

Curriculum Traditions, Music Education, and the Praxial Alternative

By Thomas A. Regelski

Helsinki University

ABSTRACT

Curriculum studies are regularly overlooked in the pre-service training of music teachers. This article examines traditional curriculum theories and philosophies and their weaknesses. Then it offers an account of contemporary theory and philosophy, including praxial theory. A praxis-based curriculum model based on action ideals is offered.

Keywords: curriculum, idealism, realism, neo-scholasticism, existentialism, pragmatism, progressivism, perennialism, hidden curriculum, praxial theory.

Introduction

Educators everywhere are busily engaged in seriously rethinking curricular philosophy, content, and organization. Yet curriculum continues to be ignored in pre-service undergraduate music education. New music teachers enter their first positions with neither formal curricular foundations during their preliminary training, nor with practical experience designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum during their student teaching internship. At best, they continue to employ transmitted methods, materials and “tricks of the trade” according to the mistaken assumption that ‘good methods’—those declared as supposedly good *in advance of use*—somehow automatically produce good results, even if these expected results are not otherwise specified or evaluated.¹

Performance ensembles that come closest to the kinds of musical results teachers were accustomed to in their own school and university musical training form the preponderance of such model “programs.”² Unlike ensembles that reach only a small percentage of students, general music classes that exist instead to address the musical needs of *all* students tend to go all but unnoticed. Hence the most substantial portion of music instruction in the schools, the portion that most justifies the inclusion of music in the over-all curriculum as part of the “general education” of all students, almost everywhere is disregarded. Instead, attention is typically directed to the performing ensembles.³

But even ensembles are instructed according to taken for granted assumptions that are in need of rigorous rethinking. For instance and typically, over eight years of, say, band, the *de facto* ‘curriculum’ becomes the literature performed: instruction is focused on bringing off the next concert successfully *as a group*, and not specifically with the lifelong functionality of the musical knowledge, skills, and attitudes that *individuals* (e.g., the third trombone player) have gained as a result. Given the fact that the *averaging effect of large numbers* conceals the expertise of individuals constituting any large ensemble, there is little doubt that many members of even the best sounding ensembles fall far short of individual competence and motivation of the kind that would allow them (or encourage them) to continue to be musically active upon graduation. And the narrowness of the literature they encounter leaves most members similarly bereft of the kind of musicianship that might prepare them to be discerning listeners—and the praxis of audience listening is not even part of their education. It is not surprising, then, that the vast majority of former ensemble members neither continue to perform in any capacity later in life and show no benefit from such instruction on their listening tastes.

Not only are undergraduate music education students unprepared to deal with curriculum, but in-service graduate study also typically ignores curriculum. One result is a decided dearth of literature in music education specifically devoted to curriculum theory and development *per se* (exceptions being, e.g., Elliott & Silverman 2015, Regelski 2004). Music teachers and their collegiate instructors thus often lack an informed analysis of the very idea of curriculum and its implications for the success of instruction and the health of

music education as a field. This article aims, then, to begin to summarize important aspects of curriculum design and theory.

Curriculum basics

The term “curriculum” stems from the Latin *currere*, meaning “to run.” It shares this root sense with the French *courier*, and is now typically adopted in English to refer to a ‘runner’ who delivers a message. Accordingly, the idea of curriculum includes two complementary dimensions: the idea of delivery and the message involved. In short, then, curriculum is concerned with both *process* (delivery) and *product* (message).

This two-fold dimension has resulted in the confusion of mistakenly assuming that the process of offering instruction is synonymous with curriculum. It is unfortunately typical, then, to see leading texts of *delivery methods*⁴ used in music education training mistakenly refer to their favored, strategies, activities, and “best practices” as amounting to a ‘curriculum’—which is akin to confusing the tools and skills of carpentry with what is built. Furthermore, commercial materials, notably elementary level “song series” for general music classes and instrumental “methods series,” often make similar claims to the status of “curriculum” when, in fact, only certain “materials” for the ill-defined “building project” are proposed. However beneficial and otherwise useful such “tools” may seem to be, at best they provide only options concerning the *process of delivery*; but they most certainly do not automatically address the *product* criterion for curriculum.

Three distinctions can be made in any consideration of curriculum, with a fourth factor looming in the background. First, a *formal curriculum guide* is a document that describes a course of study—a “course” to be run—in a level of detail that specifies ‘content’ to be “covered” or addressed by instruction.⁵ Teachers who “write curriculum” are engaged in the process of producing a formal document that is intended to guide instruction.⁶ When “writing curriculum” is done by more than one teacher, the document produced is intended, as well, to coordinate instruction so that teachers are addressing the same skills and knowledge. *Horizontal* alignment of curriculum coordinates teachers at the

same level. *Vertically* aligned curriculum is a process by which the curriculum of lower levels flows into or harmonizes with curriculum at the next highest level.

However, having produced a written curriculum is not the same as *using* it. Thus many music teachers who have actually produced such a document—often at the insistence of an administrator as a summer assignment—do not necessarily use it at all.⁷ One reason for this is that because teachers have not been trained to write curriculum, they typically produce documents that are far too detailed, far too ambitious, far too complex to actually be used; or that are too general to be meaningful. At most, the process of producing such a document may seem to clarify some aspects of their philosophy but fails to otherwise inform their daily efforts.

The second distinction, *curriculum as instructed*, refers to the actual instruction given by the teacher. Such lessons simply refer to what the teacher actually does with (or in the absence of) a formal curriculum guide. In this regard a useful distinction can be suggested between “teaching” and “instruction.” *Because not all instruction results in learning, not all instruction amounts to teaching.* Therefore it seems useful to reserve the term “teaching” for “instruction” that results in learning. Without this distinction teachers are all too apt to think that “I taught it to them but they didn’t learn it because of . . .” any number of scapegoats.

In the case of a formal curriculum guide it also is too easy to identify as “teaching” the mere “covering” of the ‘content’ outlined—meaning that the teacher merely devoted lessons to the ‘material’ in question.⁸ But lessons can be poorly conceived or delivered and fail to result in learning. Of course, the lack of learning can be due to various constraints, such as class size, limitations of resources, scheduling (etc.); but such constraints must be taken into serious consideration to begin with in the preparation of a curriculum guide.⁹

With this in mind, then, there is the learned *or action curriculum*, meaning what the students actually learn from instruction. When by “learn” is meant “can *do* something new or better” as a result of instruction, we can be clear that “teaching” is properly seen in terms of notable evidence of learning and, therefore, improved musical agency. This is not to diminish (as behaviorism does) all manner of mediating variables such as attitudes,

values, abstract thinking, feeling, intuition, metacognition, supervisory knowledge, and the like. It simply affirms that such intangibles are important or valuable to the degree they inform and serve to bring about or otherwise facilitate concrete and discernable changes in students' musical functioning *as a result of instruction*. Thus understood, curriculum takes on another two-fold qualification: it implies a dynamic interaction between the teacher and each learner. Instruction, then, must take into consideration significant ingredients, qualities, and variables that individual students bring to the transaction. In this sense, curriculum is a type of "conversation" between each student and the learning in question that is guided, facilitated, and mediated by the teacher (Applebee 1996).

Mention also needs to be made of a significant variable lurking behind all three distinctions for curriculum: the *hidden-curriculum*. If the curriculum guide is the *explicit* curriculum, the hidden curriculum is the unspoken or *tacit* curriculum that, in effect, is "soaked up" informally (inductively) by students in the form of attitudes, values, and certain other kinds of learning, habits, and behaviors. It is usually so well hidden in status quo terms, so taken for granted, that it is often invisible to teachers as well (see, importantly, deMarris and LeCompte 1999, 242-247)! The hidden curriculum consists, then, of unspoken, unrecognized, and unspecified paradigms, assumptions, values, habits and the like that, by virtue of being taken for granted by teachers and schools, influence all instruction.

Some such influences may be idiosyncratic for a particular teacher—for example, certain attitudes and assumptions concerning 'good music' may lead a teacher to conclude that only Eurocentric music is music fit for study, thus excluding from the curriculum virtually all forms of vernacular and multicultural musics—in effect "teaching" students that these other musics (often "their" musics) are not worthwhile enough to include in the curriculum. Other influences are typically more widespread—for example, the overwhelming acceptance by music educators of the large ensemble as the sole format for performance instruction, thereby rejecting chamber groupings for various kinds of music (jazz, folk, ethnic, etc.). The hidden curriculum, in other words, is dominated by an unwitting acceptance of all manner of institutional (i.e., status-quo) thinking which then

conditions in a variety of ways whether learning takes place at all; and, if so, what is learned and what “good” it is as seen from the student’s point of view.¹⁰

The differences between the formal curriculum guide, the instructed curriculum, and the action curriculum, all conditioned by the background of factors governed by the hidden curriculum, point out the kinds of consequential considerations that are typically overlooked or minimized by otherwise well-meaning music teachers in typically providing instruction. Until or unless such considerations are informed by philosophical and other theoretical possibilities, teachers will continue to run afoul of various kinds of unexpected consequences, many of which are negative.

Curriculum as philosophy

In essence, any curricular inclusion is a matter of deciding among possible values. The most basic curricular decisions thus involve answering this question: *What of all that could be taught is most worth including in instruction?* There is always more to teach than there is time or resources! But not all musical knowledge and skill are equally valuable to all students everywhere. Thus, ultimately, curricular thinking amounts largely to a process of judging some potential learning to be more valuable (to individuals students and society) in comparison to other local possibilities. The domain of values, of course, is a notably difficult terrain to negotiate because status quo and traditional values are often taken for granted. Being explicit about the bases and criteria for various value-laden curricular decisions clarifies thinking and assists people in the direction of greater discernment, effectiveness, and consistency.

Historically, the study of values, *axiology*, is a traditional sub-discipline of philosophy. Since curricular thinking inescapably involves the criteria involved in making value judgments concerning what is most worth including in instruction, then *curriculum planning and choices are largely philosophical!*

Most teachers may not think of themselves as involved daily in matters of philosophizing. But the fact that their values have often been taken for granted and not been made more philosophically explicit and warranted does not in the least mean they

have avoided basic philosophical conundrums. In fact, that is the problem: Not being prepared by inclination or training to examine the philosophical nature of what they offer, music teachers are unaware of the philosophical (and practical) implications of the often uninformed philosophical choices for curriculum they do make. For example, facts and information *about* music are usually confused with music as praxis—as doing.¹¹

Instruction in the “rudiments” or “theory” of music regularly falls prey to such misleading results; for example, when “common practice” theory is advanced as being factual, common, or practical for the present needs of most musicians. Rarely are the theories behind, for example, so-called “perfect” intervals disclosed to students—assuming the teacher knows.¹² And it is entirely unappreciated by most who offer instruction in music theory that “music has from its beginnings been connected with philosophical theory” (Alperson 1994, 195). Thus even the very question of “What is music?” (e.g., Alperson 1994; Erskine 1944) is inescapably philosophical to begin with. This being the case, the teacher who presumes to teach “music” but who is philosophically uninformed about what it “is,” is open to creating and suffering all sorts of problems.

Many teachers uncritically assume, for example, that “music” is simply the “score” and proceed only to emphasize music reading—only to wonder why the right notes still don’t sound “musical”; and they have equal difficulty accounting for music that doesn’t use a score. Others who claim to “teach music” in fact focus to such an extent on technical skills (“exercises”) that the question of any difference between a “music lesson” and, say, a “piano lesson” seems to them absurd (only to wonder why many perform with a technical command that far exceeds any evidence of musical insight or artistry).¹³

And most consequential is the question of musical meaning and value—that is, whether (a) music’s meaning is aesthetic, autonomous, intrinsic, and immanent to the sounds of musical “works”; or (b) is socially and culturally constituted to the degree that individual “works” are not autonomous but, rather, are particular instances of cumulative, socially situated processes and meanings that are at least in part extrinsic to the sounds of the moment. The former philosophy of music sees music as *aesthetic* in meaning while the latter philosophy roots music in and as *praxis* and thus social in meaning. And the practical

consequences of this philosophical distinction for curriculum are considerable! Thus the question of curriculum for music education profits from being placed in a philosophical context.

Traditional Curriculum Philosophy

Traditional philosophies fall into three broad schools: idealism (perhaps more easily understood as idea-ism), realism, and neoscholasticism.

Idealism. For *idealists*, realities and truths take the “forms” of abstract ideas or concepts. In this broad and diverse school, then, ideas are regarded as more substantially ‘real’ than tangible things simply because an idea is eternal and unchanging (e.g., the idea of a table) while the things of the empirical world (this or that table) are physically destroyed by age or change according to fashion. Truth, then, takes the form of ideas that have logical, internal consistency. Knowledge, in this view, is not gained through experience but depends on rational thinking (rationalism), intuition, and transmission by authorities. Thus, for idealists, values involve ideas of goodness and beauty that are absolute and eternal. Art and music, then, objectify various ideas that transcend sensory perception and the human body in favor of reflecting ideal or universal ideas or abstract forms. Addressing music’s “forms,” it follows, is teaching “music.”

In the idealist’s view of schooling, intellectual learning is important since knowledge is governed by the rational mind. Teachers’ minds are more highly developed and, consequently, they transmit knowledge of reality, truth, and beauty to students. The curriculum, as a result, is predicated largely on ideas—largely verbal, formal, and mathematical—and instruction, in turn is given to techniques of various kinds for transferring ideas (information) from the teacher (books or computers) to students. The use of the computer, though new technology, should not be allowed to disguise its all too traditional use in simply transmitting idea(l) knowledge which, despite the possible activity of searching for it, is received passively by students as inert (e.g., “perfect” intervals).

It is not necessary to idealists that understanding be *useful* in any applied sense. Thus it often remains “merely academic” (the “Academy” having been the name of the

school where Plato, a leading proponent of idealism, taught). Such ideas, theories, and understanding—as defined by experts, authorities, and transmission from the past—are therefore “good for their own sake.” And schools exist to protect and transmit such knowledge from the past, rather than to effect change. Curriculum, then, is a matter of *transmission* to, not of *transformation* of learners, or the *social construction of meaning* (deMarrais & LeCompte 1998, 1-42).

Idealism has been the predominant philosophy of music (see, e.g., Bowman 1998). It has resulted in many *aesthetic theories* that stress the intellectual, cerebral, cognitive, and symbolic values of music—values which, despite certain key distinctions, tend to overlap realist and neo-scholastic aesthetic theories (described below). An aesthetic ideology or orthodoxy dominated by idealist strains has thereby arisen and dominated music education at all levels. According to this orthodoxy, ‘good music’ is the “art music” of High Culture. Musical meaning is intrinsic to (‘built in’) music’s sounds as governed by the score and exists for its own sake. An ‘aesthetic distance’ must therefore be maintained that separates (“pure”) musical contemplation from any other ‘extrinsic’ functions and interests (e.g., dancing) or personal uses (e.g., mood management).¹⁴ Such “absolute” music, as it is called, is said to transcend any particular time, place, or person in favor of universal meanings of a metaphysical or cognitive kind (depending on the aesthetic theory, of which there seem to be as many as aestheticians).

While popular, folk, improvisatory, and similar kinds of vernacular, indigenous, and functional musics may be allowed to be called “music,” a strict aesthetic hierarchy of value is maintained with the Eurocentric “art music” canon of “pure” instrumental music at the very top, and other musics variously arrayed on a descending continuum beneath (depending on who is doing the ranking). In the idealist view, “music” is a composite idea (like “table”); it supposedly has a single *essence* or nature and the very idea of a plurality of “musics” violates the ‘reality’ of the idea(l) “form.” Furthermore, when legitimacy is sometimes conferred to jazz, popular, ethnic and similar, ‘lesser’ kinds of music, it is only through the claim that such music favorably compares in some insignificant way with aesthetic criteria. In other words, despite the fact that its creators have praxial rather than

aesthetic criteria and intentions in mind, 'aesthetic properties' supposedly emerge naturally and spontaneously, thereby insuring some (lesser) aesthetic experience.

However, it is held that even such aesthetic experience remains cerebral, intellectual, abstract and takes the form of ideas, but *not* as mediated by the body. Powerful bodily-based feelings, frissons, somatic residuals, and other embodied experiences are, if anything, treated by idealist and other formalist aesthetic traditions with deep suspicion—as merely satisfying bodily appetites or as superficial “entertainment” (i.e., as “ear candy”)—and are ultimately seen as distractions from the ‘real’ meaning of music which is one or another form of cerebral ideation. Consequently, as critics too numerous to mention have pointed out, idealist aesthetic philosophies of music separate the mind (ideas) from the body (sentience) and give precedence to the former while denying or deprecating the value of the latter.

The body is also denied in certain important ways by a certain downplaying of the act of performance. Certainly an important respect is accorded performers, for without them aesthetes could hear no music. But listening and composing are accorded the highest priority—the latter because the composer’s creativity is said to encode purely aesthetic ideas into notation on the page that the performer then only instantiates. And contemplation of music for its own sake is the ultimate value. Thus performance is accorded a certain secondary status as mainly (or merely) replication of a composer’s creative notation.¹⁵ For instance, in university schools of music “studio” instruction and ensemble participation are not accepted as “general education” requirements and, hence, are treated as “professional training” not as liberalizing or humanizing arts.

Musical aesthetics have been, for all (im)practical purposes, the taken for granted philosophy supporting music education.¹⁶ Nonetheless, music teachers have focused almost exclusively at the secondary levels on performance ensembles to the exclusion of musical contemplation (or, for that matter, composition studies). And it is clear that the small percentage of students who choose to take part in ensembles find the social activity of making music to be the main attraction, while their ‘tastes’ outside of school appear to remain unchanged.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the conditions for making music in large ensembles

are difficult to find or create after graduation.¹⁸ Since most students have not had significant opportunities to discover the joys of solo and chamber performances of various kinds, few continue to perform after graduation from school despite their attraction to performance ensembles as a school-based adolescent social activity.

General (classroom) music teachers, on the other hand, tend to “teach concepts” as the ideational bases for exactly the kind of musical contemplation described by aesthetic ideals (e.g., Schwadron 1967; Reimer 2003). However, social psychologists conclude that it is precisely the use-value of music (praxis) that most attracts young people (Zillmann and Su-lin Gan 1997)—keeping in mind that such ‘extrinsic’ use-value is viewed by idealist and other aesthetic traditions as detrimental to the fullness of aesthetic responding. Social psychology also confirms the existence of important “taste publics” and “taste cultures” (Russell 1997) that reflect the social variables that are denied by aesthetic theories and confirmed by the praxial view of music (described below). In other words, ordinary people of varying educational backgrounds find a host of interests in and from musics the value of which are denied or downplayed by the idealist dominated aesthetic orthodoxy and its partiality for abstract ideas.

It might be assumed that if we turn to the philosophy of realism, more down-to-earth bases for music and curriculum might be discovered, but this is not the case.

Realism. Realism does diverge from some of the abstractness and abstruseness of idealism by emphasizing instead tangible reality—that the ‘real world’ is independent of observers or observations. Thus it accepts that the things we perceive are ‘real’ apart from our ideas of them.¹⁹ Accordingly, for the realist, the material world is independent of mind; and the physical world and knowledge of natural laws is then the source of truth and knowledge—instead of mind. Realism therefore serves as the source of modern empirical science. Values, for realists, are derived from natural law and as a result are absolute and eternal. ‘Good art’, then, is expected to, reflect or re-present the orderliness and rationality of the universe (i.e., the natural world; thus realist aesthetics are sometimes called “naturalistic aesthetics”).

Schooling exists, similarly, to convey an understanding of the logic and order of the universe. Mathematics and the social and natural sciences are stressed, and primary importance in all subjects is given to transmitting facts and information. Knowledge and truth, not unlike idealism, then, arise outside (before) the learner's experience and are merely transmitted and passively received—despite instruction that sometimes favors activities, experiments, demonstrations and the like. What is experienced, then, are matters of *a priori* or “given” truths and facts, not personally constructed meanings.

In dealing with music, realism faces many troublesome problems. This may account for the fact that few philosophers or musicians have felt comfortable expressing philosophies of music that reflect realist aesthetic leanings—George Santayana and Richard Wagner being exceptions. One problem faced by realist aesthetics of music is the fact that while musical sounds have physical properties, music is not simply acoustics. Similarly, hearing sound *as* “music” is not a function of the auditory mechanisms of the brain; it is not the physical “ear” mechanisms that convert sound into “music” but the social mind.²⁰ Secondly, with the exception of trite imitation, music does not refer directly to the things of the world. Thus even “program music”—music inspired by stories and visual images—depends on titles and other hints to the listener who otherwise would have no idea about what the music is based on “expressing” (e.g. Debussy's *La Mer*, for desert peoples).

Similarly, although realism is sometimes credited with a move from the purities of “formalist” aesthetic theories (i.e., music as pure form; as balance, proportion and symmetry; or as an “architecture of sound”) to “expressionist” aesthetic theories, the feelings, ideas, emotions “expressed” by music are quite evidently not in fact “real.” Consequently, upon identifying, say, anger or sadness in music, we do not find ourselves actually angry or sad. Such “expression” is said to be from and of the composer who put it “in” the music (i.e., the score); it is not, therefore, from and of the listener who, instead, supposedly only experiences a cerebral portrayal of the composer's inner life. “That is why, emotion felt in listening to music has been called aesthetic emotion, intellectual emotion, . . . It is not the real thing somehow” (Broudy 1991, 81). Thus aesthetic realism holds that music suggests or symbolizes images and ideas by imposing form upon sound in a rational

and logical way. For example, musical movement can be analogous to the movement in the physical world and experienced as “expressive of” the emotions that accompany material movement (Broudy 1991, 81) without, somehow, actually invoking the ‘real’ emotion. Thus while music is experienced as such “in” the brain, in the realist’s view musical experience does not call attention to or take the sentient form of bodily experience. Consequently, not unlike idealist aesthetic theory, realist aesthetics results in disembodied products of perception that are appreciated based upon some hypothesized cognitive association with lived experience.

As a philosophy guiding music curriculum, realism strongly—paralleling idealism—emphasizes *connoisseurship*. Music deemed to be good by the “experts of successive ages” is therefore imposed on students in the hypothesis that it will “enhance the pupil’s enjoyment of music and life” (Broudy 1991, 91-92). According to realism, music other than the Eurocentric canon, whatever *pragmatic* values it might have for religious, or social occasions, is not to be confused with *aesthetic* values which should be the sole focus of formal music education (Broudy 1991, 77). The emphasis, again like idealism, is largely on contemplative listening. Performance is once again relegated to a secondary realm in this disembodied account of musical meaning. Aesthetic realist philosopher Harry S. Broudy (1991) hardly mentions performance in relation to music education. Instead, meaning for him resides objectively “in” the score, the work, and is only apprehended in a detached and thus basically cognitive or cerebral form.

This brings about a final problem especially associated with realism as a basis for school-based music curriculum: If the ‘higher’ and ‘richer’ forms of human experience somehow supposedly encoded musically in a score by a composer are the true bases for musical valuation, it is difficult to account for how students of school age are supposed to be able to recognize, associate, or identify with such intricate adult life experiences and, thereby, to value them since they have not yet had such rich and mature personal experiences; and supposedly having them musically is not the same as educating them for future life. Music they *can* and *do* relate to is by the same account juvenile and inferior. Nonetheless, the comprehension and discrimination needed to develop good taste and

appreciation are supposedly developed largely through listening because young performers lack the technical skills to properly fully realize the aesthetic value of 'good music' through performance. For similar reasons, however, all manner of amateur recreational, lay, vernacular kinds of music and music making are all but ignored. Instead, "musical training affords the learner a basis for objective and informed judgments about certain aspects of musical quality" (Broudy 1991, 86).

This idea of music education as a "training" for *backgrounded connoisseurship*²¹ bears a close similarity to the neo-scholastic philosophy.

Neo-scholasticism. *Scholasticism* is a theory that developed with the beginnings of what we know as formal schooling in the middle ages (thus mention of "scholar," "school," etc.). It is thus inextricably wed to some of the most basic paradigms of schools and schooling; for example, the "lecture" (old French for "reading") method stems from medieval times when scholars simply read their treatises to student followers (called "bachelors" for obvious reasons). Today's accoutrements of bachelors and masters degrees, caps and gowns, deans and chancellors (the attire and nomenclature of medieval church schools) and the like are not, however, the only remnants of scholasticism that remain. *Neo-scholasticism* is an educational philosophy rooted in respecting the old-time emphasis on rational knowledge and traditional approaches to learning (e.g., rote memorization, disciplined learning, focus on the "classics") and has so much in common with realism that it is sometimes called "scholastic realism" or "classical realism."

A conception of humans as *rational* beings underlies neo-scholasticism. In this view, the ability to think rationally is the most noble and valued capacity that humans possess. Thus the mind can seize upon truth logically in the form of self-evident (i.e., "analytic") truths (e.g., if A is larger than B and B larger than C, then A is larger than C) or certain kinds of scientific or empirical (i.e., "synthetic") truths that depend on experience for confirmation (e.g., it is true that I have \$1 when I can produce the empirical evidence; magnets attract). This *tension between rationalism and empiricism*, usually antithetical beliefs, results in considerable overlap with idealist and realist theories (and therefore with aesthetic assumptions for music education). However, of the two, rational knowledge is

seen by neo-scholastics as of a higher order than empirical knowledge. Values, then, ultimately depend on rationality, and the “good life” is lived in agreement with reason. Therefore, base desires and emotions are to be controlled by the rational intellect—although, concerning art, intellect sometimes reaches beyond reason to acknowledge certain kinds of intuitive insights.

In schooling, the student’s rational faculties are to be developed by the selection of subject matter chosen from the leading “disciplines” of learning (e.g., collegiate “general education” requirements). Through studying these disciplines and their intrinsic logic, it is held, the student develops the disciplined habits of thinking that can most properly inform and guide the good life. Systematic subjects such as mathematics and foreign languages and, especially, the “great ideas,” “great books” and “masterworks” of the past are particularly favored in the belief that they promote the best of rational thinking and a properly intellectual understanding of the world (Adler 1994). The watchword for neo-scholasticism is the mental and personal *discipline* that results from prescribed *training* and, thus, students are regularly “exposed” to and expected to study and master subject matter in which they often have no interest because no important, immediate, or eventual practical or personal relevance can be demonstrated.²²

Given its origins in the middle ages when art and music were entirely praxial, neo-scholasticism therefore has no clear “aesthetic” philosophy. It therefore tends to share an often sloppy mix of idealism and realism, focusing sometimes on rational ideas, and sometimes on intuitions of feeling. Thus in many schools around the world—schools still committed to the original scholastic ideal and model of developing rational thinking and mental discipline through transmitting the abstract metaphysical truths and knowledge codified in the traditional intellectual disciplines—, it is not surprising that idealism and realism are often found in equal measure in most classes, including music classes, despite their typically contradictory conclusions and implications. Neo-scholasticism, however, has made a minor mark on music curriculum.

First, the historically inconsequential movement known as Discipline-Based Music Education (predicated on a model called Discipline-Based Art Education) presents and

teaches music as a formal discipline of study. In such programs, “hands-on” production or performance are downplayed in deference to a theoretical and thus strictly cognitive approach to musical perception that focuses on backgrounded connoisseurship largely as a form of music *criticism*. Any direct performing experiences as might be included only focus on preparing the student to be a rational, ‘critical’, and discerning consumer of music. In this, once again, the movement draws freely upon both idealist and realist assumptions and suffers all of the resulting problems while creating some of its own—in particular, problems from the minimal development of musical performance skills and music reading, and from the likelihood that typical students are not the least bit motivated to study music for the disciplining benefits of making them discerning music ‘critics’.

Perennialism versus progressivism. Neo-scholasticism is also a severely conservative movement that finds expression in the educational philosophy of *perennialism*. Perennialism arose as a reaction against the child-centered theory of *progressivism* which portrayed each learner as an individual with certain unique needs and traits. In progressive schools children are active constructors of their own learning and meaning, not just passive repositories of received knowledge. The progressive teacher is *authoritative* in facilitating and guiding learning to meet the learner’s interests and goals, not *authoritarian* in force-feeding it. Progressivism (Dewey 1971, 17-25; Dewey 1967, 113-126) also stresses the practical value of learning for life-use and thus *problem-solving* and *experiential* learning (“learning-by-doing”) are stressed over rote memorization of inert facts and information.

Against such claims perennialists argue that since human nature is uniform, its schooling should therefore be the same for all children. Similarly, rather than cater in any way to students’ individual needs or interests, perennialists feel prescribed subject matter should be the focus of the curriculum and that certain “basic subjects” should be included in the education of all students.²³ Instruction is not just teacher-facilitated; it is teacher-dominated—the teacher is entirely more active than students—and authoritarian: what is studied, why and how is because the teacher and the school says so. And, most importantly, in line with perennialist faith in “great ideas,” the “great works” of the past in music and the

other arts are seen as containing values which have stood the test of time (Adler 1994) and, thus, a steady diet of the “classics” are featured as eternally relevant. School, in this view, is not a preview, model, or microcosm that anticipates real-life concerns; rather it claims that ‘academics’ best prepare the mind, models, and dispositions to deal rationally with life. Progressivism, instead, focuses on the “whole child” (not just the rational part) and school is the study of life as situated in students’ present lives.

Similarities of traditional curricular philosophy. In general, all three of the traditional philosophies—idealism, realism, and neo-scholasticism—share the usually abstract, “merely academic” and impersonal approach to schooling (perennialism), as well as other traits. For all three, questions about reality, truth, and beauty are not really questions at all: they are eternal and unchanging facts and truths that exist independently of and thus prior to the experience of particular students. The abstractness of such facts and information for students is in part a direct result of the metaphysical/rational nature of such matters in all three traditional philosophies and in part a consequence of the inability of teachers to model or otherwise demonstrate in school the actual or even potential relevance of such studies for life outside of school. Such learning, then, is not only abstractly received from outside the personal subjectivities, lifeworlds, needs and the like of individual students; for most students it is largely inert in terms of any foreseeable consequence of its actual use in life, despite that for some it may sometimes be interesting. The *direct instruction* required to teach such abstractions (e.g., lecture, drill, demonstrations) is likewise a motivational liability in comparison to the “hands-on,” learning by doing, *indirect instruction* of Progressivism.

Music curriculum predicated on any one or any synthesis of these traditional philosophies falls prey to similar problems, particularly in general music and other classroom instruction such as music theory. And performance-based instruction is, as we have seen, largely ignored or downplayed. This accounts for the abstractness and inertness of such learning in music (and other) classes, and may even be a factor that disinclines graduates of ensembles to continue performing or to listen to the “classics” of ‘good music’.

There is, as well, a shared realization in contemporary philosophical circles that aesthetic assumptions are irrelevant to the actual practices and pleasures of music and confuse more than enlighten thinking about the ‘real world’ of music making.²⁴ Such assumptions have ignored the influence of major philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein whose *Lectures on Aesthetics* begins, “The subject (Aesthetics) is very big and entirely misunderstood as far as I can see” (Wittgenstein 1966, 1). Moreover, “it is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible. To describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment” (7). The environments in which music and the arts are appreciated are, Wittgenstein points out, so “enormously complicated” that words referring to aesthetic ideas and criteria have negligible importance in typical circumstances (2; see also 11). “We don’t,” he cautions, “start from certain words” describing aesthetic qualities or criteria, “but from certain occasions or activities” (3).

This need to get back to the unique requirements—“occasions or activities”—of music making as they exist in particular conditions of situatedness, as we shall shortly establish, is among the defining traits of a praxial theory of music and a praxial orientation to curriculum for music education. Thus, praxial theory rejects the misrepresentation and falsification of musical experience by idealism, realism, and neo-scholasticism as being autonomous and isolated from the important contexts of its use; and it points instead to these very conditions as prime ingredients of what music is and why it is valued.

Contemporary philosophy and curriculum

The contemporary philosophies of existentialism, phenomenology, and pragmatism have decidedly different implications for curriculum than the three traditional philosophies already discussed.

Existentialism and phenomenology. From these philosophical traditions curriculum gains an emphasis on the primacy of the individual and the important role played by each person’s awareness of inner life and experience. In practice, then, existentialism and phenomenology are altogether more concerned with the inwardly ‘felt’ subjectivity (i.e., phenomenology) of lived experience than with the rational intellect. Existentially oriented people, for example, are “engaged” with life lived passionately rather than focused on

detached, speculative metaphysics. In the existential view, meaning is not received readymade but is actualized or actively constructed by each individual. *Self-actualization*, too, is largely a matter of self-creation; of constantly bringing-Self-into-Being by and through ones' choices and actions and personal reflection on them. Such *self-creative agency*—the actions creating an evolving personhood—both reveals one's values (even to oneself!) and proposes them as models for others to consider. It also entails responsibility for one's actions and choices. Learning, valuing, and meaning, then, are all highly individual results of personal agency.

Schools that force-feed values to students and repress their individuality (despite giving mere lip-service to individualism) are seen as outright harmful. On one hand, by imposing meaning as ready-made, they prevent students from self-actualizing and thereby realizing self-created meaning in action. Secondly, students are thus quickly taught that learning is something schools and teachers do *to* you, not something you participate in and for *your own sake*. Though the progressivism described above is a direct reflection of pragmatic theories of education, many aspects of attempts at teaching influenced by existentialism—particularly the influences from *humanistic psychology*, which is a psychological counterpart of existential psychotherapy and philosophy—are similar to or overlap the descriptions given earlier of progressivism. Thus teachers *facilitate*, rather than *dictate*, and help students set and explore personally meaningful problems rather than memorize and recall learning that is force-fed because of its inertness—, its inability to 'move' students' interests.

This important distinction has been expressed as the difference between a "pull" or "lead" teacher" (who effectively leads and pulls students towards goals students have been encouraged to set for themselves) and a "push teacher" (who imposes inert goals on students and who thus must always be pushing, motivating, and scolding them). Another variant of the same contrast is the "authoritative" versus an "authoritarian" teacher mentioned earlier. The former is accepted by students as a pragmatic authority who facilitates their own musical goal-setting and progress; the latter whose 'authority' comes only with the formal designation of "teacher" and who sets musical goals and imposes an

equally authoritarian, regimented assessment of progress towards them.²⁵ With an ethos of “pull teaching” and “authoritative” instruction, music education fits especially well into a philosophy that focuses on the students’ affective development and, consequently, on the central importance of Self-and ongoing re-creation through such actions as making and listening to music (Regelski 1973).

Pragmatism. Pragmatism shares or overlaps several existential traits, giving each, however, its own spin and adding some qualities of its own. Pragmatism is a uniquely American contribution to philosophy. While it shares with realism a disdain for metaphysics and a corresponding respect for concrete experience, it otherwise has little in common with traditional realist philosophies.²⁶ Pragmatists argue that there is simply no way of confirming the various metaphysical claims of the three traditional philosophies concerning “ultimate” reality, truth, goodness, and beauty. What people can and do know and value, according to pragmatism, arises from their own down-to-earth experience. Consequently, for pragmatism, knowledge results from the experience of confronting and dealing with the multiplicity of problems—choices for action—that face us every day throughout life. Knowledge is actively created through interacting with the environment and reflecting on our actions, not passively received as inert fact at one time or place in life.

Values, including those in music, are therefore relative in certain ways to individuals—meaning to the range and specific conditions of the situations they experience—and pluralistic—meaning that different values coexist (Bowman 1991) because the experience of life is not everywhere uniform. Values are not, however, wildly subjective the way personal beliefs often tend to be. Rather, values are confirmed, demonstrated, warranted by experience that, in turn, is governed by the facticity of the situated conditions occasioning any experience in the first place. The *pragmatic criterion* holds that the worth of any ‘thing’—a method, event, action, object, (etc.)—is seen in the tangible and practical consequences that come about from its use: the notable *difference it makes* in use (Regelski 2005). Therefore, good musical results are a matter of the worth of whatever is at stake in relation to the needs or use in question (e.g., dancing, contemplation, weddings, patriotism, contemplative listening).

Criteria of value in art and music, too, are subjected to the pragmatic criterion rather than taking the form of metaphysical pronouncements by aestheticians or disclosure by teachers and other experts. Therefore, questions of musical goodness, worth, or value take two (usually interacting) dimensions. First, “art is good which is good of its kind” (Dixon 1995, 53). Importantly, then, *music is good relative to its type*, such as jazz, or the classics, rap, rock, or reggae. Questions of quality, therefore, should not be judged along a single hierarchy of musical quality with “art music” classics at the top. Rather, the classical Eurocentric repertoire “is not a quality of, but a kind of art” (6; see also 44) and represents only one “highly peculiar ‘taste’” (57)—at least in comparison to all musics in the world a relatively esoteric “taste”—among an infinite diversity of musics from which people typically choose a variety of preferences. Secondly, *music is good in relation to what it is “good for”*: for its value as a vital social praxis. Thus, the goodness or value of any music is in part—but importantly—determined by the particular situations in which it is central, which is to say, *in relation to the social praxes that occasion its use in the first place*. To understand this second condition more fully it is instructive to turn to the root meaning of the term pragmatism in the Greek idea of *praxis*. “Praxis and pragmatism share a root meaning in the Ancient Greek stem *πρᾶγμα*; in Latin, *pragma*, or concrete reality. For praxis, this focuses on “action” (its typical English translation), and for pragmatism the etymology refers to tangible acts (Regelski 2017a).

Praxis in contemporary practice theory.²⁷ In his writings on ethics, Aristotle made a distinction between three types of knowledge: *theoria*, *techne*, and *praxis*.²⁸ *Theoria* was knowledge developed and contemplated for its own sake: various kinds of theory, ideas, and information ‘appreciated’ just by knowing it. In modern parlance it has much in common with what students today call the “merely academic” learning of schools. It is not surprising, therefore, that the neo-scholasticism of contemporary schools and universities owes much of its trappings to St. Thomas Aquinas (thus neo-scholasticism is also known as *neo-Thomism*). He relied heavily on Aristotle who, in turn, had studied in the famous Academy of Plato²⁹ (therefore neo-scholasticism has also been identified as *neo-classicism* in reference to its origins in “classical” Greek thought). In general, then, *theoria* describes

much of the rationalist agenda for schooling advanced by idealists, realists, and neo-scholastics. In music, it also describes the kinds of meanings and values advanced by the aesthetic theories of the three schools of traditional philosophy (idealism, realism, Neo-Scholasticism). Thus, for all three, music is rationally contemplated in often metaphysical terms for its own sake and a sharp distinction is made between a ‘disinterested’ *aesthetic attitude* compared with the situated social bases of music as praxis (action, doing).

Techne referred to the kind of “know-how” used to produce predictable and taken-for-granted results. It is concerned with what the Greeks called *poesis* or *excellent making*. As such, it involves technical competence that embraces both knowledge and skills of production that are practiced and learned through apprenticeship and “hands-on” doing. Pragmatists often refer to “instrumental knowledge” in such terms as the kind of knowledge that is instrumental (contributory, facilitating) in bringing about certain intended results.³⁰ But *techne* has two further qualifications that must be understood in distinguishing it from praxis, which is another kind or degree of instrumental knowledge.

First, the nature of the techniques and craft skills in question is largely impersonal. There is little credit or reward to the existential self of the craftsman whose results are not unlike those of another equally competent individual. For example, any two master plumbers can get the ordinary job done equally well in a matter of fact way, and the same can often be said for technically competent musicians—for example, studio musicians for TV, film productions. Secondly, mistakes, poor work, negative results are simply discarded and one simply begins over with no harm done except the effort wasted. Thus the artisan typically discards a mistake and starts over *without learning anything new* about the process.³¹ Skills of *techne* are transmitted by a “this is how to do it” demonstration.

Praxis, however, is a much more consequential act of *doing* (rather than making). To begin with, it is importantly governed by *phronesis*, an ethical dimension that focuses on the need to bring about ‘right’ or ‘good’ results for particular human situations. The ethical dimension of praxis, then, involves its involvement with and commitment to serving the needs of *people*, not simply producing ‘things’. ‘Things’ may well be involved, for example, the house designed by an architect; but praxis requires that such results (including non-

'things' such as musical results) clearly serve the needs of the humans for whom they have been intended. Thus the architect whose building is dysfunctional, and the musician whose music is ill-suited to the requirements of the situation,³² are engaged in poor, even unethical, practice (i.e., mal-praxis). In relation to the two qualifications discussed in connection with *techne*, both the knowledge and the 'doing' of praxis are extremely personal and amount to a *personal style* that is reinforcing and defining of Self in important ways. In music this goes beyond the mere virtuosity of technique (*techne*) to the heights of artistry.³³

Furthermore, the satisfactions involved in such 'doings', such as making music, are not just personal but in praxis are self-actualizing in the sense associated with existentialism as well as the "psychology of optimal experience" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; see Elliott & Silverman 2015, *passim*, for a musical application of this concept of "flow"). Consequently, the Self (i.e., personhood) is rewarded in key and unique ways by the nature and fullness of the engagement with or in praxis. However, the 'doings' of poor praxis cannot simply be thrown away, ignored, or un-done—the way the failed 'makings' of *techne* can. Because mistakes of praxis negatively involve *people*, such failures become a new problem to be faced: the need for adjustments by the doer, the practitioner. Accordingly, a doctor's misdiagnosis or the teacher's failed lesson become factors that have certain inescapable human consequences that must be contended with if any corrected 'doing' is to reach the beneficial 'right results'. Such experiences thus create *new praxial knowledge* for the practitioners' use in the future.³⁴

Therefore, praxis depends on technical kinds of instrumental knowledge but has ethical requirements that distinguish it from mere *techne* (or just any "practice"). On the other hand, praxis also engages various kind of low-level practical and applied consequences of theoretical knowledge that guide *phronesis*. All manner of 'pure' theory (e.g., the research of scientists in various fields) has a variety of practical spin-offs. Thus the physician's knowledge and use of, say, chemistry relies on 'pure' research but in its 'applied' form its value is no longer to be gained or accumulated for its own sake but results from being used.³⁵ Praxis, in effect, is a functional synthesis of all three types of knowledge.

Theoria and techne used in connection with praxis are not undertaken for their own sake but according to the situated needs for 'right results' that bring about the occasion for praxis in the first place.

As regards music, then, praxial thinking, in line with pragmatism and contemporary practice theory generally (Bourdieu 1990, Schatzki et al. 2001), rejects metaphysical accounts of aesthetic essences (whether of the idealist, realist or neo-scholastic kind) and similar metaphysical claims treating questions of beauty, meaning, and value in music in absolute terms as eternal and universal. In particular, the idea that musical “works” are autonomous—what social theorist Bourdieu calls the “pure gaze” (Bourdieu 1993, 215-266³⁶)—is vigorously denied. The distinction aestheticians make between ‘autonomous’ and stable ‘intrinsic’ qualities, meanings and values as opposed to ‘extrinsic’ qualities, meanings, values, uses and conditions is simply not made (or is actively disputed) by praxial theorists. In this view (and the view generally of ethnomusicology and sociological theories of music—e.g., Rice 2014, Martin 1995)—musical meaning and value do not inhere simply in the acoustical sounds; nor can they be analyzed in or from the score. Music always entails inescapable interaction with the sociocultural conditions governing the sounds and the situated social praxes in which it is embedded and which, in part, it helps shape (Regelski 2016a).

Music as a social praxis

Sociality is a matter of human interaction and sharing through institutions, paradigms, and social structures of various kinds. Humans are intensely social beings, especially via language and music! Music, then, is inherently social because it invokes, evokes, and totally engages such human relationships. Society or culture, however, is not simply a monolithic entity on-its-own that influences music in a single direction. Rather, music is a consequence of the interaction between people and sounds socially recognized (labeled as) “music.” Thus music (a) stimulates and conditions sociality (b) at the same time that it is a product of sociality. Musical meaning, then, is not in the sounds or their relationships; but is in or of the interaction of such sounds with the sociocultural structures, contexts, uses, and other

governing particulars of musical situatedness. The social dimension of music is therefore importantly determining of music's meaning, and music is importantly determining of sociality (Regelski 2016b).

In this reciprocal relationship, music's social functionality is somewhat parallel to spoken language. Both are creative *of*, at the same time they are created *by* sociality. And they share the fact that in neither do sounds inherently signify immanent or fixed meanings. There is nothing about the sound of the word "pain" that is homologous with the experience of pain. Meanings associated with the sounds of music, like the sounds of words, similarly depend on a variety of social and cultural structures,³⁷ and are ultimately governed by the way and the situations in which they are used and accordingly evolve over time. For instance, a Bach chorale as part of a church service has a significantly different meaning and value than that same score performed on the secular concert stage in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. In the same manner, a secular love song used in a wedding ceremony takes on a religious and ceremonial meaning, and "gospel" song easily became "soul" music when the words were secularized. And in 1999 the Vatican allowed hula music and dance for the Catholic liturgy in Hawaii. Just as the meanings of words and expressions evolve and change according to usage chronicled in good etymological dictionaries, so do the meanings of music, even (or especially) in conjunction with "classics" of the past that respond to ever-new sensibilities and interpretations, new life situations, and experiences, even new technology.³⁸

Musical sociality, therefore, conditions a range of possible meanings without providing the kind of 'built in' meanings implied by "pure gaze" orthodoxy. However, not just any meaning can be invested via musical sounds. Sounds and their embodiment in perception have certain material conditions, and the range of meanings that arise from the sociality of music mitigate any silly relativism where "anything goes" (Bowman 1996). The range of possible states of human awareness and meanings is flexible but finite.

Sound intended, evoked, or invoked as a particular or general kind of social praxis, then, becomes "*musical* sound" (i.e., "music") in terms of that praxis. The sounds themselves "make special" (Dissanayake 1992, 1990) and meaningful a social praxis at the

same time that they are made special (viz “music”) by the praxis.³⁹ The relationship is thereby totally reciprocal and no distinction between internal-external, intrinsic-extrinsic, inherent-delineated meanings and values can ever be valid. For this reason, because traditional aesthetic accounts rely on the first term of such dichotomies to the exclusion or denigration of the second quality, they fail to account fully for and thus falsify the down-to-earth values of all kinds of musics and musical experiences.⁴⁰

Praxial theories instead stress all manner of down-to-earth musical ‘doings’ that bring about ‘right results’. First of all, in accordance with the two-fold account of pragmatic value explained earlier, the very existence of an unlimited variety of kinds, types, styles, and genres of music is in itself convincing evidence that music is as varied as human sociality. It is useful to mention again in this connection that the ‘pure’ music of the “classical” Eurocentric repertoire is but one in this vast array of musical types that arise in such multiplicity, particularly in reflecting the diversity of human meaning and valuation that music reflects and shapes. As shown above, “Classical” music is not the paradigm for all ‘good music’; that is, it is not the norm of quality to which all music should be compared but, rather, has its distinctive kind of musical quality.

Furthermore, at best, aesthetic theory is historically situated in such a way as to be largely false to modern musical life. And, at worst, aesthetic theory was, even in its past days, a fault-ridden philosophy that served (and still serves) the ideological interests of the upper-middle class and its attempts to be “classy” in its conspicuous demonstration of “good” or “refined” taste and social “distinction” (e.g., see Regelski 2016a, b; Regelski 2017b; Bourdieu 1993; Bourdieu 1984—the latter on “The Aristocracy of Culture,” 11-96). In this regard, an unfortunate consequence of the influence of the aesthetic orthodoxy is the dramatic decline in amateur and recreational music making of all kinds that it occasioned. Amateurism falls to meet aesthetic criteria!

Secondly, praxial theory points to the fact all the various kinds, types and genres of music, are “good for” an unimaginable diversity of “good results.” All kinds of practical (praxial) roles for music, then, fall within the range of praxial theory. The overwhelming preponderance of music in the world—“the indigenous, unhomogenized, uncalculated

sound of a culture becoming itself in the streets, bars, gyms, churches and back porches of the real world” (Ani DiFranco, quoted in Farley 1999)—is clearly made for a bewildering variety of life values. But, in this connection, the autonomy claimed by aesthetic theory and the “pure gaze” required by ‘aesthetic distance’ either (a) denies or deprecates the social value of such music or (b) attempts to tear such music from its natural and necessary social context in order to exhibit it for contemplation alone as though it was or could become, by such evisceration, purely or essentially aesthetic despite its origins in situated sociality. Attempts to apply aesthetic criteria to, for example, world and multicultural musics result, in effect, in a colonialism and exploitation by Eurocentric aesthetic theory that misappropriates and misrepresents the music in question and devalues the authentic musical meanings engaged only *in situ* by its creators.⁴¹

In sum, then, praxial theory accounts fully for all kinds and uses of music, and finds musical value not in disembodied, metaphysical hypotheses concerning ‘pure’ music, but in the constitutive sociality of music and the functional importance of music for the social structures that govern social and thus individual consciousness. It addresses “concert music” (of all kinds) that is presented for just listening as equally imbued with sociality and as a discrete praxis of its own that is no more or less important than other kinds of musical ‘doing’. But praxial theory redresses the imbalance the aesthetic orthodoxy has promulgated on behalf of listening, and particularly reasserts the importance of musical agency through various kinds of performance and composing.

Furthermore, whether just listening in concert situations or at home, praxial theories account for and point to the value of all kinds of music in terms of the “good time” thereby created; time that is deemed as “worthwhile” (the word means, literally, “valued time”) in relation to both its sociality and its individuating benefits and other meanings, benefits, and uses. Thus, as opposed to time we “kill,” simply “pass,” “waste” or “spend” at other pursuits (such as work), the “good time” resulting from musical praxis is a resource that promotes a variety of socially structured meanings in which the individual participates in a way that is nonetheless self-defining and self-enhancing.⁴²

In particular, then, praxial theory provides support for all kinds of amateur and recreational uses of music (Regelski 2007)—uses that in no stretch of the imagination are accounted for as aesthetically valid or valuable by the aesthetic orthodoxy. Whether such uses entail playing jazz at accomplished (but non-professional) levels of expertise, the evident artistry of many country fiddlers and banjo pickers, garage bands of aspiring musicians, or folk guitarists and untutored music making of all kinds such as community ensembles, church choirs, Christmas caroling and the like, each has a place and personal, social, and thus musical value in the praxial account. Furthermore, audience listening, while still accorded praxial importance, expands in praxial accounts to forms and types of listening where music is fully integrated in discrete social practices such as religion, weddings, ceremonies, dancing, mood enhancement, and the like.

In any case, music does not just “accompany” such occasions in a trivial role; it is intrinsic to and defining of their very value-structure at the same time that the sociality entailed is intrinsic to and defining of the “music” and its meaning and value. In the praxial account, then, music is of and for the down-to-earth conditions of everyday life and life well-lived in terms of the “good time” thus created. It is not above life in some intellectually or cerebrally abstract, disembodied, “pure,” or other-worldly realm of metaphysical ideals, “expressions,” or understandings that exist for their own sake. Rather, in a praxial account, music’s meaning and value are in and for action and human agency. Consequently, music embraces everyday people and everyday life. As such, praxial theory is altogether more down to earth as a pragmatic foundation for the decisions guiding curriculum for music education.

Curriculum as and for praxis

Aside from the philosophical problems already pointed out, idealist, realist, neo-scholastic, and perennialist musical assumptions for curriculum have distinct practical liabilities in connection with schooling. To begin with, the aesthetic meanings and values are so intangible as to present considerable practical problems for the planning and delivery of instruction: the controlling variables are usually abstractions, instruction thus tends to be

abstractly “about” not “of” music. Secondly, by definition aesthetic experience is covert and not directly observable, as musical praxis is. As a result teachers cannot be held accountable for “teaching” nor students held accountable for “learning.”

Praxial theories of music are instead rooted in the ‘doing’ of music; importantly, then, planning, executing and evaluating are all benefited by abundantly *observable* results.⁴³ In fact, curricular thinking informed by praxial theory engages all three distinctions concerning curriculum pointed out earlier. A curriculum rooted in praxis then profits from a *formal curriculum guide*. This should not merely a document that will not be used. Curriculum as praxis involves, instead, the planning that serves music teachers as a blueprint serves carpenters. In the case of teaching, however, the teacher is both architect and builder. Therefore the curriculum guide originates in the attempt by the teacher (or group) to describe the particular kind(s) of musical praxes towards which the curriculum will be directed.

This *action or praxial dimension* proposes a designated range of musical praxes understood in *holistic* musical terms and exemplified by “real-life” types of applications. This action dimension describes **what** praxis is at proposed to be learned (i.e., is worth learning). These kinds and uses of music are considered *action ideals*—not in the sense that ‘ideal’ is often thought of as fanciful, impractical, illusory, or Utopian. Action (or regulative) ideals in philosophy are ideal in the sense that there can be no single instance nor any ultimate state of perfection that could ever be reached (e.g., good parent, good friend). Action ideals for teaching are directly akin to the guiding or regulative ideals of professions: they guide or regulate the students’ praxis in question toward certain desirable but general pragmatic ends that can take no single or ultimate form and can always take improved or other forms (e.g., good health).

This is extended for each identified musical praxis by what can be called the *musicianship (or competency) dimension*. This outlines in functional terms the specific knowledge and skills necessary for students **to be able to** take part, autonomously of the teacher, in the praxis in question; that is, *independent musicianship*. Because such specifics are expressed in holistic terms and rely on the teacher’s own praxially developed sense and

informed knowledge of musical practice, these descriptions are not so detailed as to become atomistic or piecemeal, thereby losing sight of the ultimate functionality of the musicianship envisaged. They are, however, stipulated in action terms as ‘doings’ not simply as abstract information.

Finally, in recognition of the potential of the “hidden curriculum,” and the importance of inspiring students for life-long learning with the benefits and joys of the ‘play’ of music, each praxis is described in terms of the attitudes, values, and rewards the teacher will feature and foster in connection with instruction in and leading to competency in the praxis in question. This *attitude dimension*, then, is concerned to make specific, not leave hidden or taken for granted, *the affective and other “good time” conditions instruction needs to model* if students are **to want to** and ultimately choose to continue to be involved in the musical praxis in question. Praxial theory is therefore highly progressive for being focused on life-long learning.

As a very general model, the following example of a curricular action ideal for recreational singing (drawn from an actual curriculum) for a grade 7-9 (non-select) school chorus may be instructive.⁴⁴ Keep in mind, that several other action ideals relative to listening, solo singing, literature, and the like would be an integral part of the overall curriculum. This model is but one among many action ideals (slightly edited) this teacher deemed practicable for the students, time, resources and other conditions.

RECREATIONAL SINGING: Singing for individual and social pleasure.

- * Action Dimension: **what** praxes
Church and community choirs, “sing-alongs” (e.g., campfire, social clubs, etc.), patriotic and seasonal singing, singing with and for friends and family, karaoke
- * Musicianship Dimension: “to be **able** to”
 1. Matches pitch accurately, easily, and consistently.
 2. Stays in tune with others and accompaniment.
 3. “Reads” music well enough to use score to learn part after several readings.
 4. Stays on own part in the presence of other parts.
 5. Employs healthy vocal production.

6. Accommodates changing voice conditions as needed (male and female).
 7. Tone quality is pleasing, not forced or strained, and blends.
 8. Sings in style (i.e., observes vocal and musical flexibility) appropriate to typical literature.
 9. Picks up songs efficiently “by ear” without score (e.g., from recordings).
- * Attitude Dimension: “to **want** to”
10. Enjoys and looks forward to singing.
 11. Unembarrassed (even boys) to sing for peers, family, and audiences.
 12. Is comfortable with and enjoys singing with others.
 13. Eagerly learns old and new literature in a variety of styles.
 14. Accepts the importance of and works to improve vocal technique, music reading, stylistic, and performance insights and styles.
 15. Seeks or accepts opportunities to sing, especially outside of school.

Certainly different teachers would have different qualifications in mind, according to the typical conditions of their particular situations.

In addition to concern with a formal guiding document, a praxial theory will point to the organization and delivery of instruction that is based in effect on an *apprenticeship model*; where, that is, the action ideals in questions are approached in the manner of a *practicum* (Elliott & Silverman 2015). Therefore, and again, impractical, detailed and inevitably long lists of abstract concepts (e.g., National Standards) and piecemeal approaches to skills and information give way instead to the *holistic* immersion of students in the types of musicianship and musicing central to the praxes in question. To be sure, such involvement at first will be quite basic, even embryonic, but will always be at least a holistic approximation of the intended praxial (action ideal) outcome. Instead of a *spiral curriculum* that supposedly revisits concepts at ever-higher levels of abstraction, *praxial sequencing* systematically presents ever-more realistic examples and practical challenges of the ultimate praxial consequences intended: e.g., new fingerings, chords, keys (etc.).

In this manner, the knowledge and skills addressed by instruction are insured to be actually useful—a factor contributing not only to the efficiency of instruction but to evaluating the effectiveness of learning. Furthermore, briefly isolated moments of focus—for example, emphasis on this or that detail of technique—never lapse into “for its own sake” preoccupations but, rather, are always easily and naturally integrated in and through

the appropriate level of praxis. And, of considerable consequence of this holistic approach is the fact that at each subsequent level, the joys, interests and benefits of the praxis in question are fostered and thus modeled for the future, at the same time ever-new heights of praxial functioning are clearly often naturally evident and self-rewarding.

Expert exemplars may be models—as are, for example, sports heroes for young athletes—but, in schools, the next highest levels of musical expertise beckon in the form of the models provided by the next class level or age-group.⁴⁵ Ultimately, perhaps only a few younger students will aspire to and thus achieve the expertise of more expert models whose accomplishments have informed their formative years (e.g., the select chorus) and go on to further study. Nonetheless, with such models, many others will be able to and want to remain musically active, albeit as amateurs. Furthermore, despite failing to reach expert status, their praxial insights will allow them to be entirely more analytically informed and interested as listeners to the artistry of experts. This kind of appreciation, then, is informed by the praxial musicianship that results only from actually engaging in a praxis; it does not develop dilettantism in lieu of such engagement.

Nonetheless, *listening is an important praxis of its own* with its own conditions, criteria and “goods”; and therefore profits from its own practicum. Students in performance-based instruction thus benefit greatly from a listening practicum.⁴⁶ It benefits their own skill development by contact with models, levels, literature and the like that are presently outside their reach. It also provides for a future of listening, particularly on the part of graduates whose future circumstances may not allow time for ensemble membership.

Of course, general (classroom) music instruction also needs its own listening practicum. But this needs to include performing and compositional praxes of various kinds and levels that inform listening in productive ways. Instead of having listening as the *sole* intended consequence of the general music curriculum, a praxial approach to general music class will also focus on developing an interest in and nurturing the skills for various kinds and levels of performing and creating music for recreational purposes. Whether using folk instruments or composition software, general music students, in a praxial view of

curriculum, should not be denied the joys and pleasures of making music—including composition. The bottom line in general music class as elsewhere in the praxial view of curriculum, is a pragmatic concern with the kinds of holistic, “real-life” musical praxis students can do at all or better, with more enthusiasm, as a result of instruction (Regelski 2004).

This leads to the final distinction in connection with curriculum as and for praxis (Regelski 1998b): in addition to (a) a formal curriculum guide, and (b) instruction predicated on an apprentice-like practicum in one or more types of musical praxis, a praxial curriculum and the instruction it guides both need to be (c) regularly evaluated in terms of students’ actual learning (i.e., “authentic assessment”⁴⁷) and, if found wanting, adjusted. Praxial approaches to curriculum are inevitably rich in demonstrated competencies of an authentic kind. As a result, the degree and benefits of a praxial-based music education are quite evident, even dramatically so, to students, their parents, administrators, and other observers (e.g., taxpayers). Students can and do engage in one or more authentic praxis with self-evident acumen and satisfaction—at the very least in response to the psychologically hypothesized “need for achievement” (N-Ach)⁴⁸ that is important to students’ self-esteem.

Conclusions

Curriculum as and for praxis requires a certain hypothetical or experimental approach. The formal curriculum guide functions as a kind of *thesis*—more precisely, as an inter-related complex of several action ideals as theses—concerning what of all that could be learned is most worth including in instruction. For praxial approaches, the answer is pragmatic: The holistic musical praxes that are most likely to be able to make a positive musical and personal difference in the lives of typical students. These intended ‘good results’ are hypothesized as the action ideals of the curriculum. The *instructional* phase of curriculum is similarly hypothetical: the methods and materials of instruction are hypothesized as being the best likely available means at hand for local circumstances.

Instruction, however, requires *practice*! It is remarkable how often music teachers who have spent so much time practicing musical skills simply expect their methods and materials to just “work” without dedicated practice in developing instructional skills. It is not methods and materials that “work,” but the teachers who use them—according to when and how well “practiced” they are applied. Thus, despite what some texts and “how-to” oriented teachers contend, methods, and materials are only tools and need to be adeptly practiced and employed if they are to succeed in producing the intended results. Teaching as a professional praxis, then, is concerned with ethically qualified results.

The final phase in this process regards the instructional phase as a *test* or *experimental ‘proof’*—viz. authentic assessment—of the success and worth of the first two hypothesized values (viz., the curricular action ideals involved and the instructional means employed). It might be that the curricular ideals are valid (well-reasoned), but the instructional means chosen were not, or the methods were not properly “practiced” over time in action. Or the ideals themselves may have been unrealistic, unobtainable, or otherwise unworkable for given local constraints. If so, they need to be rethought in light of past practice and the predictable challenges of the near future.

The experimental (tentative) nature of this cycle is not to be confused with “experimenting” on students, since it also perfectly describes, for instance, the praxis (i.e., professional “practice”—actually “praxis”) by which a doctor diagnoses and treats patients. Thus in education, pragmatism is sometimes referred to as *experimentalism* or *instrumentalism* in recognizing that knowledge and skill always profit from regular and systematic feedback and is instrumental in bringing about pragmatic ends-in-view; i.e., action ideals (Regelski 2017a).

Over time it can certainly be expected that the evolution of music and society, new technology, changes in student’s backgrounds, attitudes, schooling circumstances, and the like necessitate periodic and systematic review of curriculum. Curriculum, in this view, is not a free-standing premise that remains unaffected by changing circumstances; it is “ideal” exactly in the sense that there is no ultimate, once-and-for-all-times “good” or final result

that can be proposed. Thus there is the constant need for ongoing connection to ever-fluctuating and evolving socio-musical needs, conditions, and criteria.

Given the intrinsic and evident sociality of music, and the direct role music provides in both creating and reflecting the structures of society and sociality, a praxial philosophy of curriculum most fully accounts for the exceptionally profound and ubiquitous role of music in human life. Similarly, then, a praxial basis for curriculum, such as is suggested here, provides the kind of pragmatic benefits of music for life that is pointed to by a praxial philosophy of music. All kinds and degrees of musical praxis are thus validated and music education curriculum planning and use become an educational praxis that is properly and fully committed to inclusiveness of musics, meanings and values, not to the kinds of exclusiveness pointed to by “pure gaze” assumptions.

Music education as praxis is predicated on the value and importance of music as praxis, and it has the effect of *including* rather than *excluding* students⁴⁹ so that music studied in school is understood by students as music for us, for our lives, for the musical “good times” of a life well-lived. Approached in this way music and music education have much more to contribute than has been realized by traditional assumptions about curriculum and, thus, holds forth the promise of being recognized as far more central to life and schooling than has traditionally been the case.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas A. Regelski is “Distinguished Professor” (Emeritus), SUNY, Fredonia NY. He has a Master’s degree in choral conducting and a PhD in Comparative Arts/Aesthetics. He has taught choral conducting, and music education methods and foundations courses. He has been a visiting professor at Aichi University in Nagoya, Japan, the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland (on a Fulbright Award), Helsinki University, and was a research fellow at the Philosophy of Education Research Center at Harvard University. He is the co-founder of the MayDay Group, and from its inception until 2007, was editor of its e-journal, *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. In addition to 120 journal articles and chapters, he is author of 6 books, most recently *A Brief Introduction to A Philosophy of Music and*

Music Education as Social Praxis (Routledge, 2016). He lectures occasionally at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and is a docent at Helsinki University.

Sources Cited

- Adler, Mortimer J. 1994. *Art, the Arts, and the Great Ideas*. New York: Macmillan.
- Alperson, Philip. 1994. "Music as philosophy." In *What is Music? An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*, ed. by Philip Alperson. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Applebee, Arthur N. 1996. *Curriculum as Conversation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. R. Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Trans. R. Nice. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.
- _____. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bowman, Wayne. 1998. *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1996. "Music without universals: Relativism reconsidered." In *Critical Reflections on Music Education*. Ed. L. R. Bartel, D. J. Elliott. Toronto: University of Toronto/Canadian Music Education Research Center
- _____. 1991. "A plea for pluralism: Variations on a theme by George McKay." In *Basic Concepts in Music Education II*. Ed. R. Colwell. Niwot CO: University Press of Colorado.
- Broudy, Harry S. 1991. "A realistic philosophy of music education." In *Basic Concepts in Music Education II*. Ed. R. Colwell. Niwot CO: University Press of Colorado.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. 1990. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Dewey, John. 1971 [1938]. *Experience and Education*. New York: Collier/Macmillan.
- _____. *Dewey on Education: Selections*. Ed. and selected by M. Dworkin. 1967 [1959]. New York: Teachers College Press.

- deMarris, Kathleen B., and Margaret D LeCompte. 1999. *The Ways Schools Work*, 3rd ed. New York: Longman.
- Dissanayake, Ellen. 1992. *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why*. New York: Free Press/Macmillan.
- _____.1990. *What is Art For?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Dixon, Robert. 1995. *The Baumgarten Corruption: From Sense to Nonsense in Art and Philosophy*. East Haven CN: Pluto Press.
- Elliott, David and Marissa Silverman. 2015. *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Erskine, John. 1944. *What is Music?* New York: J.B. Lippincott, Co.
- Farley, Christopher John. 1999. Quoting Ani DiFranco, *River of Song* (PBS 1999) in "Sounding the Waters," *TIME*, 153/1 (January 11): 95.
- Johnson, Mark. 1987. *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. 2000. *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kivy, Peter. 1990. *Music Alone*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh; The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Martin, Peter J. 1996. *Sounds and Society*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Proudfoot, Michael. 1988. "Aesthetics." In *The Handbook of Western Philosophy*. General editor, G.H.R. Parkinson. New York: Macmillan.
- Putnam, Hilary. 1990. *Realism with a Human Face*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Putnam, Hilary and Ruth Anna Putnam, 2017. *Pragmatism as a Way of Life*. Cambridge: Harvard/Belknap.
- Regelski, Thomas A. 1973. "Self-actualization in creating and responding to art." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 13/4 (Fall 1973).

- _____. 1998a "Schooling for Musical Praxis," *Finnish Journal of Music Education*, 3/1 (Spring 1998): 7-37; Reprinted: *Canadian Music Educator*, Vol. 40/1 (Fall 1998): 32-43.
- _____. 1998b. "Action Learning: Curriculum and instruction as and for praxis." *Proceedings of the Charles Fowler Conference on Arts Education*. College Park: University of Maryland Press.
- _____. 1998c. "The Aristotelian bases of praxis for music and music education." *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 6/1 (Spring): 22-59.
- _____. 1997 "A prolegomenon to a praxial theory of music and music education." *Canadian Music Educator*, 38/3 (Spring): 43-51.
- _____. 2004. *Teaching General Music in Grade 4-8: A Musicianship Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 2005. "Music and Music Education—Theory and Praxis for 'Making a Difference'," *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37/1 (January 2005), 7-27. Issue re-published as: *Music Education for the New Millennium: Theory and Practice Futures for Music Teaching and Learning*. London: Blackwell.
- _____. 2007. "Amateurism in Music and its Rivals," *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 6/3 (2007), 22-50:
http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Regelski6_3.pdf.
- _____. 2016a. "Music, music education, and institutional ideology: A praxial philosophy of music sociality." *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education (ACT)* 15/2: 10-45.
- _____. 2016b. *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music Education as Social Praxis*. New York: Routledge
- _____. 2017a. "Pragmatism, Praxis, and Naturalism: The Importance for Music Education of Intentionality and Consummatory Experience in Musical Praxes," *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* (Fall 2017, in press).
- _____. 2017b. "Automania: Music and Music Education from Mars." *Contemporary Aesthetics*
2016:<http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=790>.
- Reimer, Bennett. 2003. *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

- Reckwitz, Andreas. 2017. "Practices and their affects" (Translated by S. Black). In *The Nexus of Practices*. Edited by A. Hui, T. Schatzki, E. Shove. New York: Routledge.
- Rice, Timothy. *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Russell, Philip A. 1997. "Musical tastes and society." In *The Social Psychology of Music*, Ed. D. J. Hargreaves and A. C. North. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schatzki, Theodore R., Karin Knorr Cetina, Eike Von Savigny eds. 2001. *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Schwadron, Abraham. 1967. *Aesthetics: Dimensions for Music Education*. Washington, DC: Music Educators National Conference (NAfME).
- Shepherd, John. 1991. *Music as Social Text*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Shepherd, John and Peter Wicke, 1997. *Music and Cultural Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Turino, Thomas. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wenger, Etienne. 1999. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1966. *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Ed. C. Barrett. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Zillmann, Dolf and Su-lin Gan. 1997. "Musical taste in adolescence." In *The Social Psychology of Music*, Ed. D. J. Hargreaves and A. C. North. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹ Throughout, the use of double quotation for an expression marks an unattributed, common source (e.g., "tricks of the trade."). Use of single quotation marks denotes "so-called" or "supposedly" (e.g., 'good methods', 'true', 'real').

² References to "programs" among many directors of ensembles assuredly do not entail anything even remotely involving curriculum, as will be described. The term "program" is typically used in reference to the 'feeder' system where some elementary students continue in middle school, then fewer in high school. Very typical of any such program, then, is a notable and predictable decrease in the numbers of participating students, as the demands

of “presentational” criteria demand more dedicated practice and rehearsal. (See Turino 2008, on “presentational” vs. “participatory” musics.) General music classes (called “classroom music” in other countries) are often expected to teach “music appreciation” or music reading for purposes of choral and instrumental ensembles.

³ Compare: all students benefit from physical education/health education, but only a few choose to participate in extra-curricular (or out of school) sports. This model often leads to ensembles being treated as extra-curricular and not deserving of curricular time in the regular schedule.

⁴ Those committed to “delivering” lessons according to often scripted means, and without regard for the actual learning that might result. “Good teaching,” in this paradigm, amounts to the delivery of ‘good’ lesson plans, not in assessed or observed learning.

⁵ It is this kind of detail expressed in terms of *action potential* (i.e., agency, or what the student can do) that is among several factors distinguishing a curriculum from a syllabus. The same is true of “spiral curriculums” that claim to visit the same “concepts” at ever-higher levels of abstraction—to what ends, who knows. NB: In what follows, “agency”—i.e., being an agent—refers to being one who acts; who creates actions that engage the world and others in it. “Change agents” are those whose actions seek to change given or accepted realities. Teaching is, or should be, a profession of “change agency”: changing students’ learning, changing society.

⁶ In many subjects (e.g., language arts, mathematics), the curriculum often comes in “canned” form as commercial publications adopted by the school. In large schools, many teachers are not even consulted about such adoptions. Instrumental “methods series” are examples of such published materials parading as curriculum. In some countries, education ministries produce a ‘curriculum’ of generalities, the details of which are left up to individual teachers to fill in variously.

⁷ An exception: a teacher new to a school designed a middle school general music curriculum predicated heavily on computer compositional software and recreational instruments. The Board of Education approved it unanimously. Then the teacher filed a budget request to fund all the instruments, hardware and software, and the Board had little choice but to go along with the request.

⁸ The same problem befalls instruction in the US predicated on the National Standards which thus become “national activities” of the isolated, hit-or-miss kind: solitary, free-standing “activities” designed to meet this or that standard. Deliver the lesson and the Standard has been met, or so it is falsely assumed and without consideration of the contribution to lifelong learning of music.

⁹ For example, instruction in guitar playing where two students must share one instrument cannot premise the same results as for one student per guitar.

¹⁰ There are unfortunately a massive number of hidden curriculum “teachings” that are endemic to schools. One addressed by social critics, is that the *regimentation of schools* (bells, timed periods, dress codes, attendance taking, enforced conduct, etc.) is central to the hidden curriculum of providing *good workers* for society. The hidden curriculum also tends to take for granted middle class values, often to the detriment of students from lower socioeconomic classes (e.g., home computers, owning one’s instrument, prom dresses, music heard at home).

¹¹ Certain facts and information, such as key and meter signatures, are best learned and assessed in use—as one or more forms of musical praxis. The same goes for “music appreciation”: observing claims for it “in use”!

¹² “Perfect intervals” are those pitches that occur in the scales built on each of the two pitches: e.g., C occurs without an accidental (i.e., “perfectly”) in the scale of F, and F occurs “perfectly” in the scale of C. Thus, the interval C to F (C to the 4th degree of its scale, F) is called a “perfect fourth.” The same is the case for perfect fifths (C to G).

¹³ The maxim of the celebrated piano virtuoso, Yves Nat, teaching at the Paris Conservatoire in the 1950s, was “*Toute pour musique, rien pour la piano*” (Roughly: “It’s all about the music, not about the piano”). CD liner for “My personal favorites: *The Jacques Loussier Trio Plays Bach*,” Telarc 35319-02, 2014. Louissier, a conservatory piano student of Nat, is notable for having popularized “crossover” jazz based on classical favorites. Worth a listen, especially for listening lessons.

¹⁴ Words are also ‘extrinsic’ in this sense for referring to ‘extra-musical’ ideas, usually love, nature, and God; and vocal/choral music is thus rendered further down the aesthetic hierarchy that has instrumental chamber music at the top most valued as “pure” music (Kivy 1990).

¹⁵ Facile fingers and digital dexterity; as a kind of athletic discipline; e.g., scale drills and other “exercises” as, in effect, musical calisthenics.

¹⁶ At least in North America. In some countries (e.g., Germany), “aesthetic education” refers to praxis and ‘doing music’ in various ways in contrast to overly intellectualized traditions of “music appreciation” as informed contemplation.

¹⁷ Do they listen, for example, to choral and band/wind literature outside of school, or as adults? They might if provided as part of the curriculum with playlists and even assignments for listening, and if the school library was furnished with CDs of such musics. Listening is its own praxis.

¹⁸ For example, too often community ensembles don't exist (Why is there no demand?) and where they do, scheduling rehearsals and concerts into busy adult life is often difficult and can exclude those with interest who can't participate. Chamber musics (e.g., duets, trios) are much easier to schedule.

¹⁹ There are different varieties of realism. *Pragmatic (or internal) realism*, in particular, is different from the *metaphysical realism* described in what follows. The latter posits that reality exists apart from our concepts of it (the tree you walked into exists whether or not you have a concept of "tree"). Pragmatic realism accepts that the material world of things exists independently of our concepts (i.e., that trees exist); but importantly qualifies that our knowledge of them (via walking into the tree in the dark) is nonetheless always embodied (pain, "internal") and thus conditioned by the mind's language, and pragmatic experiences: we never know it (tree-ness) as a thing-in-itself (e.g., Putnam 1990, 3-43; Putnam & Putnam 2017, 140-58; Johnson 1987, 194-212).

²⁰ "Mind," philosophically, includes bodily responsiveness and the "social mind" demonstrated by the social sciences and philosophical pragmatism, not just brain anatomy (Johnson 1987). The social mind is mentality as conditioned by one's social and environmental milieu. Some thoughts cannot be thought outside of one's place in the world (e.g., the many ideas of different qualities of snow that inform the lives of natives of northern climates whose lives depend on the distinction).

²¹ That is, the contention that true connoisseurship and appreciation depend on *background information* from music theory and history and past performing experience.

²² A true example: the futility of the 8th grade general music teacher who taught a "unit" on "The 25 Greatest Composers," giving students the rationale that "Someday you'll be at a party where people are talking about composers and you'll be able to join in." I was there.

²³ Music educators who follow neo-scholastic Perennialism try to argue that "music is basic" in just this way and approach teaching it as transmission from the past not transformation for the living future.

²⁴ "It would be had to think of a subject more neurotically self-doubting than aesthetics. Claims that the subject is irrelevant, muddled and misunderstood have been a persistent theme, not only of recent, that is to say, post-war, writers, but from the very start of the subject. Alas, these claims have all too frequently been justified." Proudfoot 1988, 831; see, too, 856.

²⁵ Readers should think seriously about the differences between these two conceptions of "teacher" as regards directing an ensemble, or planning "activities" for general music

classes. Curriculum (what is most worth addressing by instruction) can either favor the former praxis, or rely on the status quo practices of the latter.

²⁶ For an extensive account of pragmatism for music education, and its relationship to praxis, see Regelski 2017.

²⁷ “Practice theory” offers social and philosophical accounts of human action and agency, and analyzes contemporary culture and its institutional practices; e.g., Bourdieu 1990, Schatzki et al. 2001, Wenger 1999. While practice theory can account for an affective component (Reckwitz 2017, 114-125), unlike praxis it lacks an inherent explicit ethical dimension that, when applied to schooling, has to be considered in addition.

²⁸ For an in-depth account of Aristotle’s theory of knowledge for music education, see Regelski 1998c.

²⁹ Named after a Greek war hero, Academus.

³⁰ A common synonym for this aspect of pragmatism is *instrumentalism*.

³¹ Some incidental learning can result; in carpentry and tailoring, for example, “measure twice, cut once” to avoid mistakes.

³² True example: a jazz group hired for dancing played tempi and meters unsuitable for dancing, thus drawing complaints from the dancers. It was “good jazz,” but not “good dance music.” A matter of praxis: I enjoyed listening, the dancers objected.

³³ More music teachers should take note of the important difference between teaching technique (*techne*) as though for its own sake (exercise, drills, etc.) and teaching *music*; thus, the difference between a piano lesson and a music lesson via piano noted earlier in note 12.

³⁴ An apocryphal story illustrates: A teacher complained to a colleague, “I taught it to them but they didn’t understand. So I taught them again, a different way, and they still didn’t understand. Then I taught it to them a third way and, finally, *I understood.*”

³⁵ We might wish the same connection between abstract theory and a potential for applied use were the rule rather than the exception in the case of the kind of “music theory” provided in the curriculum of most teachers and professors in secondary and higher education; e.g., jazz and “fake book” symbology (at least in addition to figured bass) where G⁶ is not a “first inversion.”

³⁶ He also demonstrates the sociological/historical “Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic,” (254-266), thus demonstrating that aesthetic theory itself was a social construction of the 18th-19th centuries and not at all a matter of ‘pure’ reason.

³⁷ As does even “pain” (and emotion and affects in a particular language culture) which in many respects is conditioned by sociocultural variables (e.g., Kövecses 2000). Athletes deal with pain in ways that differ with other people.

³⁸ E.g., technological improvements in instruments (piston valves); performing Bach on the modern grand piano or marimba; the ‘romantic’ Samuel Barber *Adagio for Strings* as used in the war movie *Platoon* (etc.).

³⁹ Some religions disapprove of “music” *per se* but condone in their religious praxis what other cultures would describe as sung “prayer.”

⁴⁰ For detailed analyses of music and sociality see, e.g., Martin 1996, Shepherd 1991, Shepherd and Wicke 1995, Regelski 2016, and the scholarship from sociology of music and ethnomusicology in general. These disciplines are not usually taught in (North American) university schools of music, probably because they contradict the “pure gaze” premises of aesthetic theory. In some countries, then, “music education” is taught through departments of social and cultural theory, not in “schools of music” (e.g., Sweden).

⁴¹ When performed publically for audiences, such musics become “concert music” (a different praxis) for just listening and no longer serve (for concert audiences, at least) their original situated, praxial values. Performers may, however, still be “into” displays of the originating praxial functions (e.g. performances of “Kodō,” the Japanese *taiko* drumming ensemble whose mesmerizing concert performing is, for them, a spiritual discipline, even in concert).

⁴² For more on “good time” see Regelski 1997, Lakoff & Johnson 1999. The “good time” described in both should not be confused with mere “fun time.”

⁴³ Without getting into behaviorism, scientism, and positivism, “observable” here means in the same practical sense that, say, a child’s “good manners” are seen in action (or not); and in the same sense that “loving” is observed in action (or not) beyond “I love you” assertions. Thus, the “love of music” (“music appreciation”) can only be seen in action, in observable actions of loving. Praxial assessment always involves “authentic assessment” of the skills and knowledge “in action.”

⁴⁴ For details of an Action Curriculum for sixth grade (ages 10-11) general music class, see Regelski 2004, 257-265, which also demonstrates the use of a Planning Grid for easy daily reference to the particulars of the formal curriculum.

⁴⁵ It is important then, for example, that elementary students regularly hear the performance of middle school students and that the latter hear performances of high school groups. If possible (and scheduled by administrators) some public (evening) concert literature should also be offered during school time (assembly events) where the ensemble can perform for age-group peers and the next generation. This listening aspect should be articulated in the curriculum of performance ensembles.

⁴⁶ E.g., at least critical/analytic listening to recorded passages of their own playing (during a rehearsal) for reflective praxis (e.g. perform a passage, listen to the recording, perform again to improve without director input); but also, listening to at least models of the ensemble medium by accomplished groups (especially high school and collegiate—the next levels they can relate to), with attention to details of performance as their own action ideals and for appreciation for future listening. Some teachers find value in taking time to have small groups (e.g. SATB for 8 voices), as part of a rehearsal, pulled out to perform a short passage during rehearsal for the choir's listening and suggestions. This improves performance criteria and listening skills. Chamber groups from within the ensemble can rehearse their literature interests (e.g., woodwind quintet) on their own time, perform in rehearsal time for the full ensemble, and even as part of concert programs.

⁴⁷ Authentic assessment samples the “real life” form of praxis at stake; thus, say, competence with meter and key signatures or fingerings is seen “in action,” not on paper.

⁴⁸ A “need for achievement” (N-Ach) is a premise of *personality theory* that describes, in effect, the human *need to be good at something* that is meaningful to Self (of any age). It accounts for “achievement motivation”—intrinsic and extrinsic—associated with countless fields of human endeavor. It is held to be especially important in the healthy development of adolescents, and accounts for many of their compelling interests—from music, to computers, to sports, scouting achievements, and the like. Some educators even hypothesize that N-Ach affects those students who aspire to only being good at being bad (i.e., misbehaving and getting peer attention). For more, see Regelski 2004, *passim* as indexed.

⁴⁹ E.g., instruction for only the select or ‘talented’ few. A praxial curriculum will instead be devoted helping *all* students find some forms of musicing that contribute to lifelong musicing.