Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)	5.38	1.00	5.45	1.01
Behavior Contract	5.10	1.13	5.31	1.13

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine inservice music teachers' perceptions of inclusion approaches that impact both learning and behavior for students with special needs. The results revealed that the majority of practicing teachers received their special education preparation and IEP training outside of their preservice experiences in music education programs. In terms of inclusion approaches, overall, inservice teachers considered laws, contracts and documents to have the highest importance for both the learning and behavior of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Approximately half of participants claimed to have some sort of special education preparation and IEP training. Specifically, 57% of participants had some kind of special education training while 50% claimed to have IEP training. However, the vast majority of this training occurred outside of a college music education program, primarily through professional development opportunities. This mirrors findings in previous studies (Gfeller et al., 1990, Hammel, 2001; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a) and begs questions of teachers' perspectives on specific inclusion approaches.

For overarching categories of inclusion approaches, participants responded similarly for the highest rated category but not the lowest rated for student learning and behavior. Contracts and Documents had the highest mean score for both student learning and student behavior. This might be because of the purpose behind contracts and documents and their legal implications. For student learning, Learning Formats was rated lowest for importance, perhaps because their effects are not as observable as with other categories. This could also be because of lack of understanding of how different learning formats affect the learning of students with special needs. Regarding categories for student behavior, Laws had the lowest mean score (which was the second highest mean score for student learning), perhaps because laws are perceived as having a greater impact on student learning than student behavior. These overarching scores are better understood when examining scores for individual inclusion items.

Participants' gave their perspectives on the importance of specific inclusion items on the learning of students with disabilities. For the Learning Formats category, Individualized Instruction may have had the highest mean score because of the one-to-one interaction with students, allowing teachers to focus attention on students' individual needs. Group Work may have had the lowest mean score because group work may not be a format that some music teachers use in their classes. Looking at the Lesson Features category, Structured Environment might have been scored highest because teachers may have learned about the importance of structure for certain disabilities. Color Coding may have been scored lowest because music teachers may not want to write in music, especially original copies. For the Individualized Adaptations category, Modifications for Physical Limitations may have the highest mean score because of the stigma of "disability." Frequent Non-Verbal Reinforcement may have the lowest score because some children with disabilities have difficulties with non-verbal communication, making teachers feel they need to talk to communicate messages to students with special needs. Looking at the Tools and Aids category, Communication with the Special Education Teacher(s) might have had the highest mean score because special education teachers are the school experts in working with children with disabilities. Assistive Technology may have been the lowest score because of its limited (but

growing) use in music classroom classrooms (McCord & Watts, 2010). Looking at Laws, IDEA had the highest mean score, perhaps because of its familiarity and frequent mention in schools. Section 504 may have been scored lowest because of teachers' unfamiliarity with the law. In the Contracts and Documents category, IEP may have had the highest score because of its frequent mention in schools (similar to its associated law – IDEA). Behavior Contract might have been scored lowest since it relates directly to student behavior.

Participants gave similar responses for items on students' behavior as items for student learning, with few differences. With the exception of two categories – Individualized Adaptations and Contracts and Documents – all categories had the same highest- and lowest-scored items for student behavior as for student learning. For the Individualized Adaptations category, Frequent Verbal Reinforcement had the highest mean score (compared to Modifications for Physical Limitations) on its importance for behavior in students with disabilities. This might be because of the traditional teacher role and behavior where the teacher works communicates primarily through talking. The lowest mean score was, again, Frequent Non-Verbal Reinforcement. For the Contracts and Documents category, the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) received the highest mean score (compared to the IEP) on its importance for student behavior. This may be because of its legal connection (similar to the IEP). The lowest mean score was, again, the 504 plan.

Limitations

The findings and interpretations of this study need to be considered in light of several limitations. First are the short answer options. The first issue with short answers is that only participants who answered “yes” to training could provide (at least one) short answer specification. This resulted in multiple answers to a set number of responses, complicating the summary of conclusions. Also, allowing participants to provide original responses led to a variety of answers that were difficult to sort with accuracy. Another limitation is the survey format. Asking respondents to “rate the importance of” inclusion items on a Likert-type scale led to a restriction of scores that inhibited further analyses. Terminology was another limitation. Clarification of some words, such as “paraprofessional” might be helpful to participants, or even using the term “aids” instead. Also, the terms “modification” and “accommodation” were in the survey and their distinct meanings should have been clarified. Having such a broad scope was an issue in this study and having a narrower focus would simplify and clarify analyses and results.

Conclusion

Results from this study provide new information on music teacher training to teach learners with disabilities. Participants' answers on their special education preparation and IEP training relate to past study results (Gilbert & Asmus, 2001; Gfeller et al., 1990; Salvador, 2010; McCord & Watts, 2010; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014a) and raise several questions: (1) Are enough workshops offered at staff development sessions to provide music teachers with specific information to work with their students with disabilities? (2) Are there clinicians available to provide music teachers with music content-specific training to meet special education needs in music settings? (3) Why aren't music teachers receiving more of this training in music education programs and how can this be remedied? These questions have yet to be answered, therefore, researchers may

want to further investigate them in future studies.

This study covered several topics that could be assessed separately. First, is the need for studies that relate to behavior of students with disabilities in music settings. As mentioned by Draper (2007), music education is in need of more comprehensive measures of student behaviors in inclusive music settings. Research is needed on U.S. laws and documents – their impact on music education and music teachers’ familiarity with them. Lastly, future research is needed regarding special education training for music teachers that is music content-specific (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Salvador, 2010). Even replications of past studies might be helpful to see where we stand today. Further investigations of this nature might help to move the field toward a better understanding and use of inclusion approaches in music education.

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An Investigation of Secondary School Ensembles for Students with Special Needs: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Through the current study, the researchers sought to investigate the nature of ensembles for students with special needs, with particular regard to preparation for working with students with special needs, as well as details related to curriculum development and ensemble characteristics. The dependent measure for this study was a survey created by the researchers which was emailed to secondary music teachers in one state and posted on various state in the U.S., as well as national music educator social media forums. The participants ($N = 21$) for this study were secondary music teachers from the United States who taught at least one ensemble dedicated to students with special needs. Results revealed varying levels of undergraduate preparation for teaching students with special needs, as well as various approaches to ensemble development and curriculum implementation. Ensembles ranged in size from one to over 30 members with various types of instrumentation; however, the use of percussive instruments appeared to be common in the special needs music setting. Surveyed participants had many different performance schedules, meeting times, and funding sources. Some of these ensemble classes had paraprofessionals or peer mentors in the classroom, whereas others did not. While a larger sample size is needed to determine trends on the current topic, perhaps the small number of participants suggests that not many of these ensembles exist for students with special needs.

Keywords: children with disabilities, ensemble classes, inclusion, special learners in music, students with special needs

Introduction

Students with disabilities were not always represented equally within the American public school system (Dray, 2009; Yell et al., 1998). However, with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975, students with identified disabilities in the U.S. were guaranteed a free and appropriate public education through the school district in which they lived (Public Law [PL] 94-142). In addition, the law required that each student with a disability have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in order to meet certain educational and social benchmarks (US Department of Education [DOE], 2010).

In 1990, the EAHCA became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This piece of legislation has been revised several times, with continued efforts to increase the quality of instruction for students with special needs, as well as provide suitable IEPs and maintain access to the least restrictive learning environment possible (DOE, 2010). In an attempt to educate students with special needs in the least restrictive learning environment, there has been an increased emphasis on inclusion, which refers to the incorporation of students with special needs into the mainstream classroom to the fullest extent possible (Adamek & Darrow, 2018). In a fully inclusive environment, students with varying abilities are educated by teachers who adjust and modify instruction based on the individual needs of students (Darrow, 1999).

Since the passage of EAHCA—and subsequently IDEA—music educators have made many attempts to mainstream students with special needs into their classrooms and researchers have documented this process (Atterbury, 1986; Atterbury, 1998; Darrow, 1990; Darrow, 1999; Darrow, 2003; Darrow & Gfeller, 1991; Gfeller et al., 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981; Jones, 2015; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). Although mainstreaming and inclusion in the music classroom is both encouraged and expected, preparation for teaching exceptional learners has been mixed over the years. Historically, undergraduate programs have not been required to provide instruction related to teaching special learners (National Association of Schools of Music, 2003). In the past, lack of training at the undergraduate level has subsequently led to feelings of unpreparedness in teachers (Atterbury, 1986; Frisque et al., 1994; Gfeller et al., 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981; Sideridis & Chandler, 1995). As a result, many institutions now offer music education degrees that require coursework and field experiences to prepare pre-service teachers to work with special learners (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Heller, 1994; Schmidt, 1989; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2007a).

The additional preparation has contributed to (1) the increased ability to make modifications and adaptations to curricula for students with special needs (Davila, 2013; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012), (2) a better understanding of special needs terminology (Brown et al., 2008), (3) increased accuracy when assessing students (VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005b, 2007b), and (4) increased confidence in educators with regard to instructing students with special needs (Gfeller & Darrow, 1987; Hourigan, 2009; Johnson & Darrow, 1997; Smith & Wilson, 1999; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005a, 2005b; Wilson & McCrary, 1996). Researchers have found that providing additional cues (Adamek & Darrow, 2018; Cassidy, 1990; Hughes & Rice, 2006), giving reinforcement frequently (Cassidy, 1990; Hughes & Rice, 2006), and allowing extra response time (Cassidy, 1990) are effective strategies to use when working with students with special needs. Additionally, utilizing differentiated instruction and a universal design for learning have been found to be useful when working with

special learners (Darrow, 2015; Sáenz et al., 2005). When developing a curriculum for special learners, a variety of hands-on experiences should be used (Adamek & Darrow, 2018; Hughes & Rice, 2006) and goals, assessment, and difficulty level should be adapted (Adamek, 2001; Adamek & Darrow, 2018; Hughes & Rice, 2006; Mazur, 2004, VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005b, 2007b).

In music, curriculum can also be made more effective for special learners by adapting musical instruments (Abramo, 2012), using step-by-step sequences (Cassidy, 1990) with easy instructions (Hughes & Rice, 2006), having a structured environment with predictable routines (Cassidy, 1990; Mazur, 2004), planning activities that include both fine and gross motor skills (Cassidy, 1990; Mazur, 2004), having students with special needs play an active role in the classroom (Adamek, 2001; Cassidy, 1990), and incorporating peer mentoring (Jellison et al., 2017; VanWeelden et al., 2017). Lapka (2006) stated, “Students with disabilities can be fully integrated into the ensemble when band directors and special education teachers collaborate” (p. 54). Although there is abundant research on the different types of modifications, adaptations, and effective teaching strategies that can be made in the music classroom, little research has been conducted with regard to actual secondary ensembles that exist for students with special needs.

Recently, music teachers have worked to better accommodate students with special needs. Although many music teachers accommodate the needs of students with special needs within the framework of pre-existing ensembles, some have created ensembles specifically dedicated for this student population. In many parts of the country, music teachers have partnered with organizations such as United Sound in order to develop musical programs for students with special needs (United Sound, 2016). However, many music teachers have worked to create ensembles for students with special needs without the help of outside organizations; there is currently no research which describes the curriculum development and implementation for these kinds of ensembles. Through the current study, we sought to investigate the nature of ensembles for students with special needs, with particular regard to preparation for working with students with special needs, as well as details related to curriculum development and ensemble characteristics. The research questions for the current study were as follows:

1. What was the nature of musical ensembles for students with special needs (i.e., meeting time, class size, instrumentation, performances)?
2. What type of pre-service and in-service training, if any, did music teachers receive with regard to the instruction of students with special needs?
3. What type of curricular materials were used in these ensembles and how were they developed?
4. What type of support did teachers receive in the form of paraprofessional and peer mentoring?

Method

Dependent Measure

The data collection instrument for the current study was a researcher designed questionnaire. The initial draft of the questionnaire was pilot tested with a group of secondary music educators ($N = 13$). Modifications were made to the survey instrument based on the results from the pilot study, such as the refinement of

demographic questions and consolidation of list items based on emergent themes from participant responses. In addition, the survey was reviewed by a music education faculty member—who has published research in the field of music and special education—and was judged to be valid for its intended use.

The questionnaire was administered through the Qualtrics Survey Software and contained five sections. Before beginning the survey, participants were informed of the purpose of the study, as well as the voluntary and confidential nature of participation. The first section of the questionnaire (following the introductory content) was designed to gather demographic information about the participants such their primary *grade level* of instruction, primary *area* of instruction, years of teaching experience, and state of residence. In the second section of the survey, we asked participants whether they had any *general* and/or *music specific* training during their undergraduate preparation to teach students with special needs. Participants were also asked whether or not they attended in-service professional development sessions on the topic. The third section asked participants to answer a series of questions related to the nature and design of their ensembles (i.e., use of instruments versus vocals, types of instruments and instructional materials used, how materials were acquired, how materials were financed, frequency and time of rehearsals, ensemble size). In the fourth section, participants could answer whether they had the support of paraprofessionals and/or peer mentors in their ensembles, and if so, how many. For the purpose of this study, peer mentors referred to typically developing students who served as aids in the music classes for students with special needs. In the fifth and final section of the survey, participants who indicated that they had public performances with their ensembles were asked to describe the nature of these performances in free response form. It is important to note that the current study was not designed to investigate the practice of *mainstreaming* students with special needs into pre-existing ensembles, and should therefore not be used as an indicator of the overall level of inclusion in music classrooms across the country.

Participants and Procedures

After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval for the current study, the researchers used a purposive sampling method to obtain participants for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because of our history working in the state of Florida, the researchers first emailed a link to the survey to all secondary music teachers within that state. The survey was distributed to these potential participants ($N = 776$) through an anonymous Qualtrics survey link via email addresses obtained from school websites. Reminder emails were sent out after two weeks to obtain maximum participation. In addition to emailing teachers within the state of Florida, the researchers posted a link to the survey on national social media pages designed for music educators (e.g., Band Directors, School Orchestra and String Teachers). A reminder was also posted to these social media sites after two weeks. Data were collected for a total of three weeks.

The participants ($N = 21$) for this study were secondary music teachers from the United States who taught at least one ensemble dedicated to students with special needs. Demographic data indicated participants' teaching level (middle school, $n = 11$; high school, $n = 7$; both, $n = 3$), primary area of instruction (band, $n = 11$; choir, $n = 9$; general music, $n = 3$; orchestra, $n = 2$; other, $n = 4$), years of teaching experience (1-5 years, $n = 5$; 6-10 years, $n = 9$; 16-20 years, $n = 3$; 20+ years, $n = 4$), and state of residence (Florida, $n = 14$; Georgia, $n = 1$; Indiana, $n = 2$; Maryland, $n = 1$; Ohio, $n = 1$; Virginia, $n = 1$; Washington, $n = 1$). Participants could 'select all

that apply' when indicating their area of instruction, resulting in sums that do not match the sample size.

Results

Nature of Ensembles

Ensemble classes for students with special needs in this study ($N = 21$) met primarily in a dedicated class period during the school day ($n = 19$ or 90%) with a few exceptions where ensembles met during lunch $n = 2$ or (9%). Ensembles ranged in size from 1-10 students ($n = 10$ or 47%), 11-20 students ($n = 6$ or 28%), 21-30 students ($n = 3$ or 14%), and 30 or more students ($n = 2$ or 9%). The instrumentation of these ensembles also varied with some using only instruments ($n = 9$ or 42%), some utilizing a combination of instruments and voice ($n = 8$ or 38%), others using only voice ($n = 2$ or 9%), and a few using other methods of performance ($n = 2$ or 9%), such as dancing or moving to the music. When participants were asked to indicate all the types of instruments they used, almost all of the groups used some form of non-pitched percussion ($n = 16$). Pitched percussion instruments ($n = 13$), piano/keyboard ($n = 10$), guitar/ukulele ($n = 7$), technology based instruments ($n = 7$), wind instruments ($n = 4$), recorder ($n = 3$), and marching percussion ($n = 2$) were also used by some ensembles. Many of these ensembles gave performances throughout the year ($n = 13$ or 62%), though some groups choose not to perform ($n = 8$ or 38%). When describing the nature of these performances, most groups performed for parents, peers, and other teachers as a stand-alone ensemble. However, other ensembles for students with special needs performed with other established ensembles (e.g., band, choir, orchestra) at their concerts.

Teacher Training

Participants in this study had varying degrees of training with regard to teaching students with special needs. For the purpose of this study, general training was operationally defined as non-music specific training for working with students with special needs, whereas music specific training was specifically tailored to teaching music to students with special needs. Fifty-two percent of participants reported receiving some form of general training to teach students with special needs in their undergraduate degree. Additionally, 38% of participants ($n = 8$) stated they had received music specific training for teaching students with special needs. When participants were asked whether or not they had attended professional development sessions or in-service training on teaching students with special needs, 71% of participants ($n = 15$) had attended at least one of these sessions.

Curricular Materials

A variety of instructional materials were used in ensemble classes for students with special needs. When participants were asked to 'select all that apply,' sheet music ($n = 10$), manipulatives ($n = 9$), online materials ($n = 8$), lead sheets ($n = 5$), Kodaly and Orff materials ($n = 5$), and method books ($n = 5$) from instrumental classes were among the materials used. Funding for these instructional materials and the ensemble classes' general needs came from school budgets ($n = 15$), budgets from existing ensembles ($n = 10$), personal out-of-pocket

director funds ($n = 7$), grants ($n = 4$), donations ($n = 4$), and student fees ($n = 1$). The instructional materials used in these classes were self-developed ($n = 17$), found online ($n = 12$), available through the school ($n = 4$), purchased ($n = 4$), or acquired through other means ($n = 3$). Participants could ‘select all that apply’ when indicating their funding sources and the development of classroom materials, resulting in sums that do not match the sample size.

Support

Ensembles for students with special needs had a wide range of paraprofessional support. While some participants had no paraprofessionals present during their class ($n = 5$ or 23%), others had one paraprofessional ($n = 6$ or 28%), two paraprofessionals ($n = 3$ or 14%), three paraprofessionals ($n = 4$ or 19%), or even four or more paraprofessionals ($n = 3$ or 14%) available for assistance during a class period. Peer mentors also varied depending on the ensemble. Peer mentor support generally fell into four different size categories, no peer mentors ($n = 9$ or 42%), 1-5 peer mentors ($n = 6$ or 28%), 6-10 peer mentors ($n = 4$ or 19%), or 20 or more peer mentors ($n = 2$ or 9%). Most ensembles had some form of support in the form of either paraprofessionals, peer mentors, or both.

Discussion

Nature of Ensembles

Results from the current study indicate that ensembles for students with special needs are as varied as the students within them. Participants' descriptions of their ensembles revealed that the vast majority of ensembles were able to meet and rehearse during the course of the school day as a dedicated class period. This suggests not only a willingness of the directors to dedicate a class period that might have otherwise been designed for more traditional ensembles, but an encouraging level of backing from administration with regard to support for students with special needs.

Another shared trait of the ensembles in the current study was size limitation. The majority of participants indicated that their ensembles consisted of 20 or fewer students. There are various factors that might contribute to limited ensemble participation, not the least of which is the high level of differentiated instruction that is required for students with special needs. Because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to instructing students with special needs (Darrow, 2015), directors for these ensembles might have had to limit participation as a matter of practicality. In addition, because of the nature of instruments and instructional materials that participants indicated using, it is possible that student participation was limited due to the availability of these items. Finally, it is possible that only a limited number of students with special needs *wanted* to be in these types of ensembles. There could be any number of reasons for this lack of desire, including poor advertising or a simple non-interest on the part of the students and/or parents.

When asked to indicate whether students in the ensembles used instruments, voice, or a combination of instruments and voice, almost all participants indicated that instruments were used to some extent. Because many special learners have limited or non-existent speech and vocal capabilities, the use of instruments and

manipulatives allows non-verbal and verbal students alike to express musical ideas. In particular, participants noted that they most often used non-pitched percussion instruments in their ensembles. Not only do non-pitched percussion instruments allow directors to focus on foundational musical skills such as rhythm and steady beat, they require less fine motor coordination than other more complex instruments. This level of adaptability is of particular importance for students with limited physical capabilities. In fact, as the results indicated, as the technical proficiency of an instrument increased, the frequency of use declined. However, it should be noted that participants were not asked to provide a rationale for their choice of instrumentation, so further research would be necessary to discover the purposes behind their selections.

In the current study, few participants indicated that they had vocal-only ensembles. Although some researchers have examined mainstreaming for students with special needs in the choir setting (Lind, 2001; VanWeelden, 2001), there is limited research on choirs dedicated solely to students with special needs. The fact that very few participants in the current study indicated the use of vocals alone in their special needs ensembles suggests that perhaps teachers are inclined to mainstream students with special needs into existing choral ensembles rather than create vocal-only ensembles.

In addition to describing the nature of their special needs ensembles, participants were asked to describe the nature of any public performances they chose to have with their ensembles. Although most participants (62%) indicated that they did hold some sort of public performance, the performances varied from case to case. While some performances were held in conjunction with other ensembles during regularly scheduled concerts, other performances had more limited attendance and/or were held during the school day. One participant noted that the nature of the ensemble's performance from year to year "depends completely upon the students." Similarly, another participant indicated that the "prepared performance depend[s] on the ability of the group each year." The varied nature of public performances—and whether or not the ensembles even have public performances—suggests the participants' use of differentiated instruction extends beyond the rehearsal setting. This highlights the highly idiosyncratic approach that is required when working with diverse learners, including providing students with different ways to demonstrate understanding (Darrow, 2015; Darrow & Adamek, 2017).

Teacher Training

Although there have been efforts to increase undergraduate preparation to teach students with special needs (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Heller, 1994; Schmidt, 1989), the results from the current study suggest that there is still considerable room for growth in this area. The fact that only about half of the participants received general training for teaching students with special needs, and even less received music-specific training, indicates that many music teachers were left to acquire information regarding special learners on their own. In fact, the majority of the current participants (71%) responded that they sought out professional development opportunities related to instructing students with special needs after entering into the profession. The fact that the participants in this study found ways to design ensembles for students with special needs demonstrates a high level of resourcefulness on their part. However, the low response rate for the current study suggests that many music educators might not have ensembles for students with special needs at their schools or that they are choosing to mainstream students with special needs into pre-existing musical ensembles.

Curricular Materials

When asked about instructional materials, very few participants indicated the use of sheet music in their ensembles. In fact, participants responded that they used a wide array of instructional materials to teach the students in their ensembles. Because special learners have diverse needs, the fact that a variety of curricular materials is used supports the concept of differentiated instruction, including “varying the instructional process” (Darrow, 2015, p.30). For instance, requiring a student with a visual impairment to demonstrate understanding by reading a piece of written notation would be inappropriate. Therefore, following a rote approach would be an appropriate way to modify instruction and/or assessment for this student.

Participants also described a multifaceted approach to obtaining instructional materials, although the majority admitted to developing at least some of the materials on their own. Because diverse learners have diverse needs, it is unsurprising that instructional materials must often be constructed to suit the needs of the students in each individual situation. However, a lack of pre-existing instructional materials can easily become an added deterrent to creating ensembles for students with special needs, as teachers feel unsure of where to even begin. Similarly, several participants noted spending their own money in order to obtain curricular materials. For teachers who are compelled to create an ensemble for students with special needs, lack of dedicated funding could also be a potential deterrent.

Support

The majority of participants in the current study had at least one paraprofessional present in their ensembles. Although paraprofessionals can play a pivotal role in the musical experience of a child with special needs, paraprofessionals’ training for arts based classes is inconsistent at best (Bernstorff, 2001). Although many of the participants had paraprofessionals in the room, it is unclear what role they played. In addition, more than half of the participants surveyed said that they had at least one peer mentor in their ensemble for students with special needs. This is encouraging, given that “peer-assisted learning strategies are evidenced-based practices that can lead to positive learning outcomes in inclusive music classrooms” (Jellison, et al., 2017, p. 19). In addition, researchers have shown that peer relationships can have a positive impact on student socialization (VanWeelden et al., 2017).

Implications

Based on the results from this study, there are implications for both music teacher education programs and in-service music educators. Because roughly half of participants had general training to work with students with special needs—and even fewer had music-specific training—it appears that many teacher preparation programs continue to lag behind in this area. Music teacher preparation programs should continue to incorporate special education classes or units into their curricula if they want music educators to provide quality instruction to *all* students.

Perhaps due to the fact that many participants in this study lacked training for working with students with special needs, the majority reported attending professional development sessions on this topic. Therefore, state music education conferences and school districts should continue to offer courses and sessions designed to

help music teachers work with students with special needs. Similarly, in-service music educators who feel underprepared to work with the special needs population should continue to seek out opportunities for professional development. The fact that many of the participants in the current study didn't let a lack of undergraduate preparation prevent them from creating ensembles for students with special needs suggests a level of proactivity that is necessary for in-service music educators with regard to special education in music.

Limitations and Future Research

Due to the limited sample size ($N = 21$), it is difficult to make generalizations to the larger population. However, the small sample size is perhaps a valuable finding on its own. Given the large number of people who were either emailed the survey individually or exposed to it via social media platforms—and the subsequent small response rate—it seems that perhaps there are not many ensembles for students with special needs at the secondary level. Aside from working with organizations such as United Sound, it appears that the lack of specialized training for working with students with special needs, as well as a lack of standardized curriculum, could make it difficult to develop these types of ensembles. However, it is important to remember that the current study was not designed to investigate the practice of *mainstreaming* students with special needs into pre-existing ensembles, and should therefore not be used as an indicator of the overall level of inclusion in music classrooms across the country.

Future researchers might seek to expand the sample size of the current study in order to gain more descriptive data regarding ensembles for students with special needs. In addition, it might prove valuable to conduct a case study in which the experiences of one or two music educators who have created such ensembles can be explored in greater depth. As the research from the current study suggests, ensembles for students with special needs are as varied as the students in them. Examining a single case could serve as a road map for music educators looking to create similar ensembles in the future.

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The Gap between Special Music Education and Music Therapy: A Philosophical Discussion

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Abstract

Special music education and music therapy are two points on a much larger continuum of music-based practices. Special music education and music therapy are comparable professions, as both are led by trained musicians who often work with the same student/client populations, use similar music-making activities, and provide accommodations and modifications to meet the needs of their students/clients. However, the two professions are decidedly different in terms of philosophy, study and accreditation, and goals and objectives. Due to the number of commonalities, distinctions may be challenging to discern. This is particularly true when specific educational or therapeutic objectives are not the primary focus. Many musical experiences fit this model, often termed as wellness or enrichment programs, and are incredibly beneficial as they function as an integral part of people's lives. The question, then, is not whether these experiences should be provided and encouraged, but rather if these should be umbrellaed under special music education, music therapy, or constitute separate disciplines or professions that would require a different designation to encompass the philosophy, scope, and objectives accurately. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to (1) provide current definitions of special music education and music therapy; (2) identify the commonalities and individualities of the two areas; (3) identify current philosophical approaches that may provide a bridge between the two professions; and (4) discuss the importance of correctly identifying music experiences for persons who require special support.

Keywords: special music education, music therapy, community music, recreational music making, music-based wellness

Current Identification

Music Education, Special Music Education, and Music Therapy

As a field of study, music education is associated with the teaching and learning of music. It touches on all domains of learning, including the psychomotor domain, the cognitive domain, and the affective domain (Hoffer, 2017). This last area is particularly significant as it encompasses a person's appreciation for music and sensitivity. The primary purpose of music education is to work on music goals with educational objectives (Hoffer, 2017; Madsen, 1994). Defining Special Music Education is a bit more difficult because there is no set definition. However, if we use the definition for music education as the foundation, then special music education is a field of study associated with the teaching of music to and the learning of music by persons who need special support. Again, the primary purpose is to work on music goals with educational objectives (Adamek & Darrow, 2018).

The field of music therapy can be defined as an allied health profession in which credentialed music therapists apply evidence-based music interventions within a therapeutic relationship or the professional use of music and its elements as an intervention to help service users improve, restore, or maintain individualized physical, sensory, psychological, cognitive and social functions (AMTA, n.d.; Bruscia, 1991; World Federation of Music Therapy, 2011). In music therapy, music is primarily used to reach non-musical goals, and services are provided in a diverse range of settings to address behavioral, cognitive, emotional, rehabilitative, social, and other needs.

Analyzing Similarities and Differences between Special Music Education and Music Therapy

When comparing music educators' and music therapists' careers, there are notable similarities between the two professions. In many countries, trained musicians lead the activities associated with both professions. Music educators and music therapists often work with the same student or client populations and use similar music-making activities. Additionally, professionals in both fields are trained and accustomed to providing accommodations and modifications to meet their students' or clients' needs. Conversely, there are distinct differences between the two professions when contrasting their philosophies, requirements for study and accreditation, and their distinct goals and objectives. In the most general sense, the difference is that music educators work on music goals with educational objectives while music therapists work on non-music goals with therapeutic objectives.

Identifying the Gap

Special music education and music therapy are two points within a larger continuum of music-based

practices. When examining this specific portion of the continuum, one can see both similarities (e.g., individuals served) and differences (e.g., educational or therapeutic purpose). However, individuals who participate in special music education and music therapy may also participate in other music experiences in which educational or therapeutic objectives are not the primary objective. While these experiences are incredibly beneficial, they also fall within what we are terming the “gap” since they lie outside the philosophy, scope, and objectives of special music education and music therapy. After looking at a wide range of terms and the corresponding definitions, we identified three categories of music experiences that we believe fall within the gap: (a) community music, (b) recreational music making, and (c) music-based wellness. The next portion of the paper provides definitions, examples, and our rationale for why we believe these categories not only fall within the gap but should also be discussed by this Commission.

Community Music

There are many definitions of community music, both specific and general (Schippers & Bartleet, 2013); however, for this paper, we will use the definition described within the ISME Community Music Activity Commission’s vision statement (2020), which states it comprises music activities that provide opportunities to construct personal and communal expressions of artistic, social, political, and cultural concerns beyond formal music education. Since the purpose and scope of community music activities encompass more than just working on music goals with educational objectives, which is the primary purpose of music education, we decided to place these types of experiences within the gap. Examples of community music experiences within the sphere of what our Commission’s membership, and other like-minded individuals, might do include:

- An older adult choir where members are encouraged to suggest repertoire to perform that has meaning to them, as well as to suggest options of how best to express the music to provide greater meaning of the text (e.g., reminiscing about the time period the music was composed; adding movements, gestures, or choreography). Although the overall purpose may be to learn choral music with the goal of performing concerts, the experience provides opportunities to construct personal and communal artistic expressions beyond what is typically found within a formal music education setting.
- A drum circle, which is a rhythm-based community event that uses hand drums and other percussion, empowers individuals and provides creative musical expression opportunities. While drum circles are an accessible and fun music-based experience that helps individuals of all ages and abilities enjoy making music in a community setting, there are no educational or therapeutic goals enfolded into the experience. Instead, drum circles focus on building unity and positive relationships through musical cooperation and collaboration.

Recreational Music Making

Recreational music making is defined as group music-based activities to facilitate non-music-based outcomes, such as intellectual stimulation, social support, enhanced coping, and stress management (Bittman et al., 2003). These experiences also strive to bring together individuals of varying ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and abilities to engage with each other in an enjoyable environment (Bittman et al., 2003; Dillon, 2007; Jutras,

2006; McGree & Richerson, 2017). Because the primary purpose of recreational music making is to facilitate non-music-based outcomes, it is arguably more similar to music therapy. However, it is not entirely within the realm of music therapy since these activities may not need to be facilitated by credentialed music therapists, nor, perhaps, do they apply evidence-based music interventions within a therapeutic relationship. Therefore, this type of experience also falls within the gap between special music education and music therapy. Examples of recreational music making experiences might include:

- A group piano class for adults where the participants join for the social benefits that stem from the group setting. To help promote social support, instructors act more like facilitators who accompany the participants to guide them on their musical journey, and the overall focus of the class is on musical enjoyment rather than musical excellence.
- An older adult choir where the primary purpose is to give the members a place to meet others once a week and sing songs they enjoy. Within the rehearsals, opportunities to connect with others in the group beyond singing are included (e.g., meet and greet activities, partner dancing, handshakes, hugs), and the facilitator allows time for members to share joys, concerns, or updates about those who may not have attended in a while.

Since both scenarios highlight music-based activities that primarily focus on social support, these are examples of recreational music making experiences.

Music-Based Wellness

Defining wellness is challenging due to the related terms, such as “well-being” and “health,” that are often used synonymously (Segall, 2018). Furthermore, the term “wellness” has different meanings depending on the field in which it is used, such as in the performance and pedagogy fields where the physical and mental well-being of musicians is addressed (Cornett, 2019; Dawson, 2008; Klickstein, 2009; McAllister, 2013, 2019; Nagel, 2017). For this paper, music-based wellness is defined as the use of music experiences to help clients/participants (a) proactively maintain, restore, or enhance their quality of life; (b) maximize well-being and potential; and (c) increase self-awareness (Mandel, 1996; Segall, 2018). In this context, music-based wellness can include a wide range of objectives, such as enhancing work-life balance, promoting social interaction, enhancing mood, reducing anxiety, and enhancing relaxation

(Mandel, 1996; Segall, 2018). These types of activities are also similar to music therapy, and credentialed music therapists often facilitate the groups that engage in wellness. However, we placed music-based wellness experiences within the gap because these activities do not necessarily apply evidence-based music interventions within a therapeutic relationship. Examples of music-based wellness experience might include:

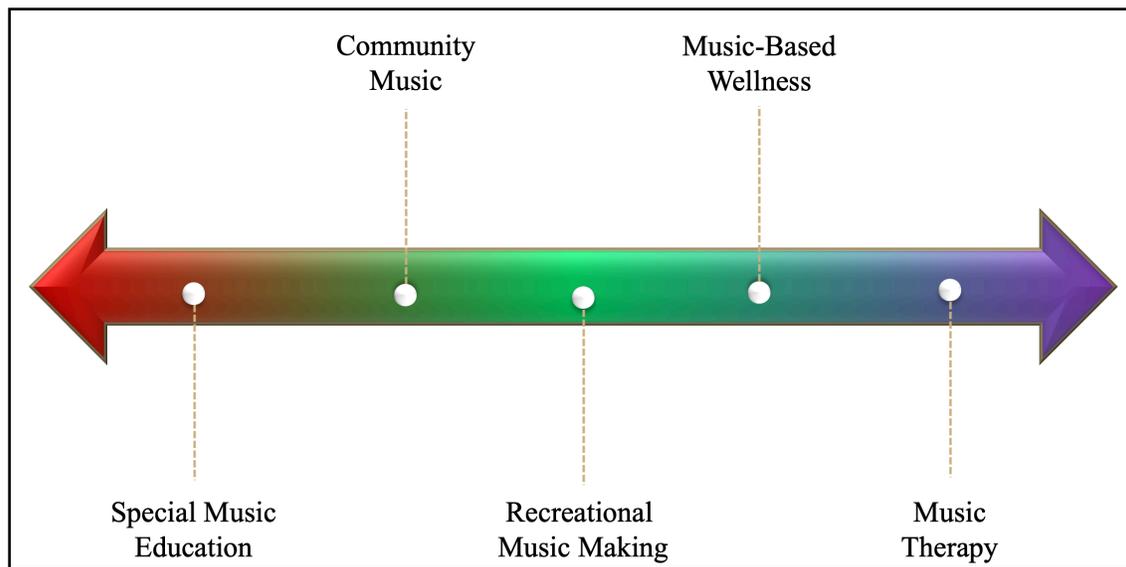
- An older adult choir where the purpose of the group is to improve the physical and emotional well-being of the members. To facilitate the physical goals, the rehearsal includes activities to help the members increase the volume of air moved in and out of their lungs (i.e., vital capacity) through vocal warm-ups and phrase length, as well as stretch atrophied muscles in the arms, neck, and torso through physical warm-ups and simple choreography. Emotional goals are facilitated by the director keeping the rehearsal upbeat, often including funny anecdotes, and highly encouraging the members to smile and see the

positive side of situations to help the members leave the rehearsal happier than when they arrived.

- Music performances integrated into hospital settings. These types of performances are often fun and much appreciated by the patients, visitors, and medical staff; however, they do not usually have specific, individualized goals and objects, involve a credentialed music therapist, rely on the use of music within a therapeutic relationship, or are designed to improve functional outcomes. Additionally, these performances do not involve active music making like community music or recreational music making, and there are no educational goals to music as there would be in special music education.

Figure 1

Continuum of Music Experiences between Special Music Education and Music Therapy



The Importance of Correct Identification

All the music experiences discussed in the previous sections of the paper have value and represent a continuum from special music education to music therapy (see Figure 1). Furthermore, this continuum can also be viewed as a portion of a larger continuum of music-based practices. However, because each music experience has a unique purpose and scope, exploring the differences and similarities will allow us to (a) promote discipline development by fostering organized bodies of knowledge, (b) encourage professionalization of the disciplines if/when appropriate, and perhaps most importantly, (c) determine which experience is most beneficial for the participants based on the purpose, setting, and desired outcomes. Correctly identifying special music education and music therapy, along with music practices that fall in the gap, is both important and consistent with the mission of the ISME Special Music Education and Music Therapy Commission “to contribute to the progressive development of special music education, music therapy, music in special education and other related fields of practice which examine the relationship between music, health, public health and well-being” (Special Music Education and Music Therapy Commission, para. 1, 2020).

Training of Leaders/Facilitators

Training in music education and music therapy typically involves the most clearly defined parameters of all the practices outlined in our continuum of music services. In many countries, music educators and music therapists must complete degree-based programs that include standards for education and practical/clinical training established by various governing bodies. For example, in the United States, organizations like the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) provide oversight for education programs and practical/clinical training. Gap practices, however, are not necessarily linked with any specific type of degree program, and training for individuals who facilitate gap experiences varies widely, even in more established sectors (McNiff, 2013). Thus, these practices do not have the same level of professionalization that special music education and music therapy do. As a result, we often know little about how musicians facilitate gap programming (Perkins et al., 2018) and subsequently promote the establishment of professional and educational initiatives (McNiff, 2013). This may include preparatory, experiential, and continuing education opportunities (Perkins et al., 2018) that will both help ensure that practitioners safely and effectively implement experiences within each practice (Brener, 2003; ISME Special Music Education and Music Therapy Commission, 2020) and promote discipline development and professionalization.

Clear Objectives

Established professions like music education and music therapy often have clearly defined scopes of practice (AMTA, 2015; Gates, 2000), standards for training/education, professional organizations, established codes of ethics (AMTA, 2019; NAfME, 2019) and governmental regulations or licensing requirements (McNiff, 2013). These parameters have been established to ensure that practitioners adhere to explicit objectives within their scope of practice. Identifying similar standards for each of the gap practices—including pinpointing training requirements, required competencies, and methods for evaluating competence—can promote understanding of the unique roles played by each of these practices, help us identify the appropriate scope for each type of music experience, and help us further examine the relationship between music, education, therapy and well-being.

Highlighting the Diversity of Programs Available

Musicians engage with communities in a variety of ways ranging from clinical arts interventions to non-clinical participatory arts programs (Jensen & Bonde, 2018). Researchers have found that participation in these experiences can facilitate a range of outcomes (Perkins et al., 2018) and provide holistic health benefits (Jensen & Bonde, 2018). Clearly outlining gap practices can highlight the diversity of programs available and showcase their value for participants (Dileo & Bradt, 2009). Equally important, outlining the diversity among gap practices can potentially help us identify when and where they would be most beneficial. By recognizing that music experiences are not “one size fits all,” we can embrace the diversity of practices and identify new opportunities for music making and new ways to engage in music to promote health, learning, and well-being.

Awareness of Natural Collaborations

Collaboration between music educators, music therapists, and musicians can enhance value for participants, especially when the unique skills of each group are used to support and expand opportunities to engage in music experiences. Yet even in the established professions of music education and music therapy, researchers have suggested that collaboration is limited (Smith, 2018), though there is a desire for collaboration and support (Scott et al., 2007). By understanding the intersections among community music, recreational music making, music for wellness, music therapy and music education (Perkins et al., 2018), we can promote increased cooperation and collaboration among the practices. This can not only lead to greater value but may also lead to expanded opportunities and the ability to reach more individuals (McNiff, 2013).

Conclusion

We have presented a continuum of music experiences for individuals who need specific support ranging from special music education to music therapy. Among these are “gap” experiences, which do not have educational or therapeutic objectives as the primary focus. Yet these experiences have value and can be incredibly beneficial for participants. We have attempted to define these experiences and explore the unique purpose and scope of each one. We have also highlighted the differences and similarities and outlined the importance of correct identification, as we believe it can help us to accurately determine which experience is most beneficial for participants based on the purpose, setting, and desired outcomes. Furthermore, we encourage continued discussion among our Commission, as we represent one of the leading international voices who work with persons who need special support.

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Uganda Heritage Roots: Harnessing Folk Music and Dance for Youth Rehabilitation in Kampala

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Abstract

Uganda has numerous musical arts initiatives that engage vulnerable youth groups such as street children, orphans, victims of war, homeless youth, and refugees, for rehabilitation, occupation, and, for some, provide an education. Despite considerable individual successes achieved by these initiatives, their practices and methods have not found equal recognition in Uganda's formal education and rehabilitation centers. This paper explores the experiential learning model of Uganda Heritage Roots (UHR), as a rehabilitation program for street children using Ugandan folk music and dance with the hope of deriving a standard rubric based on indigenous music education and music therapy practices. I discuss the foundational ideas that inspired the establishment of the program and UHR's approaches to transform homeless youth into self-sustaining and productive citizens. The paper uses an auto-ethnographic lens of my personal life as the program's founder by connecting these experiences within a social-cultural context of vulnerability experienced in various Ugandan communities. This paper also draws from narratives of selected individuals' reflections who interfaced with UHR in different capacities as participants and partners. The setting is Kampala, Uganda, where the only government street children's rehabilitation facility also serves as a juvenile detention center, hence, operating with limited capacity to meaningfully address the children's social, moral, physical, intellectual, and emotional rehabilitation needs. This is the situation that UHR attempted to respond to in 2003 through folk arts training and performance for rehabilitation and skills development. The study may be of particular interest to those involved in international special music education and music therapy.

Keywords: Uganda Heritage Roots, folk music and dance, rehabilitation, experiential learning, 'singing the dance'

A personal note from Alexander Katende, a participant in the Uganda Heritage Roots (UHR) program

When I was 10, my father divorced my mother and married another wife. My stepmother mistreated me because I was my father's only son, so she feared I would inherit all his property in case he died. One day instead of going to school, I decided to run away to a place I did not know only to find myself on the streets of Kampala. I found many other kids who had also left their homes, and I started a new life with them. I lived on the street for almost two years.

From time to time, some [white] people would come to the streets to share with us things like food, clothes and told us about Jesus. Among them was a Scottish lady who asked me about my dreams; I told her I loved school and music. She took me to Uganda Heritage Roots, where I found other former street children and orphans enjoying music and dancing yet going to school. I joined UHR in 2005, the children I found there became my brothers and sisters, and we all liked one another because we had faced similar challenges in life. I am now a music and dance performer and trainer, and able to support my own family and my parents. (Personal Communication, date: January 15 and 17, 2019)

Background

Katende's story at the beginning of this paper is one example that potentially applies to several other vulnerable youths who have become street children in different communities in Uganda. Street children have become a global phenomenon, an elusive problem that is increasingly catching the world's attention in searching for comprehensive solutions (Munene & Nambi, 1996; Russel et al., 2006). However, there are very few reliable estimates of the population of children living and/or working on the streets. In a study that enumerated children on the streets in four towns in Uganda (Mbugua et al., 2017), the authors noted that “a figure of 10,000 children is cited in a number of studies, however the actual study that produced this figure could not be traced.” (p.4). Results of the Mbugua et al. study reported 6,800 children aged between 7-17 years, living on the streets, and a combined 14,700 children aged between 7-17 years as working on the streets.

Ben Paul Mungyereza, the former Executive Director of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, conceded that there is no credible statistic on street children in Uganda. Mungyereza stated that street children are only covered during population censuses as a “floating population,” combined with truck drivers, bar-goers, and census night populations (personal interview on Nov. 21, 2019). The general indication points to a lack of coordination and coherence of the various interventions for these children, by both government and humanitarian organizations.

The Government of Uganda's primary intervention to the street children problem in Kampala remains the Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Center (KNRC), which is not only a rehabilitation facility but also a juvenile detention center (Gackle et al., 2007). This center is mainly used to apprehend and literally scare the

“undesirable objects” off the city streets, usually as a temporary and convenient “city clean up” measure when Kampala is hosting high profile international events. A prominent example of such clean-up exercises was in 2007 when Her Majesty, the Queen of England, visited Uganda for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala (Sundal, 2010). Clearly, there is a gap between desired interventions and the perceived threat that the street children pose to society.

Similar to Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's education approach of "explaining, demonstrating, singing and working," in the situation of the Swiss poor children and orphans in the nineteenth century (Gruhn, 1993, p.93), UHR, too, applied a related approach using folk music and dances with the hope of elevating the moral, physical, emotional and mental faculties of the Ugandan street children. Therefore, this paper seeks to document the UHR model of street children rehabilitation through music and dance and its integration of traditional arts in professional education practices.

The Role of Arts in Youth Rehabilitation

Delgado (2000) stated that: "Murals and other forms of public art provide youths with mechanisms for exploring social problems and solutions, and concomitantly provide a means for them to share their stories with other youths and adults." (p.118). This statement supports the objective of the UHR program through application of Ugandan folk musical arts for the rehabilitation of street children in Kampala. Other scholars and researchers have also discussed a range of arts rehabilitation perspectives including; moral rehabilitation, cultural orientation, “productive” citizenship, behavior change, religion and healing, talent development and education instruction (Ball & Heath, 1993; Coholic et al., 2009; Mugishagwe, 2013). Lakes (1996), discusses the connectedness that youth arts rehabilitation interventions have with culture and identity.

Delgado further argued that: "Effective social work practice is only possible and relevant when the practitioner designing the intervention is firmly grounded in the reality of the life of those he/she wishes to change." (p.4). This argument relates well to my personal life, having experienced similar vulnerability as the street children under the UHR program. This paper seeks to document the UHR model as an empirical example of experiential learning by exploring UHR's pedagogical approaches for possible adaption into education curricula guidelines for special music education and music therapy in Uganda and elsewhere. The paper will contribute to the body of knowledge on arts rehabilitation and special music education approaches, especially for developing countries.

Saved by the Tune: A Personal Story that Inspired the Birth of UHR

My professional career path is intertwined with my personal childhood experiences. Orphaned at the age of three, I learned at a tender age to survive from odd jobs to earn my day’s meal, and perhaps an education when I was lucky. Throughout my primary and secondary education, I was in and out of school because I could barely afford school fees consistently from one class to the next. Despite this, I persisted as an intermittent student. My ambition to learn more, coupled with the conviction that education would change my fate and that of my community for the better, was stronger than my fear of how I would afford school fees. I never gave up

on my dream, even during the seasons I was out of school. I kept close contact with my schoolmates, who graciously allowed me to use their notes as I studied privately.

My fortune turned when I joined a local music and dance troupe in my hometown at a tourist resort hotel, where I would dance for wages. The troupe director noticed my resilience and advised that I consider returning to school, but this time to pursue music as a career. She recommended me for an out-of-school entry examination to the university, through which I was admitted for a Diploma in Music Dance and Drama at Makerere University on a government scholarship and graduating in 2000. I never looked back since: I excelled and advanced to do the Bachelor of Music at the same university on a merit scholarship. After seven years of practice as founding director of UHR, I won a Ford Fellowship that took me to the University of Kansas, USA, in 2010, for a Master of Music in Composition. I returned to Uganda in 2012 to continue the UHR dream but also teach at Makerere University. I am currently a Ph.D. student for Music Education at Texas Tech University, USA. My creative musical capabilities and the wealth of Ugandan folk music and dance performance and training account for my entire education progress trajectory. My personal experiences not only muscled me to face my challenges but also ignited a desire to do my part in improving the lives of those in similar circumstances.

In 2000, while on a students' exchange program at Romerike Folkehøgskole in Norway, part of my daily schedules included drumming with persons with special needs, including some in rehabilitation centers and others in psychiatric hospitals. Music therapy was a new experience for me. Working with these people brought to mind the reality of many children living on the streets and slums back home in Uganda, yet without such responsive programs to rehabilitate them. My reflections on how music was being used for therapy in Norway and how the opportunity to perform had restored my education dream triggered the idea to start a special music program that would combine education opportunities and music therapy in my community in Uganda.

My vision formally came to fruition in 2003 when I received an initial grant of USD 50,000 from the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala to support my proposed initiative of Ugandan folk music and dance rehabilitation program for street children. Later, other partners, including Forum for Culture and International Cooperation – Norway and friends from the United States, joined the program. UHR was born with the core objective of healing the trauma of former street children and, through learning musical arts, rebuild their self-esteem and support them to realize their potential through formal education and employment opportunities.

Learning by Doing: The UHR Participatory Approach to Music and Dance Training

Uganda Heritage Roots did not find a vacuum in addressing the problem of street children in Kampala. Many organizations, such as the Cornerstone Development Africa Youth Initiative through its Youth Corps Homes program, were already providing shelter, food, education, and health care for homeless children (Cornerstone Development Africa, 2020). Nina Skarpsno Heide, a Norwegian volunteer, had been partnering with Cornerstone Development by providing basic domestic essentials for the children under rehabilitation to enhance their social and emotional healing from the trauma due to homelessness. However, despite all these efforts, both Cornerstone Development and Heide, felt that the children's emotional and psychological recovery

rate was slower than had been desired. Initially, this was the gap that UHR set out to address through an after-school and weekend music and dance program.

Music Therapy

The UHR music therapeutical component included sharing success stories related to what some of the trainees may have experiences. To start with, I shared my personal life story with these children of how, as a hopeless and helpless school dropout, music and dance had become my lifeline to pursue a career. My account gave them a glimmer of hope and became the hook to enroll voluntarily in our arts programs. We then introduced singing and dancing to simple folk tunes, an exercise that turned out as an avenue for bonding beyond artificial differences. The musical structures that required team participation, including accompaniment, call and response, and group performance patterns, were useful avenues in inculcating social values such as respect for one another, listening, and teamwork.

Other music therapy strategies followed in Bennis & Sheppard's (1956) group forming dynamics and negotiations between musicianship demands and interpersonal comfort dynamics (Leite, 2016). These strategies helped to manage cliques based on social stereotypes such as ethnicity, gender, and age. By using group activities such as the tug-of-war games and group presentations, we achieved closer connections among all the members, as we developed an understanding of positive competition. Through folk singing and dancing, trainees learned cultural and socioecological perspectives (Bunt & Stige, 2014; Stige et al., 2010) embedded within the songs, legends, and dance movements.

Music Education Strategies

We employed a highly participatory ensemble (Thibeault, 2015) and interactive approach in our music and dance sessions from the onset. Our "curriculum" comprised of choral (both African and Western) and instrumental (African) music styles, and Ugandan folk dancing. In 2006, we also added a sound and recording studio section. Both learners and instructors were actively involved and recognized for their contributions irrespective of age, gender, or any other classifications. Under traditional Ugandan education practices, new knowledge and skills were acquired through observation, imitation, and repetition (Tiberondwa, 1978). The modeling and participatory approaches were effective in teaching music and dance content to a group such as former street children.

The imitation approach enabled our trainees to develop an understanding of tuning and relative pitch recognition. Most Ugandan folk songs are in strophic form (call and response), with soloist and chorus sections. Our initial focus was on vocal works in the form of ear training, in which the trainees repeatedly listened and sung several traditional folksongs from different musical cultures to develop an aural understanding of pitch differences. After choral practice, we transferred the same tunes to pitched instruments such as *Amadinda* (xylophones), *Endingidi* (tube fiddle), and *Adungu* (bow harp) by playing the same tunes covered in choral singing. This transfer created an exciting experience for the trainees; it boosted their motivation and curiosity to experiment further with pitches.

As the trainees' pitch recognition abilities developed, we introduced polyphonic works in both African

and Western styles to teach harmonic perspectives. Of note was the singing of anthems and traditional hymns. Our first repertoire in this category included *Ekitiibwa kya Buganda* (the Buganda Kingdom anthem) by Rev. Polycarp Kakooza (New Vision, 2012) and the hymn *Abide with me*, by W.H. Monk (United Methodist Hymnal, 2008), in four-part Western harmonies. By singing four voice parts (SATB), first on neutral syllables and then on lyrics, the trainees' musicality significantly developed. This practice expanded further to include the singing of anthems of different traditional kingdoms such as Bunyoro, Busoga, Tooro, Adhola, and Lango, in their respective indigenous languages. With such musical competence, UHR developed a dexterous choral ensemble that sings anthems, including some in other foreign languages. Since 2013, the UHR choir has been a regular fixture at the annual Joint Nordic Day Celebrations in Kampala for singing the four national anthems of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden in the respective native languages (Embassy of Denmark in Uganda, 2019).

Other musical arts skills learned included an understanding of Ugandan folk arts' characteristics and the inherent interconnectedness and interactions between music and dance perspectives (Mabingo, 2020; Nannyonga, 2015). Through dancing to drum accompaniments and choruses, trainees comprehended musical aspects such as tempo, meter, polymeter, variations, motifs and transitions, and how they function within a musical arts performance. The diversity of our repertoire, derived from Uganda's different ethnic cultures, provided a variety of musical arts learning experiences. Within three years of UHR's establishment, the UHR music and dance ensemble totaled 40-45 members, and our general rehearsal schedule was on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 6:00pm – 8:00pm. Our repertoire included dances and musics from the following regions of Uganda: Kadodi, Owaro, and Tamenha Ibuga from the east; Orunyeye, Ekizino, and Ekitaguriro from the west; Bwola, Dingi dingi, and Larakaraka from the north, and Baakisimba and Maggunju from central.

“Singing the Dance” Technique

The singing of dance and drum rhythms is a traditional practice in Ugandan folk musical arts, where performers sing tunes to lyrics or neutral syllables that are descriptive of the motif. At UHR, we apply this technique to teach learners cognitive comprehension of dance patterns before engaging in musicking. This technique was useful in training participants the teaching and learning methods in musical arts such as chunking, slowing down the tempo, and explaining. During a training session, a trainee proposed the phrase: "Sweet potato," derived from the footwork's sounds of a motif in *maggunju* (a royal dance from Buganda).

Example 1. “Sweet potato” motif in *maggunju* dance

STEP	DESCRIPTION
Sweet	Jump with both feet and land flat on your feet while bending your knees.
Po	Jump on one foot (left) with the right foot suspended in space
ta	Step with the right foot at the back of the left foot to form a T-like shape with both feet.
to	Step with the left leg in its forward position.
	Repeat exercise in reverse order to the right

The same technique was applied in teaching drumming rhythms in a combination of traditional oral and conventional music learning styles. We aligned each syllable to their respective handwork marking (L & R), similar to fingering markings in piano teaching, even before introducing the corresponding notation. Example 2 demonstrates a drumming motif from *maggunju* dance from central Uganda with lyrics taken from a traditional folktale. *Ensuku zaffe bbiri, ze zatuwonya enkolo leka nesulike ondabe* – literally meaning: “it’s our two banana plantations that saved us from famine, so let’s play.”

Example 2. *Maggunju* drum rhythms derived from a folk story from Buganda.

L R L R L R L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

Namunjoloba 1,2
(Bangos)

En - su - ku za - ffe bbi - ri ze za - tu - wo - nya enko - lo le - ka ne - su - li - ke onda - be.

Conclusion: The Measure of Success

The participatory approach was critical for UHR to gain the trust of the participants. As facilitators, we purposed to engage the children not as mere recipients but as contributors to the process and the program's outputs. This approach also brought to the fore individual participants' capacities such as leadership, team play, and artistic talent, attributes that became instrumental in propelling them to self-sustenance beyond UHR.

Emphasis on the process rather than the output was central to UHR's consistency. Delivering the program; we operated an open-ended plan, which allowed trainees to develop long term targets, including opportunities for vocational skills development alongside training in the arts regardless of one's talent as a performer. Public performances were a convenient incentive for the participants, for whom exciting a respectable audience had seemed like a far-off dream for a street kid. These performances also served a therapeutic function of repairing participants' confidence and self-esteem. Starting with regular team

performances before peers, we progressed to staging shows in other street children's centers around Kampala and eventually advanced into a professional performing troupe that gained traction in the entertainment industry. We attracted high portfolio events, including state functions, diplomatic banquets, conference openings, religious ceremonies, and international tours.

In summary, UHR was able to find a fair balance in the "curriculum" for homeless youth rehabilitation that incorporated the cultural and socioecological perspectives of the traditional Ugandan society while emphasizing professional dimensions in the performing arts. Beyond the sociocultural change noted in the community, several "graduates" of the UHR youth rehabilitation program are presently some of the finest folk arts performers and expert trainers in Uganda. UHR programs have contributed to promoting performing arts professionalism and entrepreneurship and championing new dimensions in harnessing indigenous talent for youth employment.

UHR continues to explore effective pedagogies that meet the needs of these and other vulnerable categories of young people. In so doing, UHR has inspired the development of several similar street children's rehabilitation initiatives, including some by graduates of our program, and continues to engage with homeless youth through a combination of indigenous and conventional musical art forms. Ultimately, we recommend acknowledging and adopting indigenous musical arts pedagogies as regular and meaningful knowledge transfer approaches that should be supported in mainstream public education and rehabilitation institutions. Evaluation studies should be commissioned to document the UHR's actual impact and similar models on rehabilitating street children and promoting experiential learning in developing societies.

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