

Bridging the gap: How university music programs can integrate contemporary music creation into elementary school curriculum

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Abstract: *In this paper, integration of contemporary classical music creation in elementary school curricula is presented as a key to boosting student engagement and creativity. It identifies a gap between traditional music pedagogy and modern practice whose music pedagogy limits students' engagements with music outside of school. Through the use of university music programs for the development of professional development and collaborative curriculum development, educators become more inclusive in the environment of music education. Among many innovative practices including graphic scores, Sound painting, improvisation, instrument making and body percussion, the study reviews some ways of creating freedom and cultural understanding for the non-music students.*

Key-words: *integration, creativity, engagement, curriculum, collaboration, music education, contemporary music*

1. Introduction

Fostering elementary school student engagement and creativity in music education comes from an essential step, which is, the integration of contemporary classical music creation into the elementary school curricula. With the advent of an ever-new educational paradigm that recognizes the diversity of learning styles and cultural contexts, the role of its contemporary music in the lives of young learners must be increasingly noted. Silva indicated that active participation with music improves cognitive, emotional wellbeing and social interaction amongst students (Silva 2024). Featuring modern classical music, educators can create a classroom in which not only is traditional music appreciated, but that also recreates in the

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learners the ability of experiencing their own creative potential, closing the gap between traditional teaching approaches and the modern musical world.

The difference between traditional music pedagogy and contemporary practice of music education is extreme in terms of current music education. Most elementary music curricula continue to anchor teaching to classical traditions, but there is increasing acknowledgment that the musical interests of today's students cannot be supported by curricula still rooted in the past. According to Barrett et al., current instruction in music education has difficulties related with the technological advancements and needs of current students merging with the opportunities for doing innovative and evolving music education (Barrett et al. 2019). This gap in the curriculum raises critical questions about the functionality of existing music education practices: Are they doing enough to get students ready for what they will hear outside of school? What are the changes that have to be made to make music education more relevant, appealing, to today's youth?

Finally, as music education is often overshadowed by the renewal of academic standards and a focus on the core academic subjects, too much attention is turned away from beginning creative expression of exploration. This trend is unwelcome because prior research has demonstrated that music education enhances memory, attention, spatial-temporal skills, which are important to students' success in all academic subjects (Rodney 2024, 43-54). Consequently, it seems quite natural to consider integrating contemporary classical music creation into the curriculum because it offers students musical experiences and contributes to their overall academic and personal development.

Given such thinking, it is necessary to investigate how elementary school curricula can effectively incorporate contemporary classical music. At this integration, there are many forms of this, beginning with collaborative projects and interdisciplinary approaches that unite music with other subjects. Educators can encourage such a curriculum which values contemporary classical music creation to enable students to own their musical learning making for a more dynamic and inclusive music education.

In conclusion, the integration of contemporary classical music creation into elementary school curricula is not simply an add on to music education but an evolution that is necessary about the demands and desires of today's student. If music educators can fill the gaps in traditional approaches and embrace new ideas, the music education experience can be more engaging and more meaningful, and students may be prepared to live and explore music for all their lives.

1.1. The basic background information about the importance of music education in schools

A good well-rounded curriculum cannot be complete without music education as a vital component, and this is because it plays an important role in the cognitive, emotional and social development of students. Many studies have continuously proven that active participation in music education develops critical thinking skills, creativity and communication skills – skills that are important for success later in academics and in life. Additionally, music education brings the students, who often work in ensembles or as members of a group project, together as a community, developing their team-working and interpersonal skills. Also, students demonstrate the ability to show and experience the musical expression that also conveys the emotional development of a student as a healthy outlet of feelings and experiences. Therefore, equipping children with the knowledge of music is as important to the development of a child as much as providing nutrition is for the development of a baby.

1.2. Overview of the existing status of music education and the lack of focus on contemporary creation of music

While the value of music education is now recognized, most elementary school curricula underemphasize contemporary music creation in favor of traditional music forms. However, this neglect of modern musical practices may sometimes hinder students' sense of involvement and communion with the music they meet in their out of school experience. In today's society current music education tends to focus on classical repertoire and informed techniques but today's students are increasingly nurtured with a variety of musical genres through technology and popular culture as opposed to classical repertoire and necessarily formal techniques. Consequently, it is an immediate need to integrate contemporary music creation in the curriculum, so that students can experience music which is relevant and expressing to them. By offering the possibility for curricular integration, this report could help improve student understanding and appreciation of music as an art form that exists dynamically and in evolution.

1.3. Thesis statement

Music programs in the university have the ability to heal the divide in elementary music education by bringing on board contemporary music creation into their curriculum. With the help of university level educators and incorporating the

innovative education teaching practices, schools bring in an inclusive and dynamic music education atmosphere, where you get to learn, create and express yourself. In addition to aligning with the interests of students, it helps students prepare for a world in which musical literacy must be a diverse cipher for the world of genres and styles, and, in turn, enhances their educational experience and overall development.

2. Benefits of contemporary classical music creation in education

2.1. Development of creativity and self-expression

Elementary school students develop creativity and express themselves through classical songs and music creation integrated into the existing curricula. When young children engage in contemporary music, they utilize the musical identities they develop to experiment with sounds and styles that help them develop their creative capacities. However, research shows that music education helps greatly to enhance creative thinking skills, meaning students learn to compose, improvise and perform music based on the experiences and emotions they have personally had (Potter 2021, 16-23). In addition to this process nurturing artistic expression, it pushes students to think and to be creative because it looks favorably on innovation and originality.

2.2. Connecting modern culture and Relevance to students

Being an important link between students and modern culture, contemporary creation of classical music renders music education more relevant to the students' lives. Because today's students are immersed in different kinds of music through different kinds of media, there is an opportunity to connect what students hear in class to what they hear outside of school (Dobrota and Ercegovic 2016, 41-55). This relevance makes learning easier for students since they are willing to spend time and even energy on learning a subject that connects with them in terms of their interests, as well as culture. Additionally, it also brings the student into more aspects of the actual music of today because by incorporating aspects of contemporary classical music will provide the student with greater access to more musical expressions related to the contemporary issues and themes of society. In addition to enhancing a student's musical experience, thought about the place of music in one's own life, and in the community is encouraged. By looking at contemporary music, students can also work on cultural identity, social justice, and

the development of musical styles, through discussion of the relationship between music and society (VanWeelden 2012, 14-24).

2.3. Enhancement of critical thinking and problem-solving skills

Along with learning emotions and how to convey them to other human beings, the contemporary classical music creation process helps students sharpen their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. While composing and improvising, students encounter a number of hurdles that force them to put greater amounts of thought into musical structure, harmony, and rhythm. It makes them go into different musical ideas and experiment, and then assess their effectivity, to further make informed decision about their composition (Barrett et al. 2019).

Music education has shown that it can do a significant amount of good for cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and reasoning skills, all of which are necessary for solving problems (Burak 2019, 257-271). By including contemporary classical music making in the curriculum, educators have the opportunity to give students the opportunity to develop those skills in a creative context that may better prepare them for academic and real-world success. Moreover, the music formation by the team enhances teamwork and communication skills since the students work together in elaborating their projects and making feedback to each other (Fonte et al. 2022).

Finally, the incorporation of contemporary classical work into the elementary classroom reveals many advantages to the creative, expressive, connection to the present, and ability to think critically and solve problems. Embracing contemporary music offers educators an opportunity to design a more engaging, relevant music education that students will relate to and for which they will be prepared for a changing, musical future.

3. Elements of challenges and barriers to adopting contemporary music creation in elementary schools

3.1. Traditional curriculum – Classical music and theory in great abundance

There is currently a preponderance for traditional music education concerning classical music and theoretical study, which is today's largest obstacle to creating a scaffolding of contemporary music creation for elementary school curricula. Historical composer and formal music theory are studied to the exclusion of contemporary practice, in classical canon-based music programs written itself in the literature (Sogen 2023, 43-54). This strict traditional approach is risky because

students have or are having musical experiences separate from the curriculum they are studying and are potentially unable to identify why music which isn't modern or doesn't relate to their lives is important for the course. Yet, McFerran and Crooke assert that a redundant music program will lower student involvement, which will prohibit the educational progress for a curricular holistic music education (McFerran and Crooke 2014).

3.2. Lacking training and resources for teachers

Also important to the integration of contemporary music creation is a lack of training and resources for teachers. So many educators, especially those not primarily involved in music education, feel not well equipped to teach contemporary music successfully (Burak 2019). Sometimes, a lack of confidence can be due to few opportunities for professional development along with the fact that the currently available music curriculum doesn't cover modern music elements and practices. However, if teachers have no fundamental understanding of musical matters, they will find it difficult to integrate modern musical issues into music education and rely on the traditional methods that do not raise students' attention (Burak 2019). Furthermore, resources, like instruments and technology for music creation are limited in many schools so that contemporary music projects can hardly be implemented by teachers (Julia et al. 2020, 547-558).

3.3. Competing priorities and time constraints

The greatest obstacle that is encountered, however, in integrating contemporary music creation with the curriculum is time constraints and competing priorities in the school day. Music education is sadly left out of the picture more and more, in favor of other priorities, as there is an increasingly greater emphasis on standardized testing and core academic subjects (Clark 2022, 1-8). Teachers may struggle to find time to include music in the classroom or may opt to reduce how often or how long music class happens because of the perceived importance of math, science, reading, and writing during limited instructional time. Opportunities for students to create contemporary music thereby may be greatly diminished. Furthermore, emphasis on the curriculum demands can tend to lead to an orientation of performance-based outcomes over creative exploration, narrowing the scope for students to express themselves through contemporary music (Hallam 2010, 269-289).

Finally, integration of contemporary music creation into elementary school curricula presents great promise, but several obstacles and barriers must be

overcome. Traditional time constraints, the lack of training and resources available and traditional focus on classical music make implementation and use of contemporary music practices in the classroom hard. There will need to be a tremendous amount of commitment on the part of educators, administrators and policymakers to develop a music education that is more inclusive and meaningful for all music students.

4. How university music programs bridge the gap

4.1. Elementary school teachers professional development and resources

Music programs at the university level are important in closing the gap in music education for in service elementary school teachers at the lowest rung. Undoubtedly, many teachers, especially those without music training, may feel unprepared in teaching contemporary music. This gap can be filled with the help of the university programs that organize workshops, seminars and courses particularly on the topic of creating modern music with such aim to empower teachers to offer those special classes through more recent spectrum of musical sensitivity. According to Bernāts and Mūrnieks the practical experience within music education is important and implies that music education student training must involve both classical and contemporary music style experience so that the teacher can adopt pedagogical approaches of dealing with various musical styles (Bernāts and Mūrnieks 2021, 24-30). University programs aimed at improving the quality of music education in elementary schools can greatly increase teachers' musical competencies.

4.2. Working with schools in the design and implementation of curricula

Uniting university music programs and elementary schools in collaboration to develop and implement a curriculum that reinforces contemporary music practices is necessary. Local schools can partner with universities to develop tailor made music programs to cater for students' unique needs and interests. Co-development of lesson plans, share resources or being a mentor of teachers are some common collaborations that can happen. As Southcott and Joseph (2010) point out the benefits of diverse music education can be applied to contemporary music as well. Universities and schools can collaborate to produce a curriculum that not only includes contemporary music creation but also nurtures an appreciation for multiple musical traditions which supplement classroom learning.

4.3. Programs offer outreach to the community and partnerships for improving music education

In addition, university music programs can contribute to community music education with such programs and partnerships as outreach and professional development and curriculum collaboration. These initiatives give students a chance to learn about contemporary music through related workshops, masterclasses, and university faculty and student performances. Those are the kinds of things that will help demystify contemporary music to them and motivate them to dig deeper into what they might want to do musically. In addition, partnerships with community organizations can create pathways to resources and support for music education projects that give all students experience in contemporary music creation. Through these outreach efforts, a very strong connection can be formed between university music programs and the community, which greatly improves music education overall and instills a long-term interest in music in students.

In conclusion, university music programs contribute immensely to overcoming the deficit of elementary music education through improving credentials of teachers via providing information in regard to specialized musical training, coordinating with schools to work together to create a suitable curriculum for music teaching, and ability to organize outreach programs meant to encourage individuals' involvement in the programs. With this, it becomes viable for universities to leverage their ability, knowledge and resources to create an inclusive and more dynamic music education environment that sets students up for a dynamic musical future.

5. Bimusicalism analysis

5.1. Definition and explanation of bimusicalism

Bimusicalism is the capacity to work with and understand various musical idioms and languages and to strike into and experiment with various musical kinds alternately. Conceptually this is like bilingualism, i.e. being able to converse in two languages smoothly. Bimusical individuals have the cognitive flexibility to move between different musical frameworks, permitting them to comprehend and fabricate music reaped from various social roots. It is this ability that improves musical creativity and promotes a better understanding of the cultural context of

production of various types of musical forms (Matsunobu 2013, 147-149). Students therefore encounter (and thereby develop) multiple musical languages, leading to a richer musical vocabulary and thus greater ability for expression or innovation in or through music.

5.2. Bilingualism and bimusicalism: a comparison

Some similarities also exist between the cognitive processes and the outcomes of subsequent learning of bilingualism and bimusicalism. Bilingual and bimusical individuals exhibit activated cognitive flexibility whereby they are able to chunkily shift between two sets of rules (linguistic or musical) (Matsunaga et al. 2012). Engaging with multiple languages, musical styles, or concepts has been shown to enhance problem-solving and creativity, and increase cultural awareness (Bohannon and McDowell 2010, 27-31). But it's not all night and day, there are also some notable differences. Although bilingualism is a concern with verbal communication and language structure, bimusicalism involves a larger part of auditory experiences in the areas of rhythm, melody, harmony and the cultural context. That highlights the fact that processing of musical information requires different resources from language processing (Matsunaga et al. 2012), and that it may be processed by different neural pathways.

5.3. Studies and research into the benefits of bimusicalism

Many studies have been conducted looking at how student creativity, cognitive development and cultural awareness are aided by bimusicalism. Research by Matsunaga et al. (2012) provides, for example, evidence that individuals exposed to two different musical cultures also exhibit systematic patterns of brain activity, suggesting that bimusicalism may improve cognitive processing of musical information (Matsunaga et al. 2012). Moreover, studies have shown multiple musical style exposure in students answer to be more creative in their composition and improvisation (Gubbins 2020, 74-91). In addition to that, bimusicalism promotes cultural awareness among students as it broadens their music knowledge on diverse musical traditions, placing them in a position to admire and respect diverse cultural manifestations by music (Adeogun 2018). As globalization increases, understanding and valuing diversity is more important than ever, so this cultural competence is increasingly important.

5.4. Examination of the implications of bimusicalism for music education curriculum in elementary schools

This has profound implications for what the music education curriculum should look like at the elementary level. A bimusical approach can be integrated into the curriculum to improve students' musical experiences while at the same time making music education more inclusive and relevant. Resources that foster bimusicalism in the classroom may include teaching various musical genres, supporting students to learn about their cultures through music and enabling them to engage as bimusicals through joint music making from different musical traditions (Moses 2021, 53-71). Creating an environment that appreciates diverse musical expressions allows educators to lead students to equip them with the skills and self-confidence to interact with contemporary music creation in an effective way.

6. Strategies and educational tools

6.1. Graphic scores

Making use of the visual instance in music making can be a pioneering and exhilarating experience of using graphic scores to group improvisation. Graphic scores present ways in which visual symbols, shapes, and images are used as musical instructions, whether literally, instructing the player what to do, or as suggestions for possibilities (cues to explore), as a way of exploring an easily generated flexible and more open-ended framework in which the interpretation and playing of the piece is determined by the student. Here are some basic benefits to include graphic scores into group improvisation activities for elementary students:

1. *Visual interpretation*: They can also introduce students to many types of graphic scores each week (abstract symbols, pictorial images, or any arbitrary notations indicating anything—and I mean anything—from sound texture to dynamics to tempo, etc.). The process of composing the scores is discussed, the relationship of the two scores to one another and in particular, how these visual clues instigate new musical ideas to feedback once again into the visual expression (Hope 2020, 187-197).
2. *Collaborative creation*: Encourage students to collaborate, especially in the creation of their own graphic scores with colored markers, shapes, textures, and/ or found objects in groups. However, encourage students to use visual things and structures in different ways to create their own graphic scores, as an expression of their improvisational ideas and ideas and concepts, for them to

create a collective creativity and a collective collaboration. (Rabinowitch et al. 2012, 484-498).

3. *Non-traditional instrumentation*: Students use non-traditional acoustic instruments, found objects, body percussion, vocal sounds to expand their sonic palette through improvisations on graphic scores. The experiments of program performances that stimulate students to increase their sonic vocabulary and possibilities of expression of improvisatory performance with unconventional sound making techniques and textures derived from the visual symbols and images of graphic scores (Lopes 2014, 228-238).
4. *Multi-sensory exploration*: In fact, the inclusion of this aspect of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic is also an encouragement to multisensory engagement when considering an improvisational process through the lens of graphic scores. Ask students to experiment with allowing visual stimuli to guide musical decisions, movements, gestures, and interactions in group improvisation: Artistic practice rooted within a dense, sensory rich practice grounded in a process of experimentation, interpretation and collaboration (Lopes 2014, 228-238).

Elementary school children will become more creative, imaginative, and expressive when graphic scores are used as part of group improvisation activities which involve manipulation of visual representation in music making. The approach is interdisciplinary and provides a unique and enriching method for students to engage the intersections of visual art and music through production of novel dynamic and improvised uses of creative expression within their improvisational performances.

6.2. Soundpainting

The integration of Soundpainting into the elementary school curriculum is a conceptually powerful, track transform in music education for students without experience in group music making, music notation or formal music training. Using live composing sign language called 'sound painting', students can immediately be involved in spontaneous creation of music and the class will be a place of creative and collaborative possibilities. Besides improving music skills, this innovative method helps develop those skills in a crucial aspect of life, representing therefore a valuable addition to contemporary music education.

Another benefit of including Soundpainting is that it allows us to tear down barriers for our students without formal music training. Typically, traditional music education majors spend a lot of time reading music notation and learning the theories behind what they are learning that may be intimidating for beginners

(Pendergast and Robinson 2020, 264-285). Rather, Soundpainting helps students to express themselves musically without prior knowledge. Similar research shows that students enjoy learning in learning environments where they can experiment and make their own music at their own pace (Pendergast & Robinson, 2020). Soundpainting provides a platform for improvisation and exploration, demystifying the music making process and opening it up to all students in an accessible and enjoyable way.

Additionally, the team-based nature of Soundpainting imparts students team working and communication skills. Working on activities for playing as a group enables children to learn to listen to one another, negotiate ideas and work towards a common goal (Gabnyté 2020, 55-61). Successful music making requires these skills, which are also employable in other aspects of their academic and personal life. Learning music in a group has proven to be an essential part of the development of social skills, (which permits students to critique their peers appropriately and furnish constructive feedback) (Gabnyté,2020). Students utilizing this collaborative experience tend to derive meaning and self-esteem as well as a sense of belonging to relationships, especially given students from marginalized backgrounds in traditional learning settings.

A study of music education reveals a national awareness that it is essential for different styles of music and its practices to be included in the curriculum. Classical and popular music forms have blended together in the education arena, enriching the education of the students on music by giving them a broader understanding of music as an art form in evolution (Li 2023, 172-177). This fusion is represented by soundpainting; it's an artistic form which encourages students to create new compositions from many disparate influences but pushes students to also consider how this is affected by the cultural backgrounds and experiences of themselves. Because it doesn't only build creativity, but it also increases cultural awareness and cultural appreciation among students (Sularso 2023).

In addition, Soundpainting can be used as a rejuvenating mechanism for music education in schools, in contexts in which resources could be limited. Educators in turn can develop an array of workshops by partnering with local musicians and artists, developing an ecosystem of traditional and modern music practice (Sularso 2023). It affords opportunity for the creation of programs celebrating cultural diversity with students encouraged to explore their musical heritage. Initiatives of this sort can thus initiate students to the richness of their cultural backgrounds and simultaneously start an exploration of new musical forms within an integrated approach to music education.

Soundpainting instruction can supplement the curriculum by helping to develop musical skills, while aiding in the development of critical thinking and

problem-solving skills, as well. Students engage in improvisation and composition while challenged to make musical decisions regarding rhythm, melody and harmony (Guderian 2011, 6-14). The process of thinking creatively and analytically is essential for success in the 21st century, which this process encourages. Studies have proven that music education can significantly improve cognitive skills especially memory, attention and simple spatial temporal skills (Lukács and Honbolygó 2019, 153-170). To this end, the educator can utilize contemporary practices such as Soundpainting to offer a wide range of opportunities for these particular manifestations of musical and cognitive development to take place.

This can be further enhanced by using technology along with Soundpainting with students. We can use digital tools to facilitate collaboration and to allow students to create and share their musical composition in novel ways (Clauhs et al. 2019, 55-63). This is technology integration enriches students learning experience and prepares students for the future where digital literacy is growing. Contemporary music creation practices can be incorporated into the curriculum, so students can learn the skills they need in order to succeed in an ever-changing musical landscape.

Teacher preparedness in the implementation of innovative music education practices is of principal importance. It is well researched that many preservice teachers feel unprepared to teach music in all settings, especially in elementary (Potter 2021). Targeted training based on current practices such as Soundpainting gives educators the opportunity to support teachers in building confidence and competence in sharing the experience of music with students. In turn it will help students who will work with teachers who are better equipped to help them with their musical journey.

Moreover, the incorporation of Soundpainting into the music curriculum can contribute in a very positive way inclusivity and equity issues in music education. When educators create an opportunity for all students to join in the music making without prior experience or background (Chandransu 2019, 547-560), the areas of traditional music education settings where it would be too much trouble are dismantled. This matches the form of culturally responsible showing in which there is the need to recognize and value the various musical backdrops of students (Villiers 2021, 423-448). Through integrating contemporary practices such as Soundpainting, educators are able to provide a place for ALL students to create, to engage.

Lastly, I observe that introducing Soundpainting into elementary school curricula improves music education. Educators can bridge a gap between traditional and contemporary music practice, by allowing students to have opportunities for creative expression, collaboration, and cultural exploration. By using this innovative approach, students are not only bettered as musicians, but also develop life skills

crucial to being well equipped for a changing and diverse musical culture. However, as we move forward with examining the possibilities within contemporary classical music creation in education, requiring teacher preparedness and culturally responsive practices to guarantee that every student is ready to flourish musically is paramount.

6.3. Improvisation

Including improvisation into the curricula of elementary school contemporary music can have a significant positive impact for students who have no prior experience with group music making, music notation or formal music training. Not only does this inspire creativity, self-expression and promote essential skills such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking. This can be achieved through the creation of a rich and engaging learning environment, one which further evolves the language system in a sound, and most importantly, up to the point where the student is able to explore self-expression within specific contexts of sound.

The most important impact of integrating improvisation into music education is that it democratizes the music making process. One of the primary themes in traditional music education is that reading music notation and following traditional musical forms must be mastered by students (Gruenhagen and Whitcomb 2013, 379-395). Improvisation, on the other hand, lends itself to student involvement in the central processes of music making, in their own way and on their own terms, freeing them of the bonds of formal training. Research suggests that improvisation facilitates a sense of ownership and agency among students allowing them ownership and ownership and agency in creating and sharing their musical ideas (Larsson & Georgii Hemming 2018, 49-67). Especially if you're intimidated by the traditional music education, this offering gives you a chance to develop your creativity in a less intimidating environment.

What's more, improvisation is a great way to build social skills and build cooperation amongst students. Listening and communicating with purpose, along with cooperation in the negotiation of musical ideas with peers, are required of students participating in the group improvisation activities (Wright and Kanellopoulos 2010, 71-87). However, this process of music making is one that not only strengthens their musical capacities, but also encourages the might life skills which are transferable to other spaces of their personal and academics life. According to Bernhard and Stringham students who participate in group improvisation have higher self-esteem and a stronger sense of belonging within their classroom communities (Bernhard and Stringham 2016, 383-390). Educators

can create a safe place for students to interact and to share their musical experiences, together, in a supportive and inclusive classroom.

Understanding music education provides the historical context underscoring the importance of improvisation as the core in musical learning. Johnston recognizes that improvisation is a central characteristic of the art of making music, which many educators have realized and should be put in a musical curriculum to teach students an overall musical art (Johnston 2013, 383-393). According to research improv does not only strengthen musical skills but also supports the entire development of thinking, for example, increases memory, attention, and the power of problem solution (Rodney 2024). Through the engagement with improvisational activities, students can become involved in the learning of some musical concepts and at the same time can cultivate and develop cognitive and affective skills.

Moreover, improvisation is combined with current music so that students are able to investigate various types of musical styles and cultural settings. Students are exposed to many musical traditions, and such exposure may deepen understanding of music as tradition, as art, and as something dynamic and ever changing (Higgins and Mantie 2013, 38-44). This work is still being done in music education and overall effective practices are being developed. Educators can achieve a more inclusive and culturally responsive music education as it works to encourage students to draw from their own cultural backgrounds and experiences. Related to informal music learning, in which students' musical experiences are recognized and valued (Wright & Kanellopoulos 2010), this harmonizes with informal learning as also advocated in the ELF movement.

Improvisation not only improves musical skills and assists in collaboration, but also a means to improve yourself and open new perspectives on yourself. Doing improvisational activities involves taking risks and spontaneity, which students put themselves in a position to be more confident and better able to bounce back when things don't go your way (Krevel 2024). According to Coss research has indicated that further that students who experience improvisation feel more comfortable expressing themselves musically and are more willing to take a creative risk (Coss 2019). The value of this self-exploration comes from the fact that it is a safe space for students to try things, and to grow, unlike other areas of their lives where they may struggle with self-expression.

Second, the incorporation of improvisation into the classroom can assist music educators in responding to the difficulties in teaching varied student groups. Despite a lack of training and experience, many music teachers are concerned with their ability to teach improvisation effectively (Whitcomb 2013, 43-51). Through improved targeted professional development and resources to help educators improve their use of improvisational pedagogy, educators will gain more confidence

and competence in presenting effective music education which suits all students. By doing this, students will have teachers more equipped to lead them in their musical journey.

Lastly, because this can accentuate improvisation directly with the use of contemporary music elements, technology can aid in the learning experience. Creating and sharing one's musical compositions is enhanced using digital tools and principles and allows collaboration. By incorporating this technology, students' learning is upgraded and are equipped for a future when digital literacy will be high priority in the music industry.

In brief, including improv and contemporary music aspects into elementary school curricula will shepherd students, even those who lack expertise in making music, towards great benefits. The fostering of creativity, collaboration and self-expression allow educators to form a rich and engaging learning community for young musicians to develop holistically. To continue to explore the use of improvisation in music education, we must prioritize practices that prepare teachers to be able to address culturally responsive practices, as well as methods that will allow all students to thrive in their musical endeavors.

6.4. Instrument Making

Integrating instrument making and sound exploration by way of normal and extended techniques into the elementary school curriculum can have a tremendous effect on students who have not had previous experience in group music making, in terms of notating or in formal music training. Besides encouraging self-exploration and creativity this approach has an added benefit of aiding students to socialize and work as a team. Allowing students the ability to create their own instruments and a way of exploring and discovering the principles of these functioning can create of rich learning environment in which not only master the musical elements, but they also grow into knowing more about themselves.

Instrument making in the curriculum offers one of the primary benefits of hands-on learning. Students tend to construct their own instruments which will provide them with a tactile and experiential way of thinking of the physical sound production involved and musical concepts. This matches with constructivist theories of education that stress the part of the learner in learning. Through manipulation of materials and experimentation with sound, students will be able to relate physical properties to respective musical outcomes and thus increase their auditory perception and creativity. Students that typically have a hard time grasping abstract ideas in the traditional music education setting find this experiential learning very advantageous.

Furthermore, because of instrument making students build a sense of community and belonging with each other. Students perform collaboratively in their instrument construction, i.e., students take on various roles in the group, as leaders and followers, fostering social skills and teamwork. Following research that indicates that group activities in music education strengthens the sense of self-esteem and belonging of students, they get to communicate, negotiate and support each other during the creative process. This collaborative environment is crucial for students that might feel isolated or within the margins in standard instructive conditions since it gives them a network of their group, so it is conceivable to help them/themselves and take away the sentiments of hole.

Normal and extended techniques are further explored on instruments, expanding on students' knowledge of the possible sound spectrum. Students can experiment with unconventional playing techniques to produce and create sounds for music. The creative and innovation subject that is encouraged by this exploration enables students to express themselves in their distinctive ways. It is known that students' musical vocabulary can be enriched, and an expanded musical style appreciation created from engaging in extended techniques. Nurturing students' creativity and preparing them for a future with diverse possibilities musically this exposure to different sound possibilities allows.

Consequently, bringing instrument making and sound exploration into curriculum can have academic benefits as well. Music has been shown to assist with memory, attention, problem solving skills, all skills necessary for academic achievement. Engaging students in music making activities promotes discipline and focus that applies elsewhere in academic subjects. It is a holistic approach to education, where music's role in a much larger curriculum supports the total development of the child.

In addition, instrument making and sound exploration make a great bridge to cultural understanding and appreciation. The beauty of encouraging students to make instruments that express their cultural background or investigating sounds of various musical traditions is the ability to build cultural identity. Culturally responsive teaching principles recognize and value the diverse experiences students bring to school and this fits within the principles of culturally responsive teaching. Through incorporating cultural aspects into music education, educators can facilitate a situation that allows for all kinds of students to enjoy the appreciation of different cultures through the freedom of expression allowed in music.

The success of instrument making and sound exploration in the curriculum is founded in teacher preparedness. Research shows that its underlying principles lack training and resources, which many music educators feel unprepared to teach. Music educators can increase their confidence and ability to offer engaging music

education through developing professional development opportunities that provide instruction in instrument making and sound exploration. In this way, students will be taught by teachers that are well prepared to take students along their musical path.

Finally, the melding of instrument making and sound investigation with elementary school curricula provides an abundance of listings for the students, especially those with a history of no music making experience. Through the promotion of creativity, collaboration and cultural understanding educators can enliven and support the holistic development of young musicians in a rich enjoyable environment. Overall, continued exploration of contemporary music creation as a tool in the music education classroom will require the active response of music educators to become prepared and culturally responsive so that all students can successfully engage in their musical endeavors.

6.5. Body percussion groups

Adding body percussion groups to the elementary school curriculum can be a game changer for students who have never had a music group experience, have not been exposed to music notation, have not had formal music training, and are in need of a creative outlet. Body percussion (using the body as an instrument to make sounds) is a fundamental activity that promotes group awareness, rhythm making skills and communication and social interaction. In addition to helping students develop their musical abilities, this approach helps students develop critical life skills, including collaboration, communication and self-expression.

Body percussion is one of the key advantages of helping to foster a sense of community and belonging amongst students. Group body percussion activities enhance the social experience in classrooms by having students collaborate, listen to each other and respond to the resulting developing beat (Sidhom 2023). As this process is collaborative, it fosters social skills and teamwork as management roles assignments are learner centered; students can act as leaders or followers. According to research, such group activities will improve the self-esteem and sense of belonging of students, especially those who may feel excluded from traditional forms of education (Clark 2022). Creating a classroom culture of positivity is supported when educators provide a supportive environment for students to speak musically.

Additionally, body percussion is a useful way to introduce young people to rhythm making at basic and complex levels. Beginning with elemental body percussion patterns provides a non-threatening means of developing basic rhythmic skills for students having no advanced skills. Once comfortability was achieved,

more complex rhythms representing traditional and contemporary music complexities can be introduced by educators (Naranjo et al. 2022). In addition to bettering students' rhythmic understanding, this progression will help them ready themselves for future more advanced musical concepts. Rhythm is one of those things that seems purely abstract to the layperson but merits a study, and studies have shown that students are able to better perceive and retain rhythm if they engage with rhythm in a hands-on manner (Hollingsworth 2022, 12-21).

As body percussion is explored as a way to discover rhythm, the principles of experiential learning apply what the students are learning using their bodies to both discover and understand rhythm. Using their bodies to make music allows their pupils to better understand rhythm and its part in the creation of music. The hands-on approach is especially applicable to young learners who are inclined to play and movement (Rodney 2024). According to Rodney, research has shown that physical activity integrated into music education, using body percussion for example, could improve such cognitive capabilities as memory, attention and problem solving (Rodney 2024). It is this holistic approach to education that emphasizes folding music into the overall curriculum in furtherance of all round development of the students.

In addition, body percussion can link in some way to an understanding and love of aspects of culture. Exploring various rhythmic patterns and styles in various musical traditions allows students to learn about various rhythmic and culture significance in music (Sularso 2023). Exposure to varied musical practices promotes cultural awareness and respect, all constituting principles of curricular culturally responsive teaching. Using students' past experiences, educators can identify similarities and differences, this in turn will help to create a non-judgmental environment based on respect towards diversity among students. (Clauhs 2024, 44-51).

In addition, body percussion in the classroom offers solutions to the problem of teaching diverse student populations identified by music educators. The inability to engage students who have little previous musical experience is a problem that many music teachers express the inability to work on it. Body percussion offers all students opportunities to be part of music making, regardless of their background or skill level. It is also very important for this inclusiveness in elementary education where we nurture a love for music starting early because we know that it can affect the way our students view learning, and view creativity.

Moreover, the use of body percussion in the curriculum could increase music education teacher's preparedness and confidence when delivering music education. According to research, many music educators are unprepared to teach rhythm and percussion because of the lack of their training and resources (Kuebel 2019, 304-322). Professional development opportunities in the form of body percussion and

rhythm pedagogy can improve educators' skill and confidence in delivering wholehearted music education. As a result, students will benefit from receiving guidance from teachers that are efficiently trained to facilitate them with their musical tours.

In conclusion, as a complementary instructional technique, the use of body percussion groups with elementary school children who have had no previous experience in music making provides students numerous benefits. In addition to this, as creative collaboration and cultural understanding takes place, educators craft a learning environment that is rich and engaging, helping a young musician to grow holistically. But as we extrapolate the possibilities of contemporary music creation in education into the future, we must be certain to focus on teacher preparedness and culturally responsive practices, so that no one will want for potential in their musical pursuits.

To integrate the creation of contemporary classical music into elementary school curricula, a generation of music educators, versed in contemporary classical music, must be ready. Instrument-making workshops, improvisation workshops, graphic scores workshops, soundpainting workshops, and body percussion group creation workshops are all innovative practices that university programs provide future educators to help their students implement through training them with the skills and knowledge to teach these.

7. Conclusion

In a nutshell, it's critical to bridge the gulf between elementary schools and university music programs in order to build comprehensive music education as it should be that serves all levels of students. Beyond the pedagogical uses of music for future music educators, it also enhances the elementary student learning experiences. Findings have shown that successful partnerships among schools and universities will help in improving educational outcomes because this kind of collaboration is the source of vital support and resources that make the music education better (Hunter 2011). By incorporating the theoretical knowledge and the application of principles from the university programs into the curriculum of elementary grades, we can develop a richer music education environment to built students up with valuable foundation to face a world of relevance and interconnection.

It is hoped that many potential benefits of integrating contemporary music creation into the elementary school curriculum can be realized. By having students create modern classical music, students are encouraged to be more creative, critical

thinking and emotional intelligent which are the need of the day in the educational environment (Chen 2023). Researchers have found that both exposure to a wide range of musical styles and the act of making music can greatly boost students' motivation and commitment (VanWeelden 2012). On the other hand, contemporary music education encourages cultural appreciation and perspicacity of different musical practices and traditions for students (Liang 2024). In this holistic way of using music, students are not only developed musically but also feel a sense of belonging to the world they live and the sense of an identity (Sindberg 2016).

To exploit the potential advantages of music in education, however, universities and schools must work together and place music as part of their curricula. Partnerships should be established by universities rather than local schools and universities working together, and this should be through resources, training and support for local schools to help take account of contemporary music practices (Hunter 2011). In turn, schools need to realize the importance of including modern processes of music creation into their curricula and start campaigning for appropriate changes in the curricular structure (Farnsworth 2024). When it is two entities, this coalition propels both to create a dynamic and inclusive music education framework that does not only conform to educational standards but also brings up a generation of musicians and music enthusiasts. The result of this collaborative work will be a more dynamic and more productive music education environment, in which music richly informs the education of all students.

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