



Establishing a pathway in Music Education

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Introduction

This project was prompted by the radical 2019 re-design of the School of Music curriculum which recognised the desirability of developing a music education pathway at both undergraduate and post graduate level. The goal of this project was to open up new areas of study at postgraduate level and, through innovative delivery modes, provide increased access for both recent graduates and those with professional expertise working in the field. In particular, it aimed to be responsive to the needs of students who desire to combine work and study.

The project



The 2020 CLear Fellowship enabled me to focus on the development of three blended delivery (on-line/on-campus) post-graduate courses in Music Education. With a strong focus on equity, inclusiveness and engagement, the proposed course development acknowledged the wide range of ways into music-making; not all of those who teach or wish to teach music in schools and communities have learned music in the same way.

The three postgraduate courses aimed to offer opportunities for:

- Engagement with the diversity of music and music education practices
- Collaborative learning
- In-depth learning in pedagogical practice
- Development of practical musicianship
- Critical reflection on musicking and pedagogical practice
- Critical consideration of relevance to local context.

Implementation: 2020 Course development

MUS 762 & 763 Approaches to Music Education 1 and 2, MUS 767 Music Education Research and Practice were identified as courses suitable for development. Each would feature:

- A workshop component which aimed to take account of and utilize the powerful nature of collaborative learning in the Arts
- Assessment activities in both workshop and online components giving students the opportunity to engage in projects connected to their own contexts
- Asynchronous discussion groups catering to a range of abilities and dispositions (Locke 2016).

Such groups enabled:

- A focus on reading and responding to academic literature and opportunities to practise academic writing in order to transition teacher-students into the postgraduate learning environment
- Opportunities for collaborative engagement where students learned from one another, with the assessment rubric rewarding both responding and initiating
- A sensitivity to shy students, or students from non-English-speaking backgrounds, since online discussion allows time for a contribution to be formulated beforehand and then shared
- Opportunities for me to scaffold learning customized to individual needs and engage in formative assessment via private dialogue.

MUS 762: Approach to Music Education 1 (The Orff approach)

On-campus workshop

My doctoral research, a critical examination of the Orff approach implemented in the Aotearoa/New Zealand setting highlighted the transformative impact of workshop-based learning. The Orff approach emphasises the centrality of creative musical practices and creative pedagogy.

A range of practices in the context of an Orff professional development workshop were found to be conducive to the development of self-efficacy in participants both as musicians and as teachers of music.

This finding aligned with Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences; social persuasion via encouragement and supportive feedback; vicarious experience via such strategies as peer teaching; and emotional dynamics such as tension and release through risk-taking.

My existing professional relationship with Orff New Zealand Aotearoa (ONZA) enabled me to negotiate an agreement enabling the April 2020 6-day workshop to be opened up to MUS 762 students and constitute 40% of the assessment. The workshop would be characterised by:

- An inclusive learning environment where music-teachers and music-teacher-scholars had the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other
- Teaching material, learning outcomes and assessment events relevant to practice in studio, school, community and therapeutic settings
- An emphasis on the development of individual teaching artistry (Locke, 2005)
- Bicultural framing. The workshop would begin with whakawhanunga tanga, end with a poroporoaki and be structured around the Māori creation story Papatūānuku and Ranginui. It would feature use of te reo, waiata and taonga pūoro
- Meaningful formative assessment embedded in workshops through regular opportunities for self-evaluation, and peer and teacher feedback
- Assessment tasks tailored to practical musicianship and pedagogy.

On-line component

Learning objectives, teaching resources and assessment practices were designed to develop a critical engagement with the Orff approach as a taonga from afar and a critical consideration of its application in a range of contexts. Teaching material included historical texts, research articles, images, and audio and video recordings. Structurally, this component consisted of 6 modules, each associated with an assessed discussion forum [40%] and 1 Assignment Essay and seminar presentation [20%].

MUS 763 was planned to follow in 2021 as a second-level course.

MUS 767

The Seed Grant enabled me to commission a literature review and scoping report as a means of identifying content that best fitted the course's focus on contemporary issues in music education with a focus on innovative pedagogy. Three modules were developed, each with an associated on-campus practical workshop:

- Module 1:** Critical pedagogy with a workshop on Contemporary music in the classroom
- Module 2:** Inclusive music education practices with a workshop on song writing pedagogy
- Module 3:** Composition and improvisation in 21st-century music education pedagogy with a workshop on Composition pedagogy.

What happened?

2020

- MUS 762 was offered in Semester 1.
- MUS 767 was offered in Semester 2.
- Online teaching for all courses (as a result of Covid19) led to on-campus workshop components of both courses being delivered online (via Zoom). This meant a considerable compromise in relation to the quality of the experience of participants. For this reason, these students were invited to participate in the 2021 Summer School iteration of this workshop (see below).
- Evaluations were not undertaken (also because of Covid19).

'As a practising teacher living outside of Auckland, the blended format of MUS 762 and Music 763 suited me very well. Having the opportunity to delve more deeply into the philosophy of the Orff pedagogy, and music education more broadly, through the mix of my own reading and thinking combined with the collegial collaboration of the six-day workshops has helped me refine my own professional thinking and practice.' Megan Flint, Taupo.



2021

- MUS 762 was offered as a Summer School as a blended delivery course consistent with the original intent. Six out of 8 S1 2020 iteration of MUS 762 and 5 Summer School 2021 students participated in the on-campus workshop.
- My Summer Research scholar Vicky Zhu is my co-investigator in a project which is investigating the comparative impact of online and on-campus workshop components of the course. Data collection is currently under way.

My reflections on the intended outcomes of this project

- A design for learning that is clearly related to the stipulated objectives (outcomes) of each course that is offered as part of the programme. *Course outlines indicate that this was achieved.*
- The achievement of a balance between online and face-to-face teaching/learning that maximizes inclusion and enrolment potential. *A framework for inclusion is in place. The enrolment potential for this programme innovation is yet to be actualized.*
- A collegial approach to course design and content delivery adopted by the teaching team. *The collaboration with ONZA in relation to MUS 762 & MUS 763 gave students access to a range of highly skilled practitioners in the school setting, who are embracing the opportunity for collegial relationships with the School of Music. MUS 767 involved the collaboration of four School of Music lecturers.* Students anecdotally commented very favorably on each of the workshop components.
- The implementation of a strategic marketing plan that is shown to attract students to this innovative postgraduate diploma. *Currently the music education pathway and specific courses are almost invisible to current and prospective students. Musicnet was used to promote the offerings, but prospective students were let down by insufficient or extremely hard-to-access information on the university website. The current SoM leadership is committed to addressing this problem for 2022.*
- The adoption of an evaluation/review plan, which would include the potential for both self-study and case-study research. *An evaluation/review will be put in place for these courses in 2022. Case study research is currently under way, conducted by myself and Vicki Zhu.*



The two pedagogy papers MUS 762 and MUS 767 have given me an introduction to the framework of a music education curriculum and new insights into how to adopt new ideas into 21st-century music classrooms. The blended post-graduate programme of MUS 762 allowed me to learn about the history of the Orff approach, develop teaching artistry in this technique, and critically evaluate it in light of my own musical experience and expertise.

Lulu Feng 2021

Vicky recently graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Honours) in music education. The synthesis of her interests in social justice, decolonisation, and critical pedagogy led to a Summer Research Scholarship focusing on the professional implications of the Orff approach for postgraduate students.

She is now completing a Graduate Diploma in Primary Teaching in the hopes to continue a lifelong inquiry into music education and society in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Conclusion

An ambitious and innovative project to establish a rigorously theorized, practical and relevant music education pathway was undertaken in 2020 by myself in association with Associate Professor David Lines. Despite a range of setbacks and difficulties – the Covid19 lockdown, internal leadership issues in the School of Music, and inadequate marketing – we achieved most of our intended outcomes.

As far as I can tell, students have responded extremely favourably to the nature of the pathway that is now in place. However, a programme such as this is always a work in progress, and we are taking steps to ensure that the feedback we obtain from recent students will guide us in developing the pathway further.

References

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