

The Effectiveness of Integrating Music and Other Subjects on Students' Development: the Music Education Situation in Australia and Finland and its Implications for Japan

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(平成24年 9月28日受付；平成24年12月 7日受理)

ABSTRACT

The positive outcomes of learning music and the arts are many, including building children's self-esteem, enhancing their academic achievement, training them in life skills and giving them a variety of means for self-expression. The benefits of using music as a form of play with young children, as well as teaching music and other arts to older children extend far beyond the reaches of the individual subjects as engagement in quality music and arts programs has been shown to support the cultivation of positive social behavior through its ability to emotionally move the listener.

Referencing the cases of Finland and Australia, this paper provides a framework for implementing arts integration activities so that teachers can effectively make use of the minimal time currently available to music and arts education to create authentic, engaging learning experiences by integrating music and the arts in other subjects across the curriculum.

KEY WORDS

Integration Finland Australia Arts Education Music Education holistic

1. Introduction

Through engaging in developing music and arts programs, children can develop their self-esteem, self-discipline and confidence as they learn to perform a variety of music. With children using music as a form of play can help them develop imagination and creativity. Engagement in arts programs can also help children develop their ability to cooperate in groups and become strong leaders and team members through group compositions, learning experiences and performances. Children can learn more about themselves, their peers and people from different cultures as they make, perform and appreciate a variety of music. They can become critical thinkers, reflective learners and creative problem solvers as they analyse music and its cultural context, create their own music and learn to take risks in making and appreciating different kinds of music and artworks (Russell-Bowie, 2012).

However given the cuts to funding to music and arts education across many countries, including Japan, Australia and Finland, the amount of time given to music and arts education schools has decreased. Therefore, the concept of integrating music across subjects has been investigated and practiced in many schools. The policy and practice of integration of music and other subjects has been debated for many years (Russell-Bowie, 2012). Some academics and practitioners have been against it saying that integration can dilute outcomes for music (Best, 1995; Eisner, 2002). However others are ardent proponents of authentic, holistic integration as they perceive it as being able to address the needs of the crowded curriculum, as well as allowing children to enhance their learning across subjects and achieve holistic and authentic knowledge, skills and understandings in each subject (Jensen, 2001; Russell-Bowie, 2009).

In this paper, three models of integration are discussed then the integrated arts situation in Australia and Finland is described, where music is used as a tool for learning, integrated with visual arts, dance and drama and other areas of learning using the transformational power of music.

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2. Integrating Music and the Arts in Australia

2.1 Models of Integration

Social constructivist views of learning confirm that integration of knowledge across subjects is essential if learning is to be relevant and meaningful (Gibson and Ewing, 2011). However, when examining integration within and through the arts it is important to define the concept of Integration. The word *Integration* can have many meanings in different contexts. Integration can occur within the arts across the different artforms or across different subjects. Integration can describe an activity where one subject services the second subject, or it can describe a program of work which includes tenuous connections between subjects, or thirdly it can be used to describe holistic authentic learning experiences that involve a variety of subject areas all contributing to the one theme or focus question. These three approaches describe how subjects can work together to achieve outcomes, each method is valid in itself when used by a creative and resourceful teacher to promote the children's understanding and application of their learning and they can also be used alongside each other in a program of work. Deep learning and understanding within the classroom is more likely to occur when integration is carefully planned to reflect authentic real world learning experiences (Ewing, 2011).

These three approaches to integration can be summarised into Russell-Bowie's (2009) three models of integration. These are **Service Connections** (where one subject services learning in another subject with outcomes achieved in the second subject only), **Symmetric Correlations** (where two subjects use the same material to achieve their own discrete outcomes) and what is called **Syntegegration** (subjects working together synergistically to explore a theme, concept or focus question and achieving their own outcomes). *Syntegegration* also achieves outcomes that transcend those in each learning area such as the development of generic skills including observation, research, problem solving, team work, etc. Through *syntegegration*, a higher level of learning and critical thinking is encouraged as children apply, compare, analyse, synthesise and evaluate ideas and concepts across the subjects (Russell-Bowie, 2009). Much of the integration seen in Australian primary schools falls under the first two categories, however some schools are implementing *syntegegration* learning experiences for their children. The following section explores a brief history of the arts in Australian primary schools and discusses the place of integration of the arts in these schools.

2.2 The Arts in Australian Primary Schools

Western education systems have been in place in Australia for over 200 years since the country was colonised by the British. During the colonial period, the British education system was prevalent and this ensured that arts education was written into the education policies in some form or other (Boughton, 1989). Generally singing, drawing and painting were the subjects taught in primary schools and these were taught often by specialists, were very teacher-centred, lacking in creativity and taught as separate subjects (Peers, 2003; Stevens, 1993).

Following the Federation of Australia in the early 1900s each state developed its own education policies and school curriculum. Music and art were still taught as separate subjects, with music focussing predominantly on singing with some schools having percussion bands. Art focused mainly on technical drawing skills. Some states funded specialist teachers for these subjects while others expected the generalist teacher to teach all subjects in the primary school (Stevens, 1997). In some schools, dance was introduced as movement to music with some teachers teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Folk dancing was often included in the physical education classes but dance and drama were rarely seen as separate subjects in their own right (Bentley, 2008).

In the second half of the 1900s, art education progressed to becoming more creative and child-centred and included craft (Dabron, 1958). In music lessons, recorders along with untuned and tuned percussion instruments were used in the classroom as well as singing. Drama lessons focussed on presenting plays and dance was either restricted to young children or seen as part of the physical education subject (Capitanio, 2004; Russell-Bowie, 2011). These subjects were seen as discrete and there was no policy of integration at this stage, although many teachers of young children (Kindergarten and pre-school) would integrate learning

experiences through play.

Over the past 50 years, a variety of arts education evaluation projects were undertaken and the results included the observations that in government primary schools, little arts education was being undertaken when it was the responsibility of the classroom teachers. However a better quality of arts education was delivered when specialist teachers were employed for these subjects (Bartle, 1966; Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs (CDEYA) 1984; Senate Environment, Recreation, Communication and the Arts Reference Committee [SERCARC] 1985). Some states had policies to employ specialist music and sometimes art teachers, while other states believed it was the responsibility of the generalist teacher to teach all subjects in the curriculum (Russell-Bowie, 2011). Little, if any, mention was made of integration and each subject was taught as a discrete entity.

2.3 Opportunities for Integration in Australian Primary Schools

Up until 1994 the Australian primary school curriculum was based on up to 15 separate subjects, each being taught in the time slot allocated to them in the weekly timetable. There was little mention of integration of any kind and the separate state syllabuses for music and art were written and updated at intervals. Dance was generally covered in Physical Education and drama in English classes. However in 1994 the Federal Government decided to group the different subjects in the primary school into six Key Learning Areas and published a series of statements and profiles for schools in these Key Learning Areas (Curriculum Corporation 1994). Music, media, dance, drama and visual arts were grouped into the Arts Key Learning Area and each state then developed and implemented their own Arts syllabuses, based on these statements and profiles. The syllabuses were generally seen to be discrete entities in themselves to be taught in separate timeslots throughout the week with little emphasis on integration. What integration occurred was generally based on the *Service Connections* model with the arts being used to achieve outcomes in other learning areas.

In the New South Wales (NSW) Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus (2000) skills, knowledge and attitudes in each discrete art form are developed. The overall aim of the syllabus is that children develop their understanding and accomplishment in each of the art forms. The objectives of each art form are then listed. The only indication that some integration may be possible is the sentence: *'It is highly recommended that teachers give consideration to interrelating the objectives in each of the artforms in the development of teaching programs'* (NSW Board of Studies, 2000, p.8). In another section there is a brief discussion about links between the artforms and other Key Learning Areas with examples given with the arts being connected to an event, or the arts connecting to other Key Learning Areas. An example given includes making art or drama in or about a place in a local environment (linking with Human Studies in the Environment (HSIE) (NSW Board of Studies, 2000, p.19). The proviso for these links is that outcomes are achieved in both the art form and the other Key Learning Area. Other states followed similar formats in their syllabuses. This form of integration is based on the Symmetric Correlations model where two learning areas use the same material to achieve their own individual outcomes.

Since 2005, in response to the crowded curriculum, NSW government primary school teachers are encouraged to implement specific connected units of work called Connected Outcomes Groups (COGs) (NSW Curriculum Support (nd). These units are written around a Connection Focus or Theme and learning areas are used to contribute to the overall focus of the unit with outcomes from each connected learning area being listed along with the sequence of teaching and learning activities. The COGs units of work have the potential to become Syntegrated learning experiences, but in practice tended to follow the Symmetric Correlations model, with each learning area focusing on its own outcomes but with links to other subject areas.

Currently Australian education is moving towards a national curriculum, with syllabuses for each Key Learning Area being the same across all states and territories. In the *Draft Australian Curriculum: The Arts Curriculum Foundation to Year 10* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012) sequences to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in each of the five art forms (music, media arts, visual arts, dance and drama) are, once again covered in the one curriculum, with each art form being developed under into the two strands of *Making* and *Responding*. There is a noted emphasis on teachers

providing opportunities for integration of content between these two strands in the primary years (p.8). The Draft Curriculum also indicates that 'there are opportunities for integration of learning between arts subject and with other learning areas' (p.21).

The draft arts curriculum document uses the word 'connections' when discussing the links between the art forms or between other learning areas within the curriculum, indicating specifically that connections could be made with English, History and Geography (p.19). In each level (band) of the draft curriculum there is a specific content description in the Making strand that enables students *'to make art works a) to explore or express concepts from other Arts subjects or learning areas through the Arts subject being studied, and b) that combine knowledge, skills and/or techniques learned in two or more Arts subjects in a multiform or hybrid artworks'* (p.19).

Thus, although currently there is no policy for integration of the arts in Australia, in practice it happens depending on the teacher and the school. The draft national curriculum for the arts is suggesting connections are developed within the five art forms and with the arts and other learning areas. This is based on the *Symmetric Correlations* model of Integration but does have the potential to provide students with more holistic and authentic learning experiences within the *Syntegegration* model of integration if teachers encourage students to be involved in a higher level of learning and critical thinking to achieve outcomes in a variety of learning areas and also achieve generic outcomes as part of the unit of work.

This paper has discussed different models of integration then examined the state of the arts in Australian public primary schools in relation to these models. The educational system of Finland will now be examined briefly then music as a tool for transformational learning will be discussed, followed by an example of the integration of music and language learning within the larger European arena.

3. Integrating Music and the Arts in Finland

3.1 The Educational System in Finland

The well-being of the Finnish society is built on education, knowledge and culture. The Finnish educational organization includes a free basic education (comprehensive school, 9 years), starting with a voluntary pre-primary education to be continued in the form of primary school (6 years) and secondary school (3 years). Upper secondary school comprises vocational and general education. Higher education is provided by universities and the applied sciences of universities. Adult education is available at all levels. A coherent learning pathway to support the child's growth, development and well-being is formed based on the education described above, and complemented by early childhood education and before-and after school activities. Students' opportunities to progress through the steps of education is safeguarded by legislation.

Universities may be academic or artistic institutions, focusing on research and education based on research. Bachelor's, Master's, licentiate and doctoral degrees are given. All teacher education courses qualify teachers to work in nursery schools, kindergartens, comprehensive schools, upper secondary-or high school levels as a classroom generalist teacher, music teacher, language teacher, specialist teacher or early childhood music teacher. See Figure 1 for the construction of the educational system in Finland.

FORMAL EDUCATION IN FINLAND

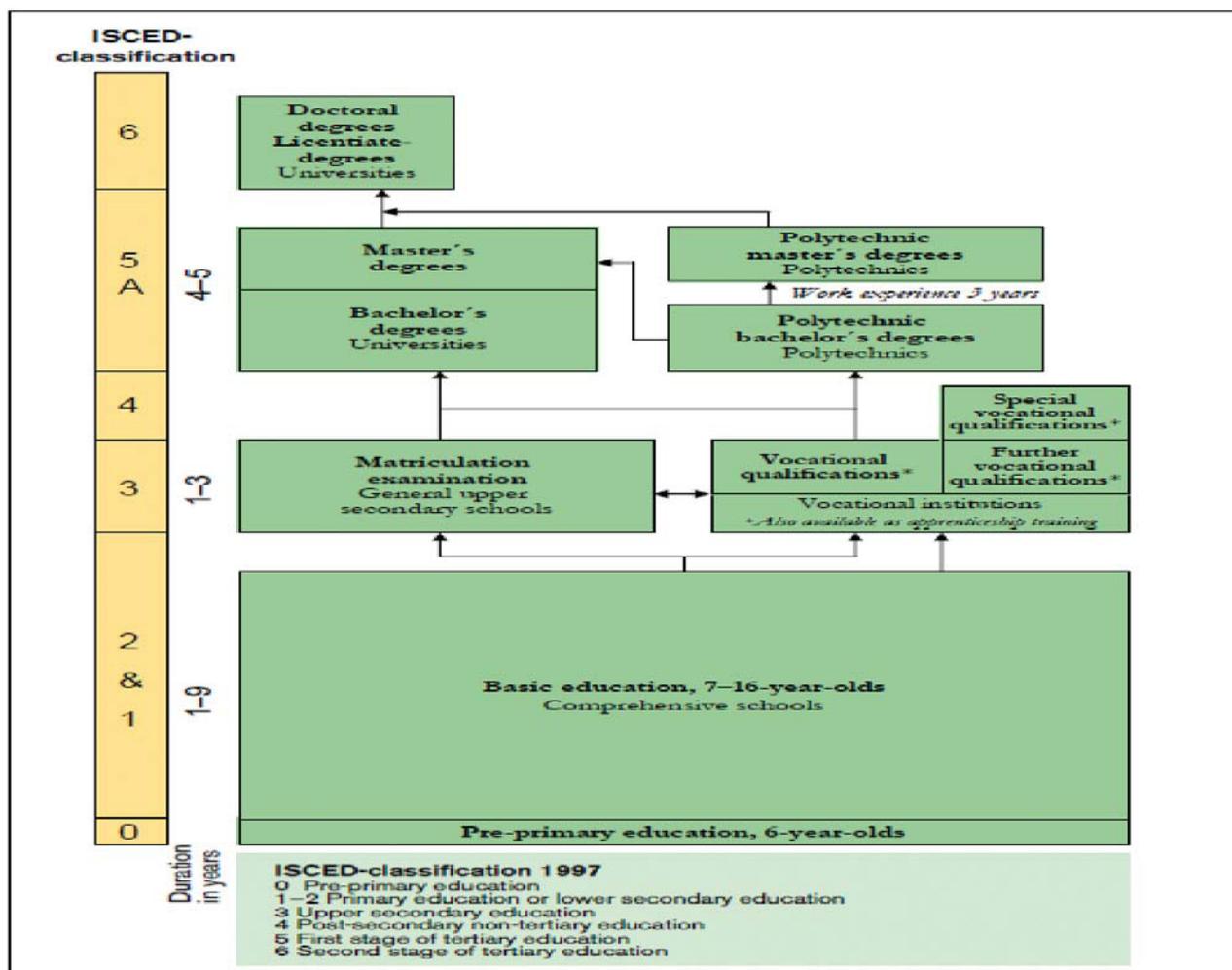


Figure 1 Formal education in Finland.

3.2 Integrated studies in Finland

The state of music education as a part of the educational system has been changing through the history of Finnish school. These changes have affected the amount of music in the curricula (Eerola 2010) and the changes of the content and aims of music teaching (Kosonen 2009). Because of the change of curricula the number of students choosing arts as a part of secondary school studies diminished, then increased back to the earlier level again in 2009. Music was the least chosen within the group of arts studies (Kuusela 2009). However, in the primary school, all the subjects within the group of arts and skills studies (PE, crafts, visual arts, music, home economics) were the most popular ones, being estimated as one of the three most popular school subjects (Marjanen & Lakso 2011). In the Finnish teacher training system, all arts subjects are included within the package of integrated arts, but taught by specialist teachers within each area: ie. Music, visual arts and drama education can only be taught by specialists within these areas.

Arts education is based on the connections between arts and mind, which has been emphasized by many empirical studies (Anttila & Juvonen 2002). The focus of music education is moving towards the understanding of arts as a holistic, integrated process from the earlier singing-based context. It is important for us to keep in mind though, that singing, as a part of the holistic vocalizing possibilities, is one of the most important areas from which to start the musical integration processes.

3.3 Music as a tool for learning

The basis for the power of music to impact one's behaviour and attitudes can be explained by the human ability to be emotionally moved because of a musical experience, in an individual level (Kypourgos 2012; Marjanen 2009; Hannaford 1995). This creates the basis for the ability of music to also support positive social behaviour. Music seems to link people because of the shared musical experiences (Marjanen 2009). The emotions within music can be described in the form of special theories, discussed by Juslin (2001, 2005) and Izard (1991), but also more closely connected to the human lives and musical interaction, like in the theories of Musilanguage by Brown (2000), music and emotions during the prenatal period by Odent (2008), Suzuki (2000), DeCasper et al. (1983) and Chamberlain (1996; 1994), and connected to mother-child interaction by Dissanayake (2000) and Papousek (1996). Gardner (1993) and Wood (1982) describe the holistic effects of music on a child. Musicality can be understood as a communicative talent (Trevvarthen 1999/2000, 159)

Emotions are deeply inherent to music: without emotions music would be dead. One of the most important theories on the emotional power of music is described through the concept of flow which is described as a very deep artistic experience, an "optimal (musical) experience" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). During the early years "play" can be understood like a synonym to "life". In a child's life, the importance of play is only secondary to the need for love, nourishment and shelter. A playful act is fundamental for physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth (Montagu 1962). When playing, our imagination functions in connection with the elements of body, emotions and reason, as a cognitive part of the learning experience (Hannaford 1995). In the study of well-being of 8-12 year-old children, the importance of imagination and creativity was also pointed out, connected to the child's well-being as their own experiences (Marjanen & Poikolainen, in press). This strengthens the understanding and the need to develop music education through holistic experiences and integrated activities, to support a child's learning in the form of nurturing the imagination and creativity.

3.4 Creating transformational music education

3.4.1. *Setting the goals*

Music education goals should be based on a wide holistic, developmental framework. The high musical quality connected to emotions is considered important, at the same time keeping in mind the differences in understanding between an adult and a child. All genres of music can be used to support the child's growth and the teacher's own musical aspects and experiences are also important starting points.

To be able to set music education goals, we must be aware of the areas of children's individual musical development. Musicality is constructed within innate musical capabilities and features to be further developed. These capabilities are individually shown as musical memory and musical imagination. Based on stimulation by the physical dimensions of sound (sense of timbres and sounds, sense of loudness, sense of melody, sense of rhythm and durations) they affect human spiritual and physical being through emotions and experiences. The goals for music education as part of the integrated learning processes can focus on the musical, socioemotional, psychomotor, aesthetic and cognitive areas, which are interconnected and support each other through interactive social and internal processes (Marjanen 2009).

The sense of self within music is created prenatally and during the first years of a child's life. A music education process should be always based within a secure, positive and warm environment within the group of children. This allows the teacher to create a framework for every individual to be able to find a freedom to empathize, to experience the inner self, to find pleasure, to share one's feelings, to create and formulate one's own world of values and to make choices.

Swanick (1988) notes that music has an incredible power to influence the mind. It is also widely accepted in education that musical activity can provide powerful means to support learners' psycho-motor, cognitive, socio-emotional, aesthetic, and kinaesthetic development. Music provides many social, personal, cognitive, and cultural functions, and researchers are discovering strong links between music making and health (Clift & Hancox, 2001; 2008; Bunt & Hoskyns, 2002). The fundamental abilities of music to support learning generally are as follows:

- 1) Musical experiences opens one's mind to be willing to learn;
- 2) Music connects the teacher and the pupils throughout shared experiences, so that an atmosphere of trust is gradually created (Marjanen, 2009);
- 3) Music enhances children's attention skills, focus and responsiveness within the classroom (Milavanov, 2009; Huotilainen, 2011); and
- 4) The transdisciplinary nature of music and musical activity makes it very suitable to relate and integrate knowledge from different fields, but also fosters teamwork and communication (Cslovjecsek & Spychiger 1998, Cslovjecsek & Linneweber-Lammerskitten, 2011; Cslovjecsek & Zulauf, in press)

According to Csire (1998), the transfer effects of music can influence and enhance all areas of human personality. He believes that music can be used in the educational process as a transfer agent in which consciousness, pulse, energies, and skills can model and train all aspects of our complex human psyches. Through learning music, the main operations of thought are involved: analysis and synthesis, comparison, association and dissociation, generalization, abstraction and realization (or concretization).

3.4.2. Choosing the methods

Using these benefits of learning music, and as a way forward in integration, some schools in Finland are involved in the European Music Portfolio project that aims to integrate musical activities into primary foreign language education. The underlying framework for this project is the understanding that musical activities and repetitious games can assist young learners by enhancing their memory as they learn the sounds and structures of new languages. They believe that by integrating music into language learning, language barriers are reduced and social integration is enhanced. Music and language integration can also nurture self-confidence and self-expression and improve intercultural understanding.

In the European Music Portfolio project (<http://www.emportfolio.eu>), ten categories of musical activities were developed to assist language learning:

1. Rhythmic vocalisation
2. Singing
3. Body percussion
4. Playing instruments
5. Dancing and moving
6. Exploring, improvising, composing
7. Listening to music
8. Painting, writing, reading music
9. Using ICT
10. Conducting, teaching music

These ten categories identify several kinds of action-oriented music education activities and open up a range of rich possibilities for integrating music into the language classroom. These categories of musical activities are interconnected and overlap. For example, when playing a musical instrument, children will listen, and may be reading, improvising, or experimenting. Rhythmic vocalisation and singing include playing with the voice to produce 'vocables', raps, accents and contrasting characters. This serves also as a frame for Finnish music education to be integrated across the arts and literacy to support a child's holistic learning processes. It also fits the model of Service Connections discussed previously, where the activities and resources achieve outcomes in both music and the other subjects.

4. Implications for Japan

Music and the arts are powerful ways of helping children learn creatively and develop their imagination as well as learning knowledge, skills and attitudes in and through the arts. This paper has examined policies and practices of arts integration across Australia and Finland, implemented to address the crowded curriculum as well as to use the arts to enhance learning in other subject areas.

Under the current Japanese Music educational system, only 1.4 hours are allotted for music classes each week in the elementary school, and only a single hour in junior high school. Even this minimal state of affairs has only been retained at great effort. At the same time, the educational goals mandated by the government require more emphasis than ever before on expressive and communicative skills (Tokie 2012 ; 2010). Given this, it is becoming even more necessary for Japan to reform its current educational system.

As of the writing of this paper, the Japanese Ministry of Education had not outlined plans to implement integrated arts studies, nor did it appear to be considering the idea. It is not clear whether such a system would benefit the students' development. However, there is still much room for reform even under the current system.

Valuable ideas might be found by examining the process the Australian and Finnish governments went through to create their integrated arts classes. If too much emphasis is being put on certain aspects of Music education, those elements should be de-emphasized, and the curriculum streamlined with a view to achieving the Japanese government's goals of improved communicative and creative skills.

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