Conference Presentations


Publication

Erickson, D. (2012). Music that matters: Reconceptualizing curriculum for the enhancement of self and others through personalized learning and youth participatory action research.

In O’Neill, S. A. (Ed.). *Personhood and music learning: Connecting disciplines and narratives.*


FACULTY OF EDUCATION

THESIS EXAMINATION

David Allen Erickson

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

SFU Burnaby
Halpern Centre, Room 124
At 10:00 AM

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair: Dr. Celeste Snowber
Senior Supervisor: Dr. Yaroslav Senyshyn
Member: Dr. Allan MacKinnon
Internal/External: Dr. Stephen Campbell
External Examiner: Dr. Peter Gouzouasis,
Faculty of Education, UBC
Curricular and Pedagogical Reform: Transformative Opportunities for Personalized Learning in Middle School Music Environments

ABSTRACT

Paradigmatic shifts in music education, supported by curricular reconceptualization and the braiding of “outside school” informal learning styles with more traditional formal learning patterns associated with classroom music, have developed slowly in North American schools. However, unlike popular music currently incorporated into Swedish, Finnish and British schools, most North American music programs maintain traditional band and choir paradigms as a curricular focus in middle and high school settings. Research in Great Britain, the United States and Canada indicates that these traditional music programs fail to sustain the interest of our youth. Alternate pedagogies, accessible through student-directed information and communications technologies, have transformed music education and displaced sole reliance upon the teacher as musical authority.

The overwhelming value of popular music for most young people has encouraged many music educators to bridge these thriving “outside” interests with school music environments. I argue that while informal learning strategies are vital to assist many of our students, the persistence of formal learning methods that they engage in outside of school should not preclude their continued importance inside our schools, including both traditional and alternative uses of music notation. The notation reform effort of Jean-Jacques Rousseau parallels contemporary efforts on the Internet to use alternate notation for learning music. Correspondingly, Rousseau’s child-centred philosophies have created opportunities for contemporary education reform, witnessed in personalized music learning environments, which value development of student voice. This is significant in middle school environments where many students claim to have fewer decision-making opportunities than in elementary school. A youth participatory action research project named Music Matters, working in tandem with Simon Fraser University researchers and the middle school music teacher, provided notable insights about the value of music and dance to the student researchers.

While I argue that changes in music education curriculum are necessary to demonstrate that educators are listening to and acting upon the needs of students, inflexible systems espousing prior practice over possible practice tend to ignore our youth. I also advocate for the addition of popular music performance to the middle school curriculum and a focus upon the individual musical needs and interests of students.

Academic Record

Doctor of Philosophy – Arts Education, Simon Fraser University

Dissertation – Curricular and Pedagogical Reform: Transformative Opportunities for Personalized Learning in Middle School Music Environments

Master of Arts – Arts Education, Simon Fraser University

Thesis – Language, Ineffability and Paradox in Music Philosophy

Bachelor of Science – Psychology, Washington State University

Awards

2008 President’s Research Stipend, Simon Fraser University
2006 Graduate Fellowship, Simon Fraser University

Graduate Research

2011 – 2012 Research Assistant – Research for Youth, Music and Education (RYME) Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University