

From the land of the maple leaf: a contemporary perspective on school music education in Canada

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Abstract: This paper first provides a contemporary perspective of elementary and secondary school music curricula across the 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada; a review of the current state of music education in Canadian elementary and secondary schools is subsequently presented. Then, further issues related to specialist/generalist challenges, teacher education, place, and current distinctions and selected innovations in Canadian music education are examined. Ongoing challenges, professional development and support for music educators, and pertinent aspects related to advocacy in music education then are presented. Finally, culminating points for consideration in the future are offered.

Keywords: Music education. Canada. School music.

Da terra dos carvalhos: uma perspectiva contemporânea das escolas de música no Canadá¹

Resumo: Este artigo primeiramente fornece uma perspectiva contemporânea do currículo de música nas escolas fundamentais e secundárias nas 10 províncias e 3 territórios do Canadá; uma revisão da situação atual da educação musical nas escolas de nível fundamental e secundário canadenses é apresentado em seguida. A seguir, são examinados assuntos relativos a desafios específicos e generalistas, formação de professores, locais, diferenciações e inovações da educação musical canadense. Desafios constantes, desenvolvimento profissional e apoio para educadores musicais e aspectos pertinentes relacionados à defesa da educação musical são apresentados também. E finalmente, são vislumbrados pontos culminantes para futuras considerações.

Palavras-chave: Educação musical. Canada. Ecolas de música.

¹ Tradução de Ingrid Barankoski.

De la tierra de los robles: una perspectiva contemporánea de las escuelas de música en Canadá²

Resumen: Este artículo ofrece primeramente una perspectiva contemporánea del plan de estudios de música en las escuelas básicas y secundarias de las 10 provincias y 3 territorios de Canadá; una revisión de la situación actual de la educación musical en las escuelas primarias y secundarias canadienses es presentada posteriormente. En seguida, se examinan asuntos relativos a desafíos específicos y generales, la formación de docentes, locales, diferenciaciones e innovaciones de la educación musical canadiense. Constantes desafíos, desarrollo profesional y apoyo a los profesores de música, así como cuestiones relacionadas a la defensa de la educación musical son también presentadas. Por último, son vislumbrados puntos culminantes para futuras consideraciones.

Palabras clave: Educación musical. Canadá. Escuelas de música.

² Tradução de Bryan Holmes.

School music education in Canada has rich heritage. From humble beginnings during colonial times to the present day, school music programs in Canadian schools have grown and developed over time and have been an integral part of the cultural development of Canada as a country (Green & Vogan, 1991). Today, school music education is a fundamental facet of general education across this vast nation.

This chapter will first provide an overview of the Canadian historical and geographical context. Next, an overview of the intended curriculum in music/arts education from each of the provinces (& territories) will be presented. Following, a review of the current state of music education in Canadian schools will be discussed including the issues relating to specialist/generalist, teacher education, place, and current distinctions and selected innovations in Canadian music education. Ongoing challenges, professional development and support for music educators, and aspects related to advocacy in music education will be presented. Finally, the closing section will offer points for consideration in the future.

To investigate the various aspects of school music education in Canada, it is important to look at and understand how the historical influences, geographical breadth, and both sociological and ethno-cultural perspectives have influenced the development of Canada as a country and Canadian culture today.

Historical and Geographical Context

Canada is the world's second-largest country comprised of land mass of some 9,984,670 km². Geographically, Canada truly stretches from sea to sea to sea: From the Pacific Ocean on the west, to the Arctic Ocean on the north, and to the Atlantic Ocean on the east. As a country, it is comprised of 10 provinces (from west to east: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador) and 3 territories to the north: the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut (Government of Canada, n.d.a).

Canada was created in 1867 when the British government passed into law the British North America (BNA) Act. The BNA Act provided for the unification of the provinces into The Dominion of Canada, as a member of the British Commonwealth; it enumerated particular powers to the provincial legislatures and residual powers to the federal government. Education, as one of the key

priorities of the new Dominion, was assigned to the provinces. For the first hundred and fifteen years, The BNA Act acted as the constitution for Canada (Government of the United Kingdom, 1867). In 1982, the Canada Act (sometimes known as the Constitution Act), was passed by the British parliament and proclaimed by Queen Elizabeth II resulting in Canada becoming a fully sovereign state. The Canada Act contains a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees 34 rights including religious freedom, minority language education, and cultural tolerance (Government of the United Kingdom, 1982).

Although Canada encompasses a large landmass, the current population of Canada of some 31 million ranks Canada as the 33rd largest global country in terms of population. Approximately 80 percent of Canada's population lives within 250 km of the border with the United States of America. While population in Canada continues to grow, most of this growth is through immigration from other global cultures; settlement of new Canadians has been primarily in urban and suburban areas of major cities. As well, Canada is experiencing a continuing shift in population moving from rural areas to more suburban and urban locations. This has resulted in declining enrolments in schools in rural areas and smaller towns and cities while large metropolitan cities i.e. Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Edmonton have seen increases in the population of school aged children (Government of Canada, n.d.b).

Canada can be described today as a multicultural society. Initially many indigenous nations (today, indigenous peoples are described in the Canadian context as First Nation peoples) were the lone inhabitants of the land we now call Canada. Beginning primarily in the sixteenth century, our early forefathers and foremothers came as immigrants to Canada from mainly English, French, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh cultural groups. Following in the twentieth century, immigrants from all cultures in the world have come to call Canada their new home. As a result, some describe Canada today as a truly cultural mosaic (Gillis, 2009; Government of Canada, n.d.b).

The Government of Canada, through the promotion of multiculturalism initiated in 1971, began to recognize the value and dignity of Canadians from all races and ethno-cultural groups, all languages, and all religions. A key movement at this time was that the government also recognized the value and dignity of First Nations peoples and it also provided equal status for Canada's two official languages: English and French. Multiculturalism has resulted today in a most tolerant Canadian society. The term multiculturalism has come to be interpreted to mean

a society in which people accept and encourage many cultures to thrive. It truly promotes cultural diversity. Living with and learning to accept people from various diverse cultures helps us all to understand each other as Canadian citizens, and, as a result, has and continues to discourage both hatred and violence (Government of Canada, n.d.b).

Understanding the historical, geographical, and both sociological and ethno-cultural context of Canada is key as we turn now our lens to examine school music education in the various provinces and territories of Canada

The Intended Curriculum From Sea to Sea to Sea: Provincial and Territorial Curricula in Music Education

While each provincial or territorial government develops and sets their own curriculum policy for students within their jurisdictions, there are certain broad commonalities amongst the music education curricula across Canada at both the elementary schools (mainly Kindergarten to Grade 8) and for secondary schools (mainly Grades 9 – 12). For elementary students, mandatory general music instruction with an emphasis on singing is prevalent across the country. Singing is often supplemented with the playing of pitched and non-pitched classroom instruments (Orff rhythmic and melodic instruments), as well as recorder and/or ukulele. Musical behaviours encompass singing, playing, listening, moving, creating, improvising, dramatizing, reflecting, and critically analyzing. At the later elementary grades (in certain provinces referred as the middle school level or junior high school level), students may be offered general music instruction or a more specialized program of music education through choral, band (brass, woodwind, and percussion), strings, or guitar. Certain provinces/territories such as Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Saskatchewan outline music learning expectations for elementary schools subsumed under broader Arts Education curriculum policy documents (Beatty, 2007; Bolden, 2012).

For secondary students, music is an optional course and some provinces/territories have at least one mandatory arts course to satisfy secondary school graduation requirements. Secondary music programs across the country are mainly performance-based where students are engaged in concert band, jazz band, concert choral, jazz choral, strings, guitar,

keyboards, or technology-based courses. In most provinces, the performance-based music making is often supplemented with listening, creating, reflecting, and critically analyzing behaviours. In some provinces/territories, locally developed courses are encouraged to address unique cultural needs within a specific school district (Bolden, 2012; Piercey, 2012, Prest, 2013).

An overview of key aspects of provincial curriculum policy documents, moving from west to east across Canada follows.

British Columbia

The British Columbia Ministry of Education released its *Arts Education: Music K-7* curriculum document in 2010. The organizers for the Music strand of this document are: exploring and creating, elements and skills, context, and presenting and performing. The developmental prescribed learning outcomes are clearly stated and expressed in measurable and observable terms. These prescribed learning outcomes set out the required attitudes, skills, and knowledge — what students are expected to know and be able to do — by the end of each grade. In addition, suggested achievement indicators are provided for each grade level and support assessment for, as, and of learning (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2010). Musical behaviours include, singing, playing classroom instruments (recorder, Orff, etc.), listening, exploring and creating, reflecting, and critically analyzing. A glossary of music terms is also included.

The secondary music curriculum from grades 8 -12 (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1995, 1997, 2002, 2004) outline required program content within the delivery of the prescribed learning outcomes for each grade; these are described under broad categories of technical competence, performance applications and music literacy. The authorized music courses include general music, mainly performance-based course such as: concert choir, vocal jazz, concert band, jazz band, orchestral strings, guitar, and with composition and technology courses added at the grade 11 and 12 levels. The secondary music curricula documents include prescribed learning outcomes, suggested instructional strategies, suggested assessment, and a glossary.

Alberta

Music Elementary curriculum policy document (Alberta Education, 1989) promotes an aesthetic education philosophy. To satisfy creative and cultural expression, kindergarten children express themselves through singing,

moving, playing instruments, creating, and problem solving. *Music Elementary* presents five general learning expectations followed by sequential child-developmental specific learning expectations. The learning expectations are organized in charts that are structured on five elements of music described as: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, expression; music behaviours such as: singing, playing instruments, listening, moving, reading (and writing), and creating are outlined. Attitudinal development is also considered.

Secondary education in Alberta is divided into two divisions: junior high and senior high. At the junior high level (Grades 7-9), the *Junior High Music: Choral, General and Instrumental* (1988) policy document promotes music learning through performing, listening, and creating. Learning behaviours involve singing, playing, reading, listening, creating, and valuing (Alberta Education, 1988).

At the senior high school level (Grades 10-12), three programs of study outline the curriculum in music: General Music, Choral Music, and Instrumental Music. Learner expectations focus on performing/listening, creating, researching, and valuing by engaging the student in musical behaviours such as: singing, playing, reading, creating, valuing, and listening to music (Alberta Education, 1991a, 1991b, 1994).

The General Music program of study provides two compulsory components: theory/ elements and structures and music making. As well, elective components include composition, history of western music, music and technology, world music, careers in music, jazz appreciation, and popular music. In the Choral Music program of study, the components consist of vocal, aural, theoretical/practical, composition, and interpretation, and synthesis. The senior high school Instrumental Music program may contain either a wind/percussion program and/or strings program. Concept/skill charts outline key learner expectations related to performance, ranges, articulation, percussion, rhythm, written, aural, history, and interpretive (Alberta Education, 1991a, 1991b, 1994).

Alberta Education is currently undergoing curriculum redesign. It is anticipated that this will include opportunities for local decision making in curriculum development and course delivery and allow for greater depth of study.

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan embraces integrating music, with drama, dance, and visual arts in the broader curriculum sphere of arts education. The three key goals/components of the Saskatchewan Grade 1-9 arts education curricula include:

creative/productive, critical/responsive, and cultural/historical. A key aspect of Saskatchewan curriculum is a strong influence from the perspectives of First Nations peoples and Métis. These curricula also promote inquiry learning to empower students to construct meaning and understanding. “To support inquiry into some of the ‘big ideas’ of interest to contemporary artists in all disciplines, and to provide meaningful contexts for inquiry, a different conceptual focus has been identified for each grade” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011a, p.13). Learning outcomes are described by discrete subject areas (i.e. music, drama, dance, visual arts) for the creative/productive goals while both critical/responsive and cultural/historical goals are stated generally in arts education language. An elemental framework guides music expectations. First Nation and Métis curriculum perspective infuse each document. A comprehensive overview of methods for the assessment and evaluation of student learning is also included (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e).

In the Grades 10-12 curricula, the Arts education framework continues for Arts Education courses (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 1996) as well as expanding to more discipline-specific curricula with music guidelines for band, choral, and instrumental jazz. First Nation and Métis curriculum perspectives infuse each document. In both the band and choral curricula, course content is organized under aural skills, musical literacy, interpretation/appreciation/decision-making, instrumental technique, and attitudes/values. In addition to guiding principles for assessment and evaluation, this curriculum includes connections to other subject areas; a sample unit is included to offer a model for teachers to see how the three goals/components can be integrated in a unit of study and to see how the suggested instructional guidelines may be applied (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 1993, 1996, 1997). The Jazz curriculum for Grade 10-12 (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c) encompasses eight strands: forms, improvisation, style/feel, tools, history, listening, ensemble/personal performance, and theory. As with other Saskatchewan curricula, learning expectations and key indicators are grouped according to the three goals/components.

Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut

The Governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are full partners in the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol in Basic Education (WNCP). This

protocol supports the development of common curriculum frameworks for Western and Northern Canada.

Within these frameworks, the various program of studies in music K-12 developed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education form the basis of the Yukon curriculum. This curriculum is frequently adapted to reflect local Yukon needs and conditions (Beatty, 2007; Yukon Department of Education, n.d.).

The Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment also sustain the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol in Basic Education (WNCP). For the kindergarten to grade 9, the Northwest Territories utilizes the K-9 Arts Education Curriculum developed by Saskatchewan Education. For grades 10 – 12, the Alberta music curriculum is followed (Beatty, 2007; Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, n.d.).

Finally, the Nunavut Department of Education also supports the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol in Basic Education (WNCP). New programs and curricula are being developed for their schools, and currently Nunavut primarily utilizes the Alberta curricula (Beatty, 2007; Council of Ministers of Education, 2008.).

Manitoba

The Manitoba music curriculum framework for Kindergarten to Grade 8 identifies four essential learning areas: music language and performance skills; creative expression in music; understanding music in context; and valuing musical experience. The general learning outcomes and the specific learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve in the music curriculum from Kindergarten to grade 8 are organized into these four essential learnings. The overarching goal of the music curriculum is to support, nurture, and inspire the growth of each student as a music maker. Music making is valued both as an individual and a group experience. In addition, a growth and sequence chart of music understandings and skills using the elements of music, as an organizer, is also included (Manitoba Department of Education and Advanced Learning, 2011).

The Manitoba secondary music curriculum framework of outcomes is currently in draft form. The framework identifies four essential learning areas: making, creating, connecting, and responding. The general and specific learning outcomes are illuminated by various inquiry questions; these questions are designed as possible supports to provide various entry points and potential pathways for

teachers and learners alike into music learning (Manitoba Department of Education and Advanced Learning, 2014).

Ontario

The Ontario curriculum policy document is mandatory for all students in elementary grades (Grades 1-8); the arts contain four strands: dance, drama, music, and visual arts. For each grade level, knowledge and skill overall and specific expectations for each strand are organized into 3 categories: 1. creating and presenting/performing, 2. reflecting, responding, and analyzing, and 3. exploring form and cultural contexts. In addition, key components of this document include a creative process and a critical analysis process. For expectations, teacher prompts are included to illustrate the kinds of questions teachers might pose in relation to the requirement specified in the expectation. In music, the fundamental concepts are portrayed through the use of the elements of music framework consisting of duration, pitch, dynamics and other expressive controls, timbre, texture/harmony, and form. Musical behaviours include: singing, moving, reading, playing, listening, writing, composing, improvising, analyzing, and reflecting. Basic considerations for assessment and evaluation of student learning, along with an achievement chart for the arts, guide teachers in determining students' strengths and weaknesses in achieving the curriculum expectations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009).

The elective Ontario arts program in Grades 9 and 10 consists of two courses in each of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, one course in media arts, and one course entitled 'Integrated Arts' while the arts program in Grades 11 and 12 contains four courses in each of dance, drama, media arts, music, and visual arts, as well as a course entitled 'Exploring and Creating in the Arts'. By the end of grade 12, all graduates must complete at least one arts credit. For each course, the overall and specific expectations comprise the mandated curriculum: they are organized into 3 categories: 1. creating and presenting/performing, 2. reflecting, responding, and analyzing, and 3. foundations. The creative process and the critical analysis process are integral foci in enabling students to meet learning expectations. In the music courses, students develop their awareness of the elements of music (pitch – melody, harmony, and tonality; duration – beat, metre, rhythm, and tempo; dynamics and other expressive controls; timbre; texture; and form) and apply them to create and perform works that are related to their own personal interest and experience. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a, 2010b).

Québec

The Québec Education Program is characterized by a competency-approach which formulates learning outcomes as competencies. A competency, in this case, is referred to as a set of behaviours based on the effective mobilization and use of a range of resources. A range of resources usually includes knowledge, skills, and values. The elementary music curriculum (as part of arts education) describes three competencies: 1. To invent vocal and instrumental pieces, 2. To interpret music pieces, and 3. To appreciate music works, personal productions and those of classmates. For each of the three competencies, the end-of-cycle learning outcomes are delineated with evaluation criteria outlined. Essential knowledges in music incorporating the elements of music and both graphic and non-traditional notation are outlined for each of the three elementary education cycles. Suggestions for using information and communication technologies are included (Québec Ministry of Education, 2001)

The secondary music program for the province of Québec is divided into two cycles: cycle 1 and cycle 2. Cycle 1 covers the first 2 years (secondary 1 and 2.) Cycle 2 is made up of the last 3 years of secondary school. The curriculum for secondary music entails the development of three complementary and interdependent competencies: 1. creates musical works, 2. performs musical works, and 3. appreciates musical works. For each of the three competencies, the end-of-cycle learning outcomes are delineated with evaluation criteria. Program content of musical concepts is aligned with the elements of music framework; traditional and non-traditional forms of notation are also included. A strong promotion of francophone culture is advocated in both elementary and secondary curricula. In Québec, the official curriculum represents only 75% of the total curriculum. Local schools can create up to 25% of the curriculum in order to meet local needs (Québec Ministry of Education, 2004a, 2004b).

New Brunswick

The music curriculum for the province of New Brunswick arises from the philosophy and outcomes expressed in the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum* (Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, 2001). This curriculum, collaboratively developed by the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, defined Key-Stage Outcomes for grades three, six, nine, and twelve. Each Key-Stage Outcome was

connected to one of eight General Curriculum Outcomes (GCO's), which were grouped into the three strands: 1. creating, making, and presenting, 2. understanding and connecting contexts of time, place, and community, and 3. perceiving, reflecting, and responding.

Following this framework, the *Music Education Curriculum: Kindergarten to Grade Five* as well as, middle school curricula for the province of New Brunswick (Grades 6, 7, and 8) were developed which outline explicit learning outcomes for each grade. Suggestions for teaching and learning, assessment, and resources are also provided. Additionally, sample standards of achievement tables are provided for specific outcomes. A scope and sequence chart lists a sequential and logical progression through the various elements of music (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b, 2008, 2009).

Music is part of the mandated curriculum experience in New Brunswick for students from kindergarten to grade 10 and available as elective credit courses in grades 11 and 12. The secondary curricula for grades 9 and 10 music outline the general and specific outcomes. Additionally, suggested strategies for assessing music learning are presented as well as recommended facilities, equipment, and resources (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2002). The course guide for *Music 111/112*, developed prior to the framework adopted from the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*, is based on the achievement of three broad outcomes: 1. demonstrate competence in performing music, 2. demonstrate knowledge and application of theoretical and aural skills and concepts, and 3. demonstrate an understanding of music in historical contexts. Content and topics are listed under the three outcomes. Strategies for assessing music learning are included, too (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2001). Some earlier course guides for grades 11 and 12 utilize curriculum learning objectives outlining performance and technical requirements as well as musicianship learnings organized by the elements of music (New Brunswick Department of Education, 1993, 1994, 2000).

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Department of Education released *Music Primary – 6* in 2002, fully endorsing the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum* (2001). The comprehensive document includes general curriculum outcomes and grade-by-grade specific curriculum outcomes. Other features include contexts for learning and teaching (i.e. principles underlying music education curricula); the learning environment;

the use of technology; roles in music education; diverse learning needs; suggestions for learning and teaching; and suggestions for assessment and evaluation, Actions involve singing, playing instruments, listening, creating and analyzing/critiquing (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2002).

The *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum* (2001) was also adopted in outlining the learning outcomes framework for junior high school (grades 7-9) and the senior high school (grades 10-12) arts courses. These over-arching documents delineate general curriculum outcomes and grade-by-grade specific curriculum outcomes for all subject areas including music (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2012, 2014).

Prince Edward Island

Embracing the curriculum framework from the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (2001) document, the province of Prince Edward Island in its elementary music curriculum organizes music learning under four focus areas: musical participation – experiences in, musical awareness and appreciation, musical understanding and musical technology. Curriculum outcomes are outlined sequentially for each grade in each of the aforementioned focus areas and instructional strategies are provided for key stage outcomes at the end of Grade 3 and Grade 6. Suggestions are provided for assessment/evaluation and communicating with parents. Appendices include: listening resources and activities, recorder skills, and various resource lists (Prince Edward Island Department of Education, 2002).

The secondary curriculum policy document for instrumental music (Prince Edward Island Department of Education, 1997), created prior to the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum* (2001), provides both general and grade specific outcomes. Promoting a philosophy of ‘learning through performance’, the basic learning activities involve creating and performing, listening and performing, and reading and performing. In addition, suggested teaching strategies, guidelines for assessment and evaluation and recommended resources are included. In addition, one newly developed course guide provided for both Grades 11 and 12, *Music 801A* focuses on popular music of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Units of this course outline specific outcomes, strategies for teaching and learning, worthwhile tasks for instruction and/or assessment, and suggested resources (Prince Edward Island Department of Education, n.d.).

Newfoundland & Labrador

The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education elementary music curriculum incorporates the Atlantic Canada arts education curriculum framework (Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, 2001). The document outlines the Key Stage Curriculum Outcomes as well as grade specific outcomes. The elements of music provide the organizer for the outcomes of each grade and the relative suggestions for teaching and learning, assessment, and resources. Musical behaviours include: singing, playing instruments, speaking, moving, writing/constructing, listening/aurally identifying, creating and improvising, and responding and reflecting. As well, appendices delineate assessment, teaching and learning strategies, facilities and equipment, musical concepts, movement, and resources (Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 2005).

The grade 7-9 music curriculum is also based upon the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum* (2001) and is mandated for all students. Through performing, listening, and creating actions, this curriculum exposes students to the musical traditions and practices in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as embracing multiculturalism and global music. Curriculum outcomes include a combination of both core (classroom and choral setting) and instrumental-specific outcomes. This flexible curriculum also offers outcomes for alternate settings such as: choral, band, strings, traditional accordion, traditional strings, and guitar. Extensive suggestions for assessment and evaluation are provided (Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 2009).

At the senior high school level, curriculum guides are provided for three courses: *Ensemble Performance 1105, 2105, 3105, Experiencing Music 2200, and Applied Music 2206/3206*. *Ensemble Performance*, divided into three levels: 1105, 2105, and 3105, is a spiral curriculum designed in which musical concepts are revisited as technical skills are refined. Goals and objectives are outlined for each type of ensemble (choral or instrumental). In addition, this course guide includes instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation, with supports for scheduling, resources, and equipment. *Experiencing Music 2200* is a two-credit course without pre-requisites open to all students at any level. It contains content not available in other high school music courses. *Experiencing Music 2200* is designed to explore a variety of musical styles, including jazz, rock, classical, country and western, pop, and folk. Finally, *Applied 2206/3206* promotes the fusion of performance skills and theoretical concepts and is reflected in the core outcomes.

These courses may be delivered through each of the following applied areas: voice, winds, percussion, strings, guitar, and piano/keyboard. Possibilities of course delivery, instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation, and various resources including recommendations for a MIDI workstation are also incorporated (Mercer, 2012; Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, n.d.a, n.d.b, n.d.c, 1996).

From The Intended Curricula to the Implemented Curricula: A Perspective on the Current State of Music in Canadian Schools.

Over the past fifteen years there have been very few key studies that have investigated the status of music education in Canada either provincially or nationally (Beatty, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; [Hill Strategies Research, 2010](#)).

In 2009, The Coalition for Music Education in Canada commissioned Hill Strategies Research to undertake a study of music education in Canadian schools. Survey respondents reported challenges in terms of music funding, instructional space, and the number of music specialist teachers. Conversely some schools reported improvements in computer / recording technology, the number or quality of musical instruments, and increase in visits by artists, and increased student involvement in music. British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Alberta and Manitoba stood out as leaders in delivering quality music programs in their schools. Six themes emerged from the survey:

- 1: there are notable benefits of music education,
2. funding of music education is a key challenge in schools,
3. qualified music educators are crucial in creating and implementing strong, sustainable music programs,
4. strong music programs rely on a delicate balance of support from various educational stakeholders,
5. schools across the country identify a need to invest in music facilities, instruments and equipment, and
6. “passive” music education is very common in schools (Hill Strategies Research, 2010) .

In an earlier study, Beatty (2001a, 2001b, 2001c) investigated the status of music education in Ontario

elementary and secondary schools using survey research. Two surveys were developed: one for elementary teachers and one for secondary teachers collected data on:

the teacher of music, the training of the teacher and teacher qualifications, the description of the school music program, the capability of teacher in utilizing provincial curricula, the availability of resources, the support of the music program, the funding of the music program and the awareness of advocacy groups in support of music education (Beatty, 2001a, p. 38)

Among the results in the study regarding secondary music, 89.6% of the music teachers felt comfortable with their current implementation of the curriculum. A common theme amongst these respondents was the challenge of the elementary to secondary continuum in the implementation of the curriculum (Beatty, 2001b).

Elementary results suggested that while the majority of respondents felt somewhat (38.1%) or very (48.8%) comfortable with implementation of the music curriculum at the time, many commented that the generalist classroom teacher was struggling with this implementation. One respondent noted:

The level of personal musicianship required to implement the curriculum effectively (and further, to evaluate it properly) is beyond the reasonable scope of the average [classroom] teacher’s experience (Beatty, 2001a, p. 40).

The Specialist - Generalist Dichotomy in Elementary Schools

The type of instructional delivery of the provincial elementary music/arts curriculum varies from province to province. In certain provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, school districts employ music specialist teachers (often teachers with a degree in music and/or music education along with teacher certification) to deliver the music curriculum, while in other provinces such as Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, the classroom teacher is expected to have the requisite knowledge and pedagogical skill in order to teach all subjects including music (Griffin & Montgomery, 2007; Bolden, 2012). In some school districts in provinces/territories where

the generalist philosophy is usually engaged, additional funding may be allocated to allow the hiring of specialist music teachers in their schools. There is great disparity in the type of music education instruction, sometimes from school to school or school district to school district even in the same province (Beatty, 2001a).

In a recent study by People for Education, a parent advocacy group supporting public education mainly in Ontario reported that “43% of [Ontario] elementary schools have a specialist music teacher, either full- or part-time; . . . the percentage of schools with music teachers has declined fairly steadily from peak levels of nearly 60% in 1998, when the provincial funding formula was introduced (People for Education, 2014, p. 4). In Ontario, Canada’s largest populated province, funding for specialist music teachers is normally derived from teacher preparation time. When a regular classroom teacher is provided preparation time, often the music specialist teaches the classroom teacher’s students. The higher the enrolment of the school, the greater opportunity there exists to hire music specialists. Therefore, smaller schools, especially in rural areas, are at a distinct disadvantage. Only 16% of schools in sparsely populated northern Ontario reported having a music specialist while in the urban and suburban area of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), 57% of schools reported having a music specialist (People for Education, 2014).

While the employment of music specialists does not guarantee that a higher quality program of music education is offered for elementary-aged learners, it does offer a greater opportunity for higher quality of music education to be actualized. Willingham and Cutler (2007) noted:

Simply having full specialist qualifications does not ensure success in teaching. Teachers are needed who bring a balance of *competence*, *confidence* and *courage*, all supported by a strong *calling* to teach children and young people, in order to have healthy and vibrant music in our schools (p.12)

Teacher Education

In general in Canada, individuals wishing to embark on a career as a music educator, undertake study in a four-year undergraduate university degree program often leading to a Bachelor of Music degree (BMus) focused on music, in general, or music education usually within a faculty or school of music. Following successful completion, they apply for and enter a professional program of teacher

education, normally in a university faculty of education, of from one to two years in duration. The degree conferred, in this instance, is usually a Bachelor of Education degree (BEd). Practice teaching in schools is included only during the BEd year(s) of study. This practice is normally described as a consecutive route to certification.

Another model in use is that which is described as a concurrent route. In this case, a student enters university from high school to study the requirements of both the undergraduate degree in music as well as the requirements of the bachelor of education degree concurrently. Some music courses and some education courses are offered each of the five to six years of study. In this model, practicum experiences are also interspersed across the years of study in this concurrent teacher education program. Subsequently, both the music and education degrees are conferred at the end of the total current education program.

Still, another model is in place in the province of Prince Edward Island. The **Bachelor of Music Education program** offered at the University of Prince Edward Island is a five-year degree designed to qualify graduates for the teaching of music as specialists in elementary and secondary school music

In provinces where a generalist philosophy pervades, certifying the elementary classroom teacher to teach all subjects, the teacher candidate normally completes a four-year undergraduate university degree program in an acceptable discipline (i.e. English, History, Mathematics, etc.) and then successfully completes an education degree. These two degrees might be completed either consecutively or concurrently depending on the university program.

Issues of Place

While the intended curricula outlines clear expectations in current provincial policy documents for music/arts education for students to meet, the reality is that due the size and breadth of this great country and such a divide between urban and rural regions, the quality of music education for Canadian students is not consistent within each province/territory; it varies from school district to school district and in certain cases, from school to school. For many students living in isolated and/or rural regions, numerous schools are not capable of offering ongoing music programs. According Dust & Montgomery (2007), less than 50 per cent of high schools in the province of Alberta offer any music credits at all. In British Columbia (BC), Anderson and Tupman (2007) reported that 60

percent of BC school music co-curricular and extra-curricular programs are scheduled outside of regular school class times. As a result of rural students needing bus transportation to go to and return from school, it is not feasible for these rural students to take advantage of these music learning opportunities. An additional challenge in rural schools is the recruitment of teachers; “not enough secondary music teachers wish to live in rural areas and not all have two teaching areas [subjects] (music teachers may need to teach another subject as they develop a small music program)” (Prest, 2013, p. 13). As Canada’s population continues the current shift in movement from rural areas to more suburban and urban locations, many rural schools and rural school districts struggle to deliver substantive music education programs due to declining enrolments (Prest, 2013).

Current Distinctions and Selected Innovations in Canadian Music Education

One uniqueness found in music education programs across Canada is the inclusion of Canadian music as an integral part of the repertoire used in Canadian music classrooms (Shand, 2003). Since its founding in the 1960s, the John Adaskin Project (JAP), jointly sponsored by the Canadian Music Centre and the Canadian Music Educators’ Association, has promoted the creation, use, and publication of Canadian repertoire. The project was designed to:

1. acquaint music educators with Canadian music currently available and suitable for student use;
2. promote the publication of additional repertoire; and
3. encourage composers to add to the repertoire (John Adaskin Project, n.d.).

The incubation work of the JAP has fostered many subsequent projects and research related to the selection and analysis of Canadian repertoire suitable of use in schools (Beatty, 2000, 2011; Shand, 2012; Smith, 2008).

Certain innovations utilizing technology are enhancing and broadening music education in many parts of Canada. In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Adams and Rose (2007) reported that the province has a significant number of small and geographically isolated schools ... that... have to be maintained. 25 percent of schools in the

province have a total enrolment of less than 100 while 45 percent of schools have fewer than 200 students (Adams & Rose, 2007). To address this challenge for delivering music and many other subjects in rural environments, the Department of Education for Newfoundland and Labrador developed the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI). Through CDLI’s e-learning environment, in those schools in Newfoundland and Labrador which are either unable to offer music programming or are unable to accommodate a local student’s schedules, CDLI offers the province’s students an opportunity to expand their music learning through two online courses: *Experiencing Music 2200* and *Applied Music 2206* (Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 1996, n.d. b, n.d.c). “These online, interest-based communities have a significant effect on how young Newfoundland musicians develop and contribute to their local artistic communities” (Mercer, 2012, p. 38).

By embracing emerging technologies, new instructional uses in the music classroom have resulted. Cullen (2011) demonstrated a myriad of ways that the iPhone and iPod can be used effectively in the music classroom; with the many apps available, these devices can assist with assessment and tracking of student growth and tuning of instruments. Subsequently, these positive technological devices and relative applications may enhance the professional and personal lives of music educators.

Creative music educators are finding new ways to broaden courses offerings at secondary schools beyond the traditional offered programs of band, strings, choral, and more recently, guitar, and keyboards. In order to meet the needs of specific regional cultural groups in school communities, music educators have risen to the call and been innovative in initiating new music courses. For example, in multicultural Toronto, music educator, Joe Cullen, established a steel pan music program at West Humber Collegiate (Toronto District School Board). Currently he teaches Motown bands, percussion ensemble, drumline, and the largest steel drum credit course in Canada (Cullen, 2008, 2013). From another innovative course development perspective, in order to infuse and apply traditional indigenous knowledge and learnings for students in her music program at Qitiqliq High School in Arviat, Nunavut, Piercey (2012) embedded the teaching and learning of traditional Inuit drum dance songs and dancing into her music program.

Canadian music educators continue to be cognizant of innovative teaching and learning practices in other countries and search for possible applications of these

approaches in the Canadian classroom context. Musical Futures is one such program gaining interest in a number of Canadian schools. Musical Futures is an approach that brings informal music learning practices into the formal school music classroom context. Based upon the work of Lucy Green's (2001) book, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education*, this approach, which originated in the United Kingdom, has generated international interest. Musical Futures, usually employed with young people in the 11-18 age range, helps students connect in-school and out-of-school interests and experiences. The approach engages students through the integration of aural learning (listening) with practical applications of music making, improvising, and composing (Wright, 2011).

O'Neill & Bessflug (2011) chronicled how real-world music learning experiences, as well as inquiry and reflective aspects of Musical Futures were applied with grade seven bands students in a British Columbia school. Additionally, in Ontario, Linton (2014) shared the application of Musical Futures in a grade one context. As the program coordinator for a pilot program in Ontario, Hutchison (2014), noted: "In our travels to various schools throughout the province, it has become clear that the network of teachers embracing Musical Futures approach is growing" (p. 29).

Ongoing Challenges

As noted earlier, the continual Canadian population shift from rural to urban and the subsequent interrelated effect of declining school enrolments will continue to have a major impact on school music education across Canada. With smaller schools, school districts will be challenged to be able to offer the breadth of music course offerings at secondary schools. As well, with declining enrolments in elementary schools, the continuance of music specialist teachers will become more difficult. A common way that Canadian school districts handle declining enrolments is to close underutilized schools and merge two or three school populations in one centralized site with students being bussed. In certain instances these consolidations have also led to teacher redundancy. This may have a detrimental effect on newly certified music teachers gaining employment.

During this twenty-first century as Canada also continues to expand immigration and welcome new Canadians from various countries in the world, there exists

and will continue to be an increasing demand for music educators across Canada to further grow and develop innovative pedagogical strategies to meet the learning needs of a multicultural community. Traditionally, Canadian music educators have taught music primarily from a western perspective; however, in the last twenty-five years, as Canada's population has continued to more widely diversify, Canadian music educators have begun to embrace more world musics as part of their pedagogical and performance repertoire; they are currently and will need to continue to learn ways that various cultures from across the globe make music authentically within their own original cultural home and acquire pedagogical skills to authentically teach these types of musics in their own Canadian music classrooms. Gillis (2009) remarked "As music educators, it is our responsibility to help and support all students to find their musical identities and understand their place within this multicultural context" (p. 30). Furthermore, Izsak (2013) examined how Islamic beliefs and attitudes can complicate participation in music activities for Muslim students. She advocated that music educators need to "gain a deeper understanding of some of the tensions that exist between music and Islam, and will be better equipped to meet the needs of Muslim students and parents in their music classrooms and school community (p.38).

The majority of music programs in secondary schools across Canada have been quite traditional in nature: choral, band, strings, guitar, keyboards, jazz band, and/or jazz choral. As a result, there has appeared a notable divide between the types of music making/enjoyment that young people experience in their own popular music avenues in relation to the genres and styles of music that may be offered within the school music program. For many of the young people, music is one of the most important things in their day-to-day life but, despite this deep appreciation of music (usually a popular music genre), they elect not to take high school music. Certain jurisdictions, such as Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador, have begun to embrace more popular music as part of music courses at the secondary school level. Both Giddings (2008) and Morrison (2008) promote the expansion of popular music offerings as an integral part of secondary school music programs. As well, Canadian adaptations of approaches to music education such as Musical Futures (Hutchison, 2014, O'Neill & Bessflug, 2011, Wright, 2011), as described earlier, are innovative ways that Canadian music educators are attempting to help students connect in- and out-of-school music learning experiences..

Professional Development and Support for Music Educators

Canadian music educators embrace a number of ways to access professional development. Most school districts offer ongoing professional learning to keep their teachers current with innovative directions for teaching and learning. However, in many cases, the professional development for teachers focuses on other subject areas i.e. developing strategies to improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy. Provincial teachers' federations/unions, through courses which they offer, also provide various opportunities for educators to grow professionally.

However, so often, music teachers rely on other avenues to enhance their own professional learning. Some music educators avail themselves of various courses, either face-to-face or on-line for broadening their knowledge and pedagogical skills. These are usually offered by universities and many add additional qualifications through these types of courses. Some also extend their learning through graduate study at the masters or doctoral levels, in either music education or education.

Additionally, many music educators join their provincial and national music subject association to help them keep current and improve their own practice. The Canadian Music Educators' Association/L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs (CMEA/Acme) is the national professional association for school music education in Canada that nurtures a vital music learning community across Canada. CMEA/Acme fosters the advancement of teaching and the lifelong learning of music through various publications (quarterly journal: *Canadian Music Educator*, e-newsletter, various books), website, ongoing advocacy, collaboration with other stakeholders on key initiatives, support for research, and a variety of competitions for undergraduate and graduate student essays, performance awards, and various awards recognizing individuals' exemplary contribution to music education in Canada (Honorary Life Membership, Jubilate Award of Merit, Executive Award, and Builders Award). After many years' absence, the next CMEA/Acme conference is planned for July 9-11, 2015 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. As well, CMEA/Acme provides regular communication with their members, provincial and territorial affiliates, partners, and the international community. CMEA/Acme is the designated national Canadian organization to the International Society for Music Education (ISME) (*Canadian Music Educators' Association, n.d.; Horsley, 2007*)

Most provinces have provincial music educators' associations which are affiliated with CMEA/Acme;

some, such as Nova Scotia Music Educators' Association and the British Columbia Music Education Association, are subject associations within their own provincial teachers' federation/union. Others like the Ontario Music Educators' Association (OMEA) offer memberships for Ontario teachers of music, voluntarily; when teachers join OMEA they also join CMEA/Acme. The Ontario Music Educators' Association is the largest provincial music subject association in Canada. With approximately 1,000 members, OMEA is a non-profit organization that represents school music educators in Ontario.

One of the objectives of the Ontario Music Educators' Association (OMEA) is to 'provide leadership in establishing and maintaining high standards of school music throughout Ontario & Canada.' OMEA speaks and advocates on behalf of its members with the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers, and the Ontario Teachers' Federation Curriculum Forum. The OMEA and the Canadian Music Industry Education Committee (CMIEC) collaborate and co-sponsor an annual provincial conference, which provides key professional development for its members. As well as its annual conference, OMEA provides its members with: regional workshops, a quarterly publication, *The Recorder*, quarterly e-newsletter, *E-notes*, numerous units of curricula for both elementary and secondary music courses (<http://www.omea.on.ca/resources.php>), awards for music post-secondary students, and awards (Honorary Life Membership, Award of Commendation). OMEA connects with thirteen affiliate organizations including: Ontario Band Association, Carl Orff Canada (Ontario chapter), Kodaly Society of Ontario, Choirs Ontario, Ontario Registered Music Teachers' Association, among others (*Ontario Music Educators' Association, n.d.; Canadian Music Industry Education Committee, n.d.*) The Ontario Music Educators' Association (OMEA), a non-profit organization that represents music educators in Ontario. One of our objectives is to 'provide leadership in establishing and maintaining high standards of school music throughout Ontario & Canada.' We participate in meetings with the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Teachers' Federation Curriculum Forum, and the Ontario College of Teachers.

Ongoing Advocacy in Music Education

Over the past twenty years across Canada, we have experienced drastic cuts to school music education

programs in certain provinces and various school districts within provinces. Some of these cuts have affected the type(s) of music instruction offered for students, resulted in decreases in instructional time for music, and changed who teaches music: from instruction provided a music specialist to that offered by a generalist classroom teacher. These changes have been influenced by a variety of factors: some school districts inaugurated budgets cuts; certain provinces decreased or changed the provincial funding formula for elementary and secondary education; and while, in other instances, changes in the emphasis of direction for certain curricula at the elementary school level have resulted in increased instructional time for the teaching of Language and Mathematics while the time allotted for the instruction of other subject areas, like music has decreased (Coalition for Music Education in Canada, n.d.; [Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia Society, n.d.](#)).

To address these ongoing challenges, CMEA/Acme and provincial music educators' association like OMEA have taken an active role in advocacy. In addition, music educators, parents, arts organizations, music industry personnel, and other interested individuals have joined together to share a united voice in support of quality school music education for all students through: the Coalition for Music Education in Canada.

The Coalition for Music Education in Canada (CMEC) was founded in 1992 when representatives of more than 20 music education organizations came together to share ideas to improve the state of music education in Canada. CMEC advocates for quality school music programs in schools across Canada, and encourages the valuing and support of students' active participation in music in their communities. The Coalition engages in and disseminates information about research on music education, provides resources and tools in advocating for quality music education in Canadian schools, and celebrates the joy of music education in Canadian schools. The Youth for Music and Youth Leadership awards programs recognize a national movement of young people who understand the importance of access to quality music education programs for all students. In addition, CMEC also raises awareness of its national campaign by sharing the joy of music through Music Monday celebrations (the first Monday in May), Champions of Music Education program, Principals of Music Awards (recognizing strongly supportive school principals for music education), and a Holiday Tuba Festival.

The Champions of Music Education program focuses on people from all walks of life who, through a series of

public service announcements, share their passion with focused, personal messages about the importance of music education (Coalition for Music Education in Canada, n.d.; Whyte & Mould, 2011). In addition to a national advocacy presence, CMEC, has also spawned certain provincial Coalition groups, like the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia Society ([Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia Society, n.d.](#)) and regional ones like Toronto District.

Additionally, In Ontario ten other organizations joined the Ontario Music Educators' Association to unify their voices under the Alliance for Music Education Ontario in order to impact provincial stakeholders and decision makers on issues relating to the funding of music education in Ontario schools (Alliance for Music Education Ontario, 2008).

Culmination: Aspects for Consideration

School music education in Canada has grown from its humble beginnings during colonial times, yet, there are still burning issues that we, as a profession, continue today in our quest for answers as we strive to improve the quality of music education for all students. Questions such as these still concern us as we advocate for and search for answers to such questions as:

- ▶▶ How do we motivate and captivate learners in music education in the elementary school?
- ▶▶ Who should teach music to them?
- ▶▶ How do we engage students of the 21st century with music in schools?
- ▶▶ What do I, as a music educator, have to offer these students?
- ▶▶ Where does popular music fit in the course of study for my students?
- ▶▶ How can I connect the in-school with the out-of-school music learning experiences of my students?
- ▶▶ How can I recruit and retain music students in my music program?

As Canadian music educators strive to find answers to these burning questions, they remain devoted to advancing and enhancing the learning of the students in a high quality program of music education.

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