

Navigating Unpredictable Possibilities in Postmodern Music Education

BETTY HANLEY

University of Victoria

The path of learning can never be determined by the teacher. However, the path of learning is dependent on the teacher. (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 66)

In this paper, I will narrate the progress of a graduate course on musicianship and pedagogy offered in elementary music education at the University of Victoria. The course occurred in the third and final summer of the M.Ed. program. The 68-hour, 3-week course consisted of two parts. Part A encouraged students to continue to develop their musicianship through an encounter with musical style in 20th century “art” music. Part B dealt with curriculum and pedagogy and was designed to help students acquire deeper knowledge and understanding of selected curriculum issues and to explore the impact of the latter on classroom practice. The two parts of the class were intended to complement each other. Thus, the methods used in Part A were useful for assignments in Part B, and what was learned about curriculum and teaching in Part B was modeled in Part A. All the students in this class are teachers.¹

¹ The 1993 version of the course was previously described in “Peeling the Onion: Arts PROPEL in the University Classroom” (Hanley & King, 1995). In the 2003 version, the content of Part A was revised to acknowledge the music of the last half of the 20th

I begin with a brief overview of what occurred in Part A so that connections across the two parts of the course will become evident, then move to a more substantial discussion of the curriculum portion of the course. This paper is less the story of a course than an exploration of issues that arose when we were challenged by postmodern views of music and education.² Four teaching moments are included to provide a sense of the pedagogy of the class.

Part A—Musicianship: Unpacking Modernism

The first difficulty in the course was my use of “art” music in the course outline, even though I used quotation marks to signify an equivocal intention. What to label “art” music has been problematic since modernist views began to be challenged in the 20th century. Assumptions of superiority and exclusivity underlie most of the traditional labels used to refer to Western European music (“fine,” “high,” “serious,” “art,” and “classical”)—the reason for my quotation marks. Since the completion of the course, I have encountered a helpful distinction made by Karbusicky between participatory and performance music.

Participatory music—historically, the primary part of music culture, distinguished by predominantly standardized creative principles; emphasis is on the performer (interpretation); reception is predominantly spontaneous. Immediate functionality assures a relatively wide basis of consumption in society, thereby preserving the continuity of the music’s communicative power.

Performance music—historically, the secondary part of musical culture, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; emancipated from immediate functionality, emphasis is on the authorized originality of the musical work, its aesthetic effect, and its ethical and increasingly noetic meaning (cited in Blaukopf, 1982/1992, p. 193).

century while that of Part B was considerably adapted in response to changing views of education.

² I would like to thank Sheila Sim, a music education colleague at the University of Victoria, for her insightful review of my paper and her suggestions for redirection and the students in the class for the journey.

Since the term describes how music is used rather than the music itself, perhaps “performance music” is a more neutral designation and preferable to “art” music. While not all students were initially sensitive to the implications of the quotation marks, this early discussion set the tone for the class and was an example of the disposition to question one’s beliefs that was encouraged throughout the course.

One of the key ideas we encountered in the course was the complex and fuzzy (from our relatively close perspective) movement from modernism to postmodernism by the end of the 20th century (<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~chatzis/courses/Postmodernity.htm>).

Whereas postmodernism undoubtedly emerged earlier in the century, Lochhead (2002) claims that music has tended to “lag behind the other arts” in acknowledging recent music in the “concert” tradition (p. 3). Indeed, “a vigorous scholarly interest in recent practice in the concert tradition has not arisen as a response to postmodern methodologies...or to postmodern thought,” unlike in popular music, as she later acknowledges (p. 2).³ How is postmodern music different? According to Clendinning (2002), postmodern music involves the following characteristics:

- complexity
- contradiction
- messy vitality
- playfulness
- richness over clarity
- purposeful disunity
- irony
- combinations of forms
- starts with the listener’s value system
- drawa consciously on the past
- collage
- pluralism
- juxtaposition

In planning the course, I felt we could not address style in 20th century music while neglecting the challenging issues of postmodernism. Thus, in the latter half of the class, we listened to postmodern works (see Appendix for 1 the listening selections), grappled with new ways of

³ The remark applies equally well to music education.

experiencing and thinking about music, discussed the anticipation of postmodernism in earlier works, engaged in a conversation with Gavin Bryars (<http://radio.cbc.ca/programs/inperformance/OCTOBER99/page6.html>), and experimented with some postmodern techniques in student compositions. I can't say we were all equally at home in the contradictory, complex postmodern world of music or that we all found the music to our liking. We nevertheless tried to understand the ideas, the contexts, and the resulting music.

Bennett Reimer (2003) has explained that music educators "are expected to clarify what music is all about, by helping our students compose, perform, improvise, listen more adequately and satisfyingly, and to understand what they are doing and why" (p. 134; see also <http://www.bsu.edu/classes/bauer/hpmused/reimer.html>). Part A of the course provided students with opportunities for the production of music, the perception of music, and reflection on their musical experience while they explored the central concept of style in music, and, to a lesser degree, in other arts. Understanding was at the heart of this course, as we explored the meanings of style, including stylistic characteristics and change. What is style in music? What is the role of social context and history in the evolution of style in music? What is culture? What is the Canadian identity? These are some of the questions we explored.

Teaching Moments—Shaping Lives

After reviewing the characteristics of the stylistic periods of the early part of the 20th century and what we had learned about style so far, I discovered that, in spite of my talk about constructivism and earnest attempt to implement its principles, I still tend to view music from an aesthetic perspective—as a work with expressive qualities—and to downplay the context. Here is what happened. The text in italics is a counterpoint provided by a student.

I asked the question "Is style always innocuous?" and launched immediately into showing the video *Degenerate Music*. The video shows how prior to and during World War II the Nazis classified certain music (jazz and the music of the Jews) as inferior and degenerate. My intention was for the class to realize that style is not just a matter of fashion but that it can have serious consequences. While this outcome *may* have been realized by the class, an unintended outcome was much more significant for the students and me. I had expected students to look objectively at the video and abhor the inhumanity recorded there. In failing to warn students of the nature of the video, I demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to the students in the class. The possibility that there might be students who would find it more difficult to view certain scenes (of the Holocaust) for personal reasons (because they were of Jewish or German ancestry) did

not occur to me. Indeed, when I had shown the video three years earlier to a graduate class, students, while horrified at man's inhumanity to man, discussed at length what had happened, why, and whether similar abuses have happened since, without displaying excessive discomfort.

After viewing the video, this class was unusually quiet. There was little discussion. I knew something was wrong (beyond the content of the video) and tried to draw out the class, to no avail. Perhaps no one wanted to challenge or embarrass me publicly. (I wish they had.)

The issue of "power over" is alive and well at the graduate level. This is perhaps unfortunate, but I feel it is a very real factor in everything from class discussions to written assignment. Students certainly self-censor—some more than others. It is simply too risky, or thought to be, to directly challenge a prof. I have certainly challenged a few in my day, and it has almost always backfired. "Power over" is a powerful censorship tool.

Later in the day, I was approached by one student who explained part of the reason for the sparse response. I requested that we discuss the lesson as a class because I wanted everyone to be aware of the impact a seemingly harmless teaching strategy can have.

I don't think this was a harmless teaching strategy and should not be stated as such. Attempting to extract aesthetic qualities of music from a video documenting Holocaust events is a potentially harmful strategy, not just because you might have students who are Jews or Germans but because it trivializes the Holocaust just as would watching the film in a fashion design class to analyze how Nazi uniforms and bright yellow stars sewn on clothing affect power relations and contemporary fashion. I recognize that you meant no harm, but de-contextualizing in this way is not good pedagogy.

This discussion, I think, was helpful in clearing the air and reestablishing trust. It also surprised the class that I apologized. Mistakes are too often swept under the carpet instead of acknowledged as opportunities for learning.

I certainly thought it was courageous of you to admit your poor judgment to the class. In doing so, you modelled an important thing for teachers and prospective teachers—admitting one's mistakes.

As curriculum, the framework for Part A was that of a domain project, a planning strategy developed in Arts PROPEL by Howard Gardner and his colleagues at Harvard University (Gardner, 1991;

Winner, Davidson, & Scripp, 1992; see also the description available at <http://www.pzweb.harvard.edu/Research/PROPEL.htm>).

According to Gardner and his colleagues, domain projects focus on a key concept or practice in a domain over an extended period of time; are student-centered; engage students in production, perception, and reflection in a domain; have a workshop climate; allow for revisiting work; and use authentic assessment including process-folios.

These were the design features applied in the course. Students showed their understanding by demonstrating a “mastery of the productive practices in a domain or discipline, coupled with the capacity to adopt different stances toward the work, among them the stances of audience member, critic, performer, and maker” (Gardner, 1991, p. 239). That is, students performed their own compositions and improvisations and the works of others; they listened to selections from 20th century Western performance music using the Integrated Listening Model as the basic approach (Hanley, 1997)⁴; they reflected on their work in their journals, in their self-evaluation and critiques, and through debriefing in-class assignments (see Appendix 2 for the assignments).⁵

Teaching Moments—Shaping Lives

We all experience music through powerful cultural and personal filters. Therefore, one challenge I encounter when I introduce students to new music is how to engage them with it in meaningful ways, ways that will encourage them to be open to an unfamiliar sonic world and seek new understanding of the music, of themselves, and of others. A number of approaches are possible. I will focus on one: the use of questions in listening and composition.

Listening. Engaging the imagination through questions can spark an interest in a piece that might otherwise elicit a yawn. Thus, before playing

⁴ Through the questions “What do you think, see, or feel?”, “What do you hear?”, and “So what?”, the Integrated Listening Model encourages students’ personal responses to music by asking them to express their feeling responses while also asking them to identify what they hear in the music and how the way the music sounds contributes to their feeling response. In addition to language responses, visual and movement responses to the music were also strategically used.

⁵ Teaching for understanding requires identifying and correcting misunderstandings. One misunderstanding that was clarified during the class regarded some confusion concerning the difference between genre and style. Genre “cuts across stylistic barriers” (Manoff, 1982, p. 4), referring to types of musical works such as operas, lullabies, blues, sonatas. Works in one genre can be in different styles. Style refers to the “outward differences”(p. 6) that characterize the music.

Satie's *Vexation* (1893), which consists of a repeated pattern, I asked: "Can monotony in music be interesting?" (One student remarked that my initial question seemed like an oxymoron. We discussed the possibility.) In my class, yes or no responses are not an option; they must be accompanied by further explanation. Two of my favourite questions are "Why?" and "So what?" In leading the kind of discussion referred to here, I attempt to remain non-judgmental while prompting students to think more deeply. "Can you give me an example?" "Is repetition always boring?" "Is variety essential to music?" "When does something become boring?" These questions are not predetermined but arise from the dialogue among the students and me. When students ask questions of their own, that is even better.

Once sufficient interest in the idea has been generated, we listen silently to the music and create individual "What do I Hear? What do I See/Think/Feel" T-charts. We then develop a collective summary on the chalkboard. The idea is to let students describe their experience of the music (not tell me what I asked them to listen for or what they think I want to hear). I act as scribe, writing down on the board what the students have heard and felt. As I write, I might comment on patterns I notice in the responses, surprises that occur, and, through questions, urge students to notice connections between what they heard and what they "saw" and felt. In the case of the particular recording of *Vexation* that I used (the work was not performed on piano as originally scored), some students were very intrigued by the variations made by the saxophone and found the music satisfying while others found the music too repetitious. Why was the response so different? We discussed this point. When I use the Integrated Listening Model, I am consistently amazed at the collective insights students bring to the music experience. The sharing is important because we learn from each other.

Questions can also be used to explore beliefs. "Does music written by women sound different?" "Should it?" When we listened to Alexina Louie's *Music for Heaven and Earth*, we explored if anyone could tell the gender of the composer from the sound of the music.

Composing. Questions also help in debriefing composition tasks. Compositions are wonderful ways of engaging students in music because they allow students to apply what they know. Furthermore, trying to think like a composer encourages them to listen more intently to their own work and that of others. Indeed, throughout the course, I urged students to listen like composers. In the case I will discuss, students listened to two of Webern's *Five Orchestral Pieces* and, in groups of three or four, were given 15 minutes to "compose" a short atonal (non serial) piece. I could sense there was some resistance to an "impossible" task; students were not comfortable with the style. Nevertheless, there was enough collective knowledge for each group to return and perform a

successful composition. I heard considerable laughter as groups explored unusual sound sources and combinations.

When students play their compositions for the class, my usual procedure is to have the rest of the class listen once with their eyes closed (to focus just on the sounds), then with their eyes open (to have the visual experience). There is usually spontaneous applause because we all appreciate the problems that have been solved. I then sometimes ask the composers to comment on their piece, perhaps regarding why they made certain choices, how the process worked, what they thought worked really well, and what they might do next. Then the class can ask questions or comment on what they noticed. This talk is an important part of the learning process. Sometimes finding the right questions can be difficult but everything does not need to rest on my shoulders. The students, also, notice musical features and bring insights; I can count on their contributions.

I notice a reluctance on the part of students to critique (in the sense of make any comment that could be construed as negative) the work of their classmates. It is important to get to a point where feedback is honest if growth is to occur. I find using the question "What if...?" to be helpful in beginning to promote honest feedback.

Our domain project on a central concept in the discipline of music was experienced in a constructivist environment where each student was encouraged to develop her own understanding and encouraged to pursue personal growth within a community of musicians and teachers. The links to curriculum issues were ongoing.

Part B — Pedagogy: Reconceptualizing Curriculum

Every time a choice is made a belief is applied. (Reimer, 2003, p. 4)

Sometimes difficult knowledge can become a generative and generous site for learning. (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 249)

Part B of the course focused more directly on curriculum issues, specifically: contemporary music curriculum theory and practice, and constructivism and teaching for musical understanding.

Beliefs underpin decisions. I agree wholeheartedly with Jorgensen's (2002) view that "instead of focusing teacher training efforts on preparing disciples or technicians of these methods, it is much more

important that teachers discover and articulate their own perspectives and voices and develop the skills and confidence to forge their own particular approaches” (p. 126).⁶ Since beliefs and current understandings are so important to learning, I asked students to articulate their assumption about music education, draw a portrait of themselves as music teacher (Weber & Mitchell, 1995), and draw a concept map showing their current understanding of curriculum. These assignments were shared and discussed, providing some surprising revelations about self (especially in the self-portraits, which ranged from traditional teachers to facilitators who were nearly invisible in the drawings) as well as a basis for further learning.⁷

Teaching Moments—Remembering Lives

We all have identities as music teachers, but we spend little time thinking about what these identities might be and what these might tell us about ourselves and our teaching. When students brought their self-portraits to the class I wondered if we should put them up on the wall for all to view for a few minutes with some informal discussion happening along the way. Then at the last moment, I decided it would be more valuable if each student talked about her portrait. We stood in a circle, and each teacher explained the significance of her portrait. I was very glad I made this decision as there was no way that I would have gleaned all the information in each portrait from examining them on my own. The colours, the fluidity of line, the selection and placement of objects and people, the use of symbols, all expressed so much. I also suspect that this careful examination of all the maps and listening to the explanations brought differences into sharp relief in ways that yielded provocative insights for some in the class. Where was my portrait?

Cultural understanding also plays an important role in curriculum, so each student undertook a personal cultural exploration (see Appendix 3 for the assignment). One question that arose from the dialogue was whether the focus on individual culture (difference) detracts from the way Canadians have historically agreed to negotiate social union (collective consensus). Questions of Canadian identity and Canadian icons (people and things) were also highly contested.

⁶ Except that I insist on teacher education, not teacher training.

⁷ These graduate students/teachers were in different stages of writing their projects. Some had already collected their data on projects that involved applying constructivist principles in their classrooms. Others were working on projects unrelated to constructivism or had not yet begun their data collection. The result was different initial levels of engagement with the content; motivation too was on multiple levels.

Moving from our conceptual webs, we launched into a more political view of curriculum with a dialogue about key questions asked by Apple (2003):

- What are schools for?
- Whom should they serve?
- Who benefits most from the ways knowledge is organized, taught, and evaluated?
- What is legitimate knowledge?
- What is good teaching and learning?
- What is a just society? (adapted, pp. 4–5)

We related our responses to educational practices in Newfoundland, Ontario, and British Columbia as experienced by students. We capitalized on the possibility of making cross-country comparisons.

I then asked students to read a review of the literature on music education curriculum (Hanley & Montgomery, 2002). The main thrust of the chapter was to identify reconceptualized curriculum trends in music education. These trends exist as social realities or discourses. Hanley and Montgomery uncovered four discourses in music education: music curriculum as institutionalized text, gender text, cultural studies text, and political text (<http://www.nyu.edu/education/music/mayday/maydaygroup/index.htm>). While we did not have time to examine each discourse in depth, I was curious about how students would understand their current professional circumstances. Since the chapter was quite dense, I provided the following questions to guide their reading:

1. Two theoretical bases are described in the chapter: positivist and reconceptualized. Apply your understanding of these positions to your own teaching practice by addressing these two questions. Which theoretical basis generally underpins the curriculum delivered in your school? Which theoretical basis generally underpins your provincial curriculum document?
2. After reading the chapter, draw a second curriculum concept map. Compare your two maps. How has your understanding of curriculum changed/developed?

The dialogue that ensued was vigorous, addressing whether there was a need for national standards in music education. As I recall, student

analyses of the theoretical underpinnings of education in their schools and provinces were mixed. Elements of the curriculum (more likely what was occurring in *some* classrooms, but not necessarily in *most* music classrooms) were perceived to be showing signs of a reconceptualized paradigm. Curriculum documents were perceived to be moving towards a reconceptualized view, for example in advocating authentic assessment. Government and administrative aspects and school structure were linked more closely to positivism. Given that students were attempting to locate evidence of reconceptualized discourse in their experiences and the view was not challenged, the reconceptualized curriculum was clearly more desirable in the view of these teachers.

In *Engaging Minds*, Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler (2000) critique the way curriculum has traditionally been developed in schools:

Curriculum documents have all tended to represent schooling as a series of discrete and linearized learning events through which one is expected to progress at a steady pace. The fact that human learning simply does not obey overly structured sequences is all but ignored within these curriculum formats. (p. 223)

The authors present an alternate way of describing curriculum that somewhat parallels that of Hanley and Montgomery. Complicated (positivist) theories view learning as mechanical, as mental activity in which internal models are built so there will be a mental match between inner conceptualization and an external reality that remains constant; learning resembles training. Behaviourist theories are examples of complicated explanations of learning. In complex theories, there is an interest in the whole, and the whole is greater than the parts. Further, learning is seen to be organic, evolutionary, unpredictable, a “participation in the world” (not a control of it) (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 64). Complex theory encompasses, but goes beyond, complicated and holistic theories. The authors identify four complex learning theories:

- cognitive constructivism (which focuses on individual cognition)
- social constructivism (which focuses on collective cognition)
- cultural and critical discourses (which focuses on how the world shapes individuals)
- ecological theories (which sees cognition as not just human or social but also biological)

By the end of the discussion of complicated and complex theories many students were somewhat overwhelmed by the possibilities and what these could mean for their music classrooms.

We then moved on to an article by Windschitl (2002) that discussed the dilemmas of implementing constructivist instruction, including the difficulties teachers encounter when they try to understand what constructivism means and how the conservative orientation of schools works against implementing constructivist approaches. Windschitl categorized the dilemmas as:

- conceptual (determining which constructivism should be used)
- pedagogical (negotiating criteria with students)
- cultural (the traditional model of schooling and systemic conditions as hard to overcome)
- political (conservative views of teachers and teaching and a privileged view of schooling)

Windschitl also proposed solutions: conceptual understanding, pedagogical expertise, cultural consciousness, and political acumen. The students, who recognize both intellectually and emotionally the appeal of constructivist theory, appreciated Windschitl's realistic consideration of the challenges; he succinctly expressed some of the concerns they had been imagining or had experienced. In spite of the dilemmas, most students wanted to pursue a constructivist model of learning.⁸

The next, and final path in the course was to apply what we had been learning to planned curriculum. Given the interest of reconceptualized curriculum thinkers and constructivism in understanding and the importance of meaning-making, Teaching for Understanding (TfU) (Wiske, 1998; Poelman, 2002, <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/Research/TfU.htm>) seemed a logical framework for curriculum development. It also related well to the domain project on style in Part A.⁹ TfU involves developing generative topics, overarching

⁸ For more information about constructivism, refer to http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/constructivism, <http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/~elmurphy/emurphy/cle.html>, and <http://www.funderstanding.com/constructivism.cfm>.

⁹ I have been disappointed that the domain projects in music described in the literature have focused on the practice central to a discipline (rehearsing), important as this role may be to music. In the visual arts, the focus has been on the concepts central to the

understanding goals (or throughlines for a longer period), understanding goals (for a unit), performances of understanding (what the students will do), and ongoing assessment (demonstrations of what the students have learned). TfU also assumes a constructivist view of learning and knowledge. Students were given the following assignment:

- 1) Using the graphic organizer designed by Poelman on page 152 in *Musical Understanding* or a similar format you design, develop a unit for a grade level of your choice. Be certain to include generative topics, understanding goals, performances of understanding, and on-going assessment. The performances of understanding should identify specific materials and content.
- 2) Take one experience from your unit and develop a single lesson plan using Wiggins' format as exemplified on page 182 of *Teaching for Musical Understanding*. Be prepared to share your work with the class and discuss the process you experienced.

We worked at developing an understanding of each aspect of TfU through class discussion. Using a TfU model required looking at teaching music differently. Most students had already been using authentic types of assessment as these are modeled in provincial curriculum documents, but other aspects of TfU were less accessible. To help us examine cultural issues in arts assessment we viewed a video of an International Baccalaureate arts symposium, *How Different Is Different?* (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 1997, see also the web-site http://www.ibo.org/ibo/index.cfm/en/ibo/about/offices/offices_northamerica), which identified the need to consider cultural norms when evaluating student work in music and art. The video also shed light on the difference between the aesthetic valuing evident in performance music and the communal nature of Balinese music (an example of participatory music). Wiske (1998) and Wiggins and McTighe (1998) provided helpful advice about what should be considered in assessment that seeks to promote in depth learning and understanding.

discipline (for example, colour, shape, design). The generative topic for Part A of our domain project was: "Style is the characteristic manner in which a basic musical impulse is expressed." The understanding goals were: Culture affects musical style. Culture conditions the listener. Listening to various styles of music can help you expand your understanding of your own and other musics (adapted from T. Manoff, *Music: A Living Language*, 1982, New York: W. W. Norton).

The most challenging part of TfU for these teachers was the development of generative topics. At first, students began with what they were used to teaching. Identifying appropriate generative topics is critical because these topics are open-ended, allowing learners to choose a path rather than follow one predetermined by the teacher; they generate possibilities. It took a great deal of thinking and *angst* to get our heads around identifying bigger ideas in music. In the end, each partnership or individual produced a successful TfU unit. Two examples¹⁰ will illustrate the results.

Teaching Moments—Inventing Forms

Inventive pedagogies must include interruptions of the familiar. (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 198)

Elementary music teachers are often steeped in pedagogy that focuses on atomistic aspects of music such as a particular interval or rhythm pattern. Even when looking at concepts that could be considered more holistic such as dynamics and tempo, the tendency is to look on these concepts in isolation. Looking at patterns or relationships is somewhat foreign. It is, therefore, not surprising that identifying generative topics has been a challenge for my students across the years. Generative topics are issues, themes, concepts, or ideas that provide depth of experience to support the development of understanding in students. I used a process to help them get over this hurdle.

- Brainstorm important topics in music alone or with a partner. Choose one topic that looks promising and is of interest to you.
- Make an idea-web around the topic to discover thematic clusters. Try to find connections among the ideas.
- Choose a cluster to become the major ideas in your generative topic.
- Compare your generative topic to the following criteria:
 - a) Is your topic of central importance to the discipline of music?
 - b) Will it be interesting to students?
 - c) Will it allow students to make connections to their own experience?
 - d) Is it accessible to the students?
 - e) Does it provide opportunities for multiple connections?
 - f) Does it allow for a variety of perspectives?

¹⁰ Used with permission.

Even with this process, some students had difficulty breaking away from the more typical concern with tasks such as how to get students to feel a quarter rest (rather than looking at silence in music) or play a dotted quarter eighth note pattern (rather than looking at rhythm pattern and its function). After a great deal of thinking, prompted by questions challenging the selected topics, students did settle upon topics that would generate student understanding.

Natalie Robinson¹¹ chose “the power of music in the media” as her generative topic for a unit for middle school students. She identified four subheadings (each of which could also be a generative topic of its own): music and emotional response, music’s role in society, music and commercialism, and music and cinematography. Her throughlines were:

- How does music shape the way in which I experience the world?
- How is music used to influence people in society?
- How do marketing groups use music to influence the consumer?
- How can I learn to develop and convey my personal interpretations of the relationship between music and the media and defend it with evidence?

Her understanding goals were stated first as outcomes then in language appropriate for sharing with the students:

For teacher: Students will understand the relationship between music and its influence on the listener.

For students: What feelings, emotions, and imagery can music evoke in us?

For teacher: Students will recognize defining characteristics in music used to represent an idea or message.

For students: Why would a particular musical style be chosen to represent an idea or message over another?

For teacher: Students will understand how the media uses music for influential purposes in marketing, commercialism, and cinematography.

For students: Why is music present in particular social locations and in the media? What message is the music trying to get across?

¹¹ Natalie Robinson is a general music specialist who is currently teaching in a middle school in Victoria, BC (School District #61 — Greater Victoria).

For teacher: Students will understand the similarities and differences between music used by media sources.

For students: Why would a commercial or movie use one musical style over another?

For teacher: Students will understand what makes a musical selection effective in both film and commercials.

For students: What makes a movie soundtrack or commercial jingle effective?

This unit addresses British Columbia's provincial curriculum goals (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/fak7/fak7toc.htm>) under the two curriculum organizers—Thoughts, Images, and Feelings, and Context—and helps students understand the many roles music plays in their lives. Students will be involved in perception, reflection, and criticism.

Amy Newman¹² and Anne Thomson¹³ wondered how cultural expression and music are related. Their unit was developed for grades 4/5 children. Their generative topic was “music in the Maori culture.” Their overarching goals were:

How are cultural expression and music related?

Why is it important to learn about music from other cultures?

Their understanding goals were expressed as follows:

For teacher: Students will better understand the role that music plays in a new cultural context.

For students: How is music used in different cultures? (Canadian/Maori)

For teacher: Students will be able to identify some defining characteristics of Maori music.

For students: What are some of the important characteristics of Maori music?

¹² Amy Newman is an elementary music teacher now working as the Fine Arts Coordinator for School District #36 (Surrey, BC).

¹³ Anne Thomson has been a general music specialist since 1997 and was a classroom primary teacher from 1991–1996 in Squamish, BC (School District #48, Howe Sound).

For teacher: Students will experience the connection between the physical expression of Maori music and the structural elements of Maori music.

For students: How does it feel to listen to, create, and perform Maori music?

In this unit, students engage in production, perception, and reflection. This bicultural unit addresses British Columbia's provincial curriculum goals under all three curriculum organizers: Structures; Thoughts, Images, and Feelings; and Context. In both units, performances demonstrating understanding and on-going assessment were developed to build on the understanding goals.

The students realized that their units were works in progress and that changes would more than likely occur in the implementation phase. Most were pleased to have developed a unit that they wanted to try with their students during the next school year. The curriculum component began with curriculum theory and ended with theory transformed into practice, promoting a synthesis of theory and practice, and using theory to provoke thinking (Pinar, 1995, p. 8).

Making Connections

Life is not a matter of equilibrium, but the presence of disequilibrium, an ever-expanding sphere of unpredictable possibilities. (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 211)

Unpredictable possibilities are unnerving. Students did experience disequilibrium in the course, partially because of the compact nature of the course but largely because they were being challenged to think about music, about teaching, about the world, and about themselves in new ways. There were numerous bumps on the road mitigated by many ahas.

In both parts of the course, teaching for understanding (as experienced and as constructed) was one overarching goal.¹⁴ The domain project on style allowed students to produce, perceive, and reflect on music that illustrated both modern and postmodern thought. In the curriculum component, we examined positivist (modern) and reconceptualized (postmodern) curriculum conceptions and attempted

¹⁴ The other two were the development of musicianship and a deeper understanding of pedagogy.

to understand that theory and practice are embedded in each other (Pinar, 1995, p. 56). We focused on curriculum as institutionalized text as we developed TfU units for constructivist classrooms. Breaking away from past practice while respecting one's experience was (for most of the class) both stimulating and perilous. Not surprisingly, we concluded with many questions.

Codetta

Precisely what is learned is rarely, if ever, immediately evident to the learner or the teacher. (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 258)

What my students will apply as they return to their classrooms or administrative roles will emerge over time. I wonder if they experienced the course as I have described it. I can say that writing about this course has clarified my thinking, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

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Appendix 1. Course Listening Repertoire

"C'est l'extase langoureuse"	Debussy
"La cathédrale engloutie"	Debussy
"La cathédrale engloutie"	Debussy/Tomita
<i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faun</i>	Debussy
"Bransle Gai" (<i>Agon</i>)	Stravinsky
"Greeting Prelude"	Stravinsky
<i>Octet for Wind Symphony</i>	Stravinsky
<i>Rites of Spring</i> (sections)	Stravinsky
<i>Five Pieces for Orchestra</i>	Webern
<i>Vexations</i>	Satie
"Gymnopédie" No. 1	Satie
"Gymnopédie" No. 1	Satie/Blood, Sweat & Tears
"Ragtime"	Satie
<i>Le boeuf sur le toit</i>	Milhaud
<i>Ancient Voices of Children</i>	Crumb
<i>Phenomena</i>	Babbitt
<i>Keewaydin</i>	Freedman
"Summa" (for voices and for strings)	Pärt
"Solfeggio"	Pärt
<i>Music for Heaven and Earth</i>	Louie
"Dead Elvis" (<i>American Icons</i>)	Daugherty
"Liberace" (<i>American Icons</i>)	Daugherty
"When the Light Appears Boy" (<i>Cornershop</i>)	Singh
<i>Farewell to Philosophy</i>	Bryars
"Rodan"	Zorn
<i>Spillane</i>	Zorn

Appendix 2. Major Assignments for Part A

1. Listening

Compare and contrast Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* with Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps* (Part I — *Adoration of the Earth*) in terms of style. Use the Integrated Listening Model as you listen to each selection (record a minimum of three responses). Discuss the connection-making for each piece in prose. Then, compare the styles of the two works in prose. Using the diamond format as a basis for discussion, include pertinent contextual information and an explanation of why the first work is an example of impressionism and the other of "primitivism."

2. Composition

After listening to George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children*, select one of the texts from pages 125 to 127 and set it to music. Be adventuresome; try some unusual ways of expressing the text. This work will not need to be performed but certainly may be. Keep drafts of your work so you can record the development of your composition. When you are satisfied with your work, in no more than two pages, discuss the musical decisions you made and the effect you wished to produce. In two more pages, summarize the style of your composition. Keep all drafts in your process folio.

3. Composition

Write your own "folk song" including lyrics, melody, and accompaniment. The accompaniment can range from simple chords to more complex work. The lyrics should be based on an event: personal, contemporary, or historical (Kuzmich, p. 136, no. 9). Write a companion piece (a second solution). Ask a colleague to peer critique your work in writing and revise your work as needed. Include a summary of the critique and how you addressed the comments. Which version do you prefer? Why?

4. Performance

Select a folk song from a country of your choice. Arrange it in a way that enhances the expressive qualities of the

melody and lyrics. Be prepared to justify your choices in terms of authenticity. Prepare the work for performance. You may ask classmates to help you in this performance.

5. Composition

Study a painting that depicts a natural scene. Work out a musical translation, a sound statement of the painting with an eye to colours, line and texture, highlights and focus, and rhythmic patterns to be performed. Although a score will not be required for this assignment (a tape or electronic version is acceptable), you are to explain in writing how the painting helped focus your imagination and musical choices. How did the style of the painting impact on your music? Discuss the style of your composition.

Appendix 3. Personal Culture Exploration

Recognition and definition of one's own musical culture enhances and prepares the way for understanding music from other people. What is your musical culture? In your exploration, you might include the following questions:

- Does your musical culture include music from the past as well as the present?
- Does it include music from around the world and other ethnic groups because you value it and feel a personal connection to it?
- Does it only include music that you really like to sing, listen to, or perform?
- What are your selection criteria for inclusion?
- Is there a common Canadian culture? If so, how do you define it?

In approaching the development of your personal musical ethnography, consider:

- your ideas about music (e.g., belief system, aesthetics, contexts, and history of music)
- the social organization of music

- the repertoire of music (e.g., styles, genres, texts, composition, transmission, and movement)
- the material culture

(adapted from McCullough-Brabson, 2002)