Addressing Popular Music and Culture in Music Education

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Considering types of musical roles in relation to popular music:
- Performer
- Listener / Critic
- Creator
- DJ / Playlist creator
- Recordist / Sound Engineer / Producer

Aural Skills and Music Literacies in Popular Music and Culture
- Expanding the types of aural skills and music literacies students develop
- Determining the aural skills and music literacies most appropriate for particular musical contexts
- Expanding beyond pitch and rhythm
- Addressing stylistic attributes of music
- Addressing timbral characteristics of music
- Addressing production

Addressing aspects of informal learning practices for formal contexts (music programs):
From “Classroom resources for informal learning at key stage 3” by Lucy Green with Abigail Walmsley available as a PDF file at http://www.musicalfutures.org

Five Principles: (Based on characteristics of informal learning practices)

Principle 1: Learning music that students choose, like and identify with

Principle 2: Learning by listening and copying recordings

Principle 3: Learning with friends

Principle 4: Personal, often haphazard learning without structured guidance

Principle 5: Integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing
### Informal Learning practices usually involve:

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<th>Informal Learning practices usually involve:</th>
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<td>Learning music which is personally chosen, familiar, and which the learners enjoy and strongly identify with.</td>
<td>Being introduced to music that is often new and unfamiliar, normally chosen by a teacher.</td>
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<td>Learning by listening to recordings and copying them by ear</td>
<td>Learning through notation or written or verbal instructions.</td>
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<td>Learning alongside friends through talking about music, peer assessment, listening, watching and imitating each other, usually without adult supervision</td>
<td>Learning through expert instruction and receiving adult supervision.</td>
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<td>Assimilating skills and knowledge in personal, often haphazard ways according to musical preferences, starting with ‘whole’, ‘real-world’ pieces of music.</td>
<td>Following a progression from simple to complex, often involving specially-composed music, a curriculum or a graded syllabus.</td>
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<td>Maintaining a close integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process.</td>
<td>Gradually specializing in and differentiating between listening, performing, improvising and composing skills; often tending to emphasize the reproductive more than the creative skills.</td>
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### Rethinking Musicianship

*In what ways might we expand our thinking on the following concepts in terms of popular music and culture?*

**Musicianship — Aural Skills — Music Literacy**

- What aural skills does one need to engage with popular music?
- What does it mean to be musical in the context of popular music and culture?
- How are young people learning music outside of school music programs?
- What forms of musical engagement related to popular music and culture do not currently exist within traditional US music programs?
- What musical goals do we have for all graduating students?
- How might our knowledge (or lack of knowledge) play a role in what and how we teach music?
- Upon what do I base decisions about musical quality and whether or not it should be included in the music curriculum?
Rethinking Music Teachers’ Roles

- Teacher facilitation/scaffolding of learning and understanding that emerges from students’ experience and work on projects
- A focus on musical problem solving (Boardman, 2002; Wiggins, 2001, 2009)
- Starting with musical concepts before labels (Boardman, 2002; Wiggins, 2001, 2009)
- Giving students time to work through problems/issues before stepping in
- Asking questions before providing answers or presenting information (Allsup & Baxter, 2004; Campbell, 2005)
- Acknowledging a shift from standard notation to aural/oral learning & literacies
- Accounting for informal learning processes within a formal setting
- Recognizing one’s own values and biases
- Acknowledging students’ expertise and being willing to learn from them
- Researching and reflecting constantly
- Draw from multiple genres and practices
- Learn more about our students, their interests, skills, and understandings
- Develop our own expertise and draw upon others’ (including our students) expertise to provide a comprehensive popular music education
- Develop balance between direct instruction, students’ solving musical problems on their own, and scaffolding

Resources


Musical Futures Website: http://musicalfutures.org