



Music in the Australian arts curriculum: social justice and student entitlement to learn in the arts

Linda Lorenza¹ · Margaret Baguley² · Martin Kerby²

Received: 25 July 2021 / Accepted: 26 September 2021 / Published online: 12 October 2021
© The Australian Association for Research in Education, Inc. 2021

Abstract

This paper explores the role of the Senior Project Officer: The Arts for the Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) in facilitating the writing of the foundation *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (2011) paper for the national curriculum, with a particular focus on the discipline area of music. The collaboration between the five arts specialists was underpinned by an acknowledgement that each Australian student was entitled to a high-quality arts education involving each of the five arts forms of Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. As it was for the other arts forms, the music curriculum needed to cater simultaneously for music specialists, primary generalist teachers and secondary teachers across a variety of school contexts. This balancing act was further problematised by that fact that each of the States and Territories adhered to particular approaches to music education that were often incompatible. The researchers have used a Collaborative Autoethnography approach (CAE) to explore the Senior Project Officer's experiences with the arts, particularly music at school, and her later involvement in the arts through her professional career with a focus on the role of the Senior Project Officer: The Arts. Two major themes emerged from the CAE: the impact of schooling experiences and diversity in pedagogical approaches. These themes highlighted the social justice principles of equity and accessibility which underpin the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*.

Keywords Arts education · Curriculum writing · Impact of schooling · Music · Music curriculum · Music education · National curriculum · Pedagogical approaches · Social justice

✉ Margaret Baguley
baguley@usq.edu.au

¹ Central Queensland University, Mackay, Australia

² University of Southern Queensland, Springfield, Australia

Introduction

National education policy development in Australia has always been a complex and politically charged issue (Brennan, 2011; Ditchburn, 2012; Harris-Hart, 2010). Though the funding of education is a Commonwealth government responsibility, the six states and two territories have nevertheless retained constitutional responsibility for education (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The ongoing controversy over the “aims of education”, “the mission of the field” and “ideas about appropriate practice” (Eisner, 2000, p. 4) were therefore never likely to end with the adoption of a national curriculum. If anything, it generated new avenues of concern, ones which ranged from the appropriateness of centralising curriculum design to the challenge of providing access to different art forms in a remote school. The fact that it took over two decades to implement a national curriculum, which was then almost immediately subject to a partisan political review, is indicative of the pressures the writers of the shape papers confronted (Ewing, 2020; Lorenza, 2021).

A national curriculum framework of Statements and Profiles for eight learning areas was developed in Australia between 1986 and 1993 and included: English, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment, Arts, Health and Physical Education, Technology and Languages other than English (Watt, 1997). The *Hobart Declaration on Schooling* (1989) was written during this time and provided national and agreed goals for schooling. The statement and profile for the Arts identified five distinct arts stands of: Dance, Drama, Media, Music and Visual Arts, however the inclusion of the arts was not always a foregone conclusion (Lorenza, 2018; O’Toole, 2018). In any case, the national statements and profiles were ultimately rejected by all the states and territories. Over the next decade, however, the states and territories used it as a definitional framework for documents relating to the compulsory years of schooling, though minor adaptations were made to align it with existing curricula (Piper, 1997; Yates, 2008; Yates et al., 2011). In 2003, *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century* [Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (MCEETYA), 1989] superseded *The Hobart Declaration* [Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MYCEEDYA), 1989], though national curriculum development did not commence until 2008 with the release of *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* [Ministerial Council of Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MEECDYA), 2008]. This document identified as its core mission the development of a world class curriculum to “develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens” (p. 2).

The *Statement and Profiles*, which had once been dismissed as unacceptable, were the agreed starting point for the development of the arts curriculum when discussions began in earnest in 2010. In time, curriculum development for each learning area of the Australian Curriculum would adhere to the requirements detailed in *The Curriculum Development Process* (2012a) and *The Curriculum*

Design Paper (ACARA, 2013). As the use of these documents suggest, the journey towards a national curriculum in the Arts progressed through a number of stages during which feedback from various stakeholders was sought at regular intervals. Indeed, if anything, perhaps too much attention was paid to critics who opposed a national curriculum outright or who instead argued for the pre-eminence of their art form at the expense of the wider ambition to recognise each one as equal (Meiners, 2014; O’Toole, 2018). The first step was the appointment of a reference group in 2009 comprised of discipline experts for each art form who contributed to the *Initial Advice Paper* drafted by Professor John O’Toole. The artform specialists who were selected from within the reference group to work as shape paper writers with O’Toole as the lead writer were Professor Margaret Barrett (Music), Professor Elizabeth Grierson (Visual Arts), Professor Michael Dezuanni (Media Arts) and Dr Jeff Meiners (Dance).

The Senior Project Officer was a pivotal role which involved international curriculum benchmarking, national curriculum and policy analysis, and the coordination and facilitation of national reference and advisory groups. This role was initially undertaken by Josephine Wise for the first 12 months and then Dr Linda Lorenza for the next five years. After the incorporation of feedback, the revised *Initial Advice Paper* was then developed into the *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts*. After further consultation, this was then revised as the final *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* published online in August 2011 and launched at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) by the then Education Minister and former rock singer, Peter Garrett. Perhaps, in a nod to Garrett’s standing in the Arts community, the Arts shape paper was the only Australian curriculum learning area shape paper to enjoy a public launch. Garrett (Ministers’ Media Centre, 2012, para. 3) also stated that it was “the first time every Australian school student will be entitled to arts education from kindergarten onwards”. The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* paper and the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* that it informed were not as prescriptive as some of its critics believed. Though the curriculum outlines that all students will study the five Arts subjects from Foundation¹ to the end of primary school, this expectation was balanced by the additional observation that “schools will be best placed to determine how this will occur” (ACARA, 2011, p. 4; ACARA, 2015a, b, c). The flexibility enshrined in the curriculum was a vital, if sometimes under-rated safeguard. It acknowledged that curriculum is interpreted differently by different people and enables a wide variety of inquiry (Moss, et al., 2019; O’Connor & Yates et al., 2010, 2011). This had already been recognised in the Federal Labor government’s arts policy, *Creative Australia: National Cultural Policy* (Australian Government, 2013), which assured concerned educators that every child would have access to arts education. More broadly, it was noted that this

¹ Foundation is the first year of school in the Australian curriculum. ‘Foundation’ was selected as the term for the first year of school across States and Territories. Previously, a variety of terms were used including Kindergarten (NSW), Preparatory (Victoria), Reception (South Australia) and Transition (NT). Prior to the development of the national curriculum, the first year of schooling in Western Australia and Queensland was Year 1.

education would facilitate a better understanding of the important role of creativity across the curriculum.

Yet, curriculum does not, and indeed cannot exist in a bubble. Curriculum in the arts is therefore torn between issues of accountability (Efland, 2004; Eisner, 2002) and the very different world of making and responding to an artwork, such as a piece of music, which is cognitive and affective and involves a process rather than a single answer (Barrett, 2003; de Bruin, 2019). The arts are rarely able to be measured with the singular clarity afforded other learning areas, yet the flexibility that this afforded was often misinterpreted as vagueness. This was exacerbated by policy, for the writing team were prevented from either specifying content or defining pedagogy (O'Toole, 2015, 2018). Instead, the content was to be framed by a "flexible child-centred progression" with achievement standards based upon "aesthetic outcomes" and not upon specific subject matter (O'Toole, 2018, p. 431). The absence of specific subject matter was an area of concern for many teachers used to working with curriculum documents that specified content for each year of schooling. Nevertheless, it was an improvement, for as Ewing (2020) argues, the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* which was finally endorsed in 2015 was considerably stronger than its predecessor. However, the failed *Statements and Profiles* ultimately "led to the development of disparate arts curricula (and language) by each of the states and territories" (Ewing, 2020, p. 76). The legacy of this state and territory centric approach to the language used was one the arts shape paper writers had to contend with in order to meet ACARA's requirement that the curriculum documents be written in the simplest English "to be understood by a year 3 generalist primary teacher" (O'Toole, 2018, p. 434).

Research approach

The researchers have utilised Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE), a qualitative research method that is simultaneously "collaborative, autobiographical and ethnographic" (Chang, et al., 2012). This has allowed them to discuss, explore and analyse their experiences of the arts and arts curriculum during their schooling and later professional careers, with a particular focus on music and the role of the Senior Project Officer: The Arts in facilitating the development of the shape paper for the arts. CAE builds on the research method of autoethnography (AE) which utilises autobiographical data and cultural interpretation of the connection between self and others (Anderson, 2006; Bochner & Ellis, 2002). In addition, CAE works particularly well when a research team is investigating shared stories such as individual and group experiences and therefore can balance the "individual narrative with the greater collective experiences" (Blalock & Akehi, 2018, p. 94). The researcher participants are all academics teaching in the arts, arts education and humanities at regional universities.

The process of engaging in CAE enables the combination of multiple voices to interrogate a social phenomenon that "creates a unique synergy and harmony that autoethnographers cannot attain in isolation" (Chang et al., 2012, p. 24). CAE attempts to address the potential limitations of dealing with self-data by working

with other researchers and in the process allows groups of researchers “to turn their collective self-narratives, observations and experiences into rich qualitative data” (Roy & Uekusa, 2020, p. 385). Engaging in CAE enabled the researchers to alternate between group and individual work. This creates a research process that is iterative rather than linear, resulting in “multiple sessions of conversations and negotiations among the research team members” (Roy & Uekusa, 2020, p. 387). CAE enables the incorporation of the researchers’ points of view which can change over time, unlike a text which is frozen in time and subsequently read as an authoritative account (Lapadat, 2017). This approach aligns with the notion of multiperspectivity which refers to the epistemological idea that “history is interpretational and subjective, with multiple coexisting narratives about particular historical events, rather than history being objectively represented by one “closed” narrative” (Wansink et al., 2018, p. 495).

The researchers recognise that the act of recounting these experiences is inevitably selective given that some events are emphasised while others are downplayed or omitted. This might be the result of various factors ranging from the vagrancies of memory to the extent that these experiences are “the means by which identities may be fashioned” (Lamont, 2011, p. 369). In addition, even eyewitnesses can recall different accounts of the same event shaped by their particular perspectives. Therefore, the multiperspectivity approach which CAE incorporates provides an important opportunity to address issues of memory recall through different temporal layers (Wansink et al., 2018, p. 497). This interpretive process results in informed reflexivity and the understanding that perspectives are personal and constructions presented by others are influenced by specific social and cultural contexts (Wansink et al., 2018, pp. 497–498). One of the greatest strengths of CAE is its emphasis on relationship building which requires sharing vulnerability, establishing trust and flattening traditional hierarchies (Baguley et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2012; Roy & Uekusa, 2020). This enables researchers to see themselves as part of a democratic community with collective agency. The researchers sought to mitigate the perceived limitations of CAE which has been intermittently criticised for its “non-accountability, non-generalizability and non-representativeness” (Roy & Uekusa, 2020, p. 388). It was vital therefore that each member of the research team accepted full ethical responsibility for their contributions, including being honest and open in their communications and collaborative interpretations in order to minimise potential issues related to subjectivity, ethics and bias.

Data collection and analysis

All the recollections of these events have been undertaken after they occurred, throughout 2021 during a six-month process. The CAE process commenced with the first stage of preliminary data collection which consisted of a group conversation about our arts experiences at primary school, and specifically any engagement we had with music during that time. We also discussed our more recent engagement with the *Australian Curriculum* with a particular focus on the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*. After this meeting, we each wrote a preliminary narrative about our

experiences which we then shared with each other. During this process, we took the opportunity to ask questions to elicit further information (individual self-writing and reflection/group sharing and probing).

The second stage resulted in further data collection based on the group questioning of the preliminary narratives. This process helped us to begin making meaning from the individual narratives and to see similarities and differences between our experiences (individual self-writing and reflection/group sharing and preliminary meaning-making). We then annotated the narratives with insights gained from the group questioning. The narratives were then rewritten to incorporate further insights for each researcher generated by the discussion. In the third stage, we individually identified emerging themes from each narrative and through group consensus agreed on the major themes that were predominant in each narrative (individual data review and themes/group meaning-making and theme search). The last stage was the writing of a final narrative co-authored by each researcher which incorporated discussion and analysis (individual meaning-making and outlining/group writing). This final narrative forms the basis of the discussion of the two major themes (Chang et al., 2012; Roy & Uekusa, 2020).

Findings and discussion

Each of the researchers provided important insights from their own experience of the arts at school, with a particular focus on music. They then reflected on the ongoing reverberations in their own personal and professional lives of how the arts were positioned and taught at that time. The discussions highlighted the important achievement of a national curriculum that includes a legally endorsed time for students to access a high-quality and sequential developmental arts education. In addition, our conversations and reflections revealed the particular challenges the arts face in terms of funding and credibility if they do not offer a united front. In the following section, the direct voices of the researchers are denoted in italics. Both of the major themes that arose from the CAE process are discussed in the following section and include extracts from the final report.

Impact of educational experiences

During our discussions, it became apparent that our exposure to the arts at primary school was irregular and depended to a large extent on the expertise and experience of the teacher. As we focussed specifically on our experiences with music both Linda and Margaret revealed they had taken piano lessons. Margaret recalled her initial tuition was at school lunchtimes with a nun who taught you by *rapping your knuckles with a stick if you played a wrong note*. Linda revealed she took piano and singing lessons outside of school with daily independent practice *totalling 10–15 hours per week*, demonstrating an extensive amount of “self-directed and individual practice” which stood her in good stead in her later professional career as an opera singer (Japp & Patrick, 2015, p. 264). Martin was not

involved in any extra-curricular music activities but recalled his earliest experiences of music at school revolved around the Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) radio program 'Let's Sing!'. This program was created in the 1950s as a pseudo-music curriculum in Australia, though there is some justification in characterising it as an early form of a national curriculum. As Griffen-Foley (2020, p. 201) states these sorts of radio programs were "part of the lives of generations of Australian children and their parents". Martin remembers *the diversity of the songs was in retrospect, amazing and ranged from Die Gedanken sind frei (thoughts are free), written in the late eighteenth century but later becoming important to some anti-Nazi resistance groups to the bizarre, such as 'You can't roller-skate in a buffalo herd'*. We discussed the interactive nature of such programs and how important they were in exposing students to music, particularly those who may have been able to access opportunities outside of school. Griffen-Foley (2020, p. 187) contends that these types of radio programs "sought to build intimate communities of young Australian listeners", which albeit Western-centric, provided children exposure to a diverse program of music.

The importance of a national curriculum with a common sequential program, equivalent year levels and terminology was highlighted through Linda's recollection of moving interstate during her schooling. In contrast, Margaret and Martin had stable educational experiences through their respective primary schooling in Queensland. In New South Wales, Linda attended her last two years of primary school in an 'Opportunity class' which catered for highly achieving years 5 and 6 academically gifted students. During her two years in the 'Opportunity class' Linda learned recorder and was also in the choir. However, Linda recalled her generalist primary teacher *was not musical at all*. Linda explained that the teacher's approach was instructional, *she could show us two fingers for A, one finger for B ... but she never blew the recorder herself ... it was not particularly passionate music learning*. Our discussion of the ramifications of this experience was informed by our awareness that this situation still exists in many Australian primary schools with the teaching of music being predominately the responsibility of the generalist classroom teacher with varying levels of expertise (de Vries, 2013; Pascoe et al., 2005). Martin recalled during his primary school *there was also an occasional choir practice, some limited classroom instruction in music, and a few all-class lessons with some old violins that the school had somehow acquired*. In addition to the inconsistent music curriculum being offered, he suggested that the feminine associations with music probably played a role in the limited music instruction that was offered at an all boys' school (Roulston & Misawa, 2011).

Over the course of our discussion, we came to characterise the lack of music training which hampered our primary teachers as part of a vicious cycle that has worsened due to an increasingly performative environment that includes national and international benchmarking such as the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and the NAPLAN (National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy) tests. In addition, we have all experienced the increasing pressure on universities to reduce time for the arts and how the recent Job-Ready Graduates package of reforms to higher education has seen fees for arts courses double (Australian Government, 2021; Norton, 2020), which Martin suggested *sends a message*

about how the arts are valued. The Job-Ready Graduates package has caused considerable concern at our universities which also have dedicated arts schools, and the potential impact on a student's choice to undertake a higher degree in the arts. We discussed how the ramifications of decisions such as this are particularly acute for students from working-class or less-privileged backgrounds who would like to pursue a career in the arts, but who are also aware of the importance of a career which can provide a regular income (Horton, 2020).

We have experienced the impact of limited professional development for the arts which has exacerbated the irregular experiences of our own arts experiences in school and teacher professional development (Irwin, 2018; O'Toole, 2019). Our professional experiences provided further insight into the tension between the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts'* demand for equity of access to a quality arts education for students and the *Australian National Review of School Music Education's* (Pascoe et al., 2005) contention that "music specialists should be employed in primary schools to teach music education" (de Vries, 2013, p. 376). However, we also recognised in the current performative climate that the positioning of the five art forms as equal in the national curriculum and the emphasis on areas such as literacy and numeracy makes the employment of music specialists in every primary school both philosophically and pragmatically unlikely (Pascoe et al., 2005; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). As teacher educators, we recognise how critical the provision of adequate professional development is for teachers to mitigate the steady reduction in arts training in teaching degrees (Ewing, 2020; Irwin, 2018).

It was evident from our conversations that none of us had experienced a sequential or developmental music education during our primary schooling. Linda and Margaret had more opportunity to engage in music education than Martin, although this seems partly to have been related to his experiences at an all boys' school and the lack of quality engagement with music that the school offered. The inference is that the only consistent arts experience some students had at this time was through arts activities outside of the school. However, it appears over time, and even with the implementation of a national curriculum that includes the arts that not much has changed, particularly in government schools (Brasche & Thorn, 2018). Brasche and Thorn's (2018) recent Australian study found that "music education has become increasingly divided down class lines, with as few as 23% of state schools able to provide their students with a music education program in school, as compared to 88% of students in the private system" (p. 124). They also argue that even though Australian schools are ostensibly following the same curriculum guidelines music education has increasingly "become a social justice issue as access and equity polarises students' academic potential in Australian primary school classrooms" (Brasche & Thorn, 2018, p. 125). Given our personal experiences of music education through primary school, we agreed that we have a much greater appreciation of the significance of a national curriculum for the arts. However, we also realise that without adequate resourcing and funding for professional development during pre-service teacher training and throughout a teacher's career, the vicious cycle of inequitable arts opportunities during schooling will continue.

Diversity in pedagogical approaches

As we discussed, our primary school experiences with the arts none of us could recall the five arts forms (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts) currently offered through the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* being provided during our own schooling. Margaret recalled *dancing was sporadic and relegated to a few afternoons a year learning steps to country dances such as the 'Pride of Erin', probably to help us socialise with the boys*. Martin could not recall any art or drama classes provided at this school, *though these could hardly have been less appealing*. We discussed how the inclusion of the five arts forms must have challenged the traditionally predominant arts forms of music and visual arts. Linda revealed that during the creation of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* there has been *significant infighting amongst the arts forms, some of it driven by very personal agendas*. However, we did recognise what an important inclusion the five arts forms were, as we have all seen students who were transformed by their engagement with the visual arts (media arts; visual arts), or performing arts (dance, drama, music) (Anderson et al., 2016; Barrett & Westerlund, 2017; Ewing, 2010; Kerby et al., 2018). We all agreed that as a matter of equity it was essential that the five arts forms needed to be offered during primary school, with students having the option to specialise during their secondary schooling. Linda explained how a compromise had to be reached for teachers in remote or one-teacher schools which is why *the shape paper ended up with the statement that it was 'two or more art forms depending on the capacity of the teacher and the school.'*

Linda recalled bringing the five arts together as subjects under one learning area was generally appreciated by primary teachers but less so by secondary specialist teachers (Ewing, 2020; Lorenza, 2021). In the meetings Linda felt the concerns of the generalist primary teachers were not entirely without merit, for whatever their skills in other discipline areas, they usually have limited experience of the arts (Alter et al., 2009; de Vries, 2017; Dinham, 2007). Margaret revealed that there are always *significant confidence issues* in her tertiary arts education classes. We discussed how teachers engage with the curriculum through the lens of their lived experience, which includes their childhoods, school and tertiary studies (Buldu & Shaban, 2010; de Vries, 2017; Lorenza, 2018). Linda recalled that secondary specialist teachers were consistently more sceptical through the consultation process, claiming that the five art forms approach ignored their "unique knowledge and skills" (Robinson, 2020, p. 234). As a secondary visual arts teacher and primary arts specialist Margaret recalled the issues at the time but believed *the way the curriculum was written allowed for the usual incorporation of teacher agency and expertise*. Martin remembers during the development of the *Australian Curriculum* that most teachers were *not concerned with the philosophical arguments, in fact they were quite pragmatic and just wanted to know what to do and what the changes were going to be*.

Linda recalled how the concerns of music educators were not confined to a demarcation dispute between primary and secondary teachers or site-specific issues. There were also differences in their approaches to exploring and making music, formal notation and analysing music. Linda notes that feedback from secondary specialists revealed *a marked preference for the maintenance of the classical Western*

tradition which endorsed music emanating from the European canon, one grounded in the use of staff notation to indicate the pitches, rhythms and durations in a musical composition. We discussed how this approach has been criticised by some researchers who argue that traditional Western music education still espouses the ‘Christian values’ of colonialism, with music traditions that “were exclusionary and unintentionally cultivated a culture in which many people today continue to be marginalised” (Peters, 2016, p. 22). Margaret described how ingrained this view is when she recalled the experience of a colleague at another university teaching the music unit of a core arts education course for generalist primary pre-service teachers. Her colleague had been contacted by a music student from the arts school who expressed their concern about the incorporation of ‘graphic notation’ in the pre-service generalist primary teacher course. Margaret explained *how the student with her specialist music background felt that pre-service teachers should learn formal notation, rather than visual symbols to depict music*. The student concerned was unaware that graphic notation is in fact included in the music arts subject of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* in recognition of the varying levels of music expertise of generalist primary teachers.

Linda recalled that at the time the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), School Curriculum and Standards Authority and the Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) were critical of what they saw as the absence in the draft document of a sequential development of skills and understanding in music (ACARA, 2012b). Western Australia and Queensland, both with strong histories in the Western classical tradition, argued that conventional notation was vital (ACARA, 2012b). They were supported by the Music Trust and ASME, a stance which Linda recalled was at odds with much of the feedback from primary classroom teachers. Martin, in recalling his own limited music experience, shared how he had learned to play ‘Song of Joy’ using numbers, *one-handed, but I was pretty proud of that*. He thought that the concept of graphic notation would provide students who did not have any formal instruction in music *with a way into music* (Barrett, 1997). We discussed how the flexibility within the curriculum towards various music approaches was not always viewed positively, because it challenged a singular view of music that ignored many alternate community musical practices (Leppert & McClary, 1989).

Linda described how the appointment of Professor Margaret Barrett as the music specialist ensured that the process would be led by someone with the background, expertise and experience to both value and discuss the range of pedagogical approaches to music: *She had a holistic view ... there was the tension between those who believed you needed to be learning Western classical music notation from the start and there were those who believed that you need the child to recognise that they can sing, enjoy music, make music and have their own journey. Margaret understood both perspectives but remained faithful to the view that you need the child to start from play and that music is in all of us and that it grows from there. In that sense, she initially worked from a holistic view of the child rather than from the narrower perspective of curriculum*.

We agreed that the question of equity of access both for students and teachers was also a stumbling block. If the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* was to be a socially

just curriculum it needed to be accessible to both specialist and non-specialist teachers. Generalist primary teachers would need to teach music by drawing on their own musical experience in addition to any pre-service training (de Vries, 2011a, b, 2013; Lorenza, 2018). We discussed in some depth the implications of the *National Review of Music Education* (Pascoe et al., 2005, p. 15) which had found “that pre-service teachers, many possessing very limited musical experience or background, have received on average only 23 hours of music in their entire education” and how the focus on pedagogical approaches in teacher education would not provide adequate time to fully comprehend and learn Western musical notation. We empathised with generalist primary teachers who Linda described *were reticent to learn and teach formal music notation* in addition to managing the other seven learning areas of the Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Technologies and Languages. Linda described the critical role that Professor Margaret Barrett, as the lead writer for Music, had in terms of *a really good understanding of the world of the teacher*. This allowed for a give and take in discussion, but only to a point. As Linda noted: *The curriculum was a compromise document if you are looking at it from your art form specialty ... but it was not a compromise in terms of facilitating access to the five art forms for students nationwide*.

Conclusion

This paper has provided the opportunity for the researcher participants, through a Collaborative Autoethnographic approach, to consider the ongoing reverberations and impact of curriculum decision making with a particular focus on music. This exploration provided the researcher participants with invaluable time to compare their schooling experiences of music through their current lens as teacher educators with individual and collective responsibility for preparing pre-service teachers for a teaching career. The CAE revealed that there has been an ongoing cycle of limited teacher professional development for Music education, which has continued despite the implementation of a national curriculum. It also emphasised that there is a disjuncture between the experiences and expertise of generalist primary teachers and secondary specialist music teachers which is exacerbated by the location, type and socio-cultural demographic of the school they are teaching in. The CAE revealed that without specialised music training and professional development, including teacher training, generalist primary teachers will rely on their previous experiences with music which may not be adequate to develop the stated aims in the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2021a) for Music which are for students to develop:

- The confidence to be creative, innovative, thoughtful, skilful and informed musicians;
- Skills to compose, perform, improvise, respond and listen with intent and purpose;
- Aesthetic knowledge and respect for music and music practices across global communities, cultures and musical traditions; and

- An understanding of music as an aural art form as they acquire skills to become independent music learners.

Although the philosophical and social justice principles underpinning the music learning area in ensuring all students from Foundation through to year 10 have access to a sequential high-quality learning experience in music, in reality this has been sabotaged by limited professional development opportunities and support, particularly for generalist primary teachers. The *National Review of Music Education* (Pascoe et al., 2005) provided critical insights into the Australian music education context before the national curriculum writing process had begun in 2010. It clearly revealed that pre-service teachers had limited opportunity to engage in music education and to address this schools should consider employing music specialists to teach music. The panacea of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* to provide a quality arts education across the five art forms, despite the best intentions of leading arts specialists, has been sabotaged from the very beginning. The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) responsible for the *Australian Curriculum* clearly states that its actual implementation is the responsibility of state and territory curriculum and school authorities. ACARA (2021b, para. 1) reveals that schools can “make decisions about the extent and timing of take-up and translation of the intended Australian Curriculum into the curriculum that is experienced by students”. Thus, in reality, there are inconsistent approaches being undertaken dependent upon States’ and Territories’ iterations of the national curriculum as well as a teacher’s own professional knowledge. In addition, and without any apparent irony, ACARA (2021a, para. 2) states that implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* should be done “in ways that value teachers’ professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and take into account individual students’ family, cultural and community backgrounds”. It is evident that even though this is what Professor Margaret Barrett as the lead shape paper writer for Music had intended, the actual implementation of the music curriculum was also heavily reliant on high-quality teacher professional development—the responsibility of which was shifted to the states and territories and ultimately to the schools themselves thereby creating a situation reminiscent of that experienced by the participant researchers during their own schooling. Nevertheless, in her role as the Senior Project Officer: The Arts, Linda reinforced how the five arts shape paper writers never *stepped back from their determination to create an authentic arts curriculum that reflected their beliefs about education and social justice*.

References

- ACARA. (2011). *Shape of the Australian curriculum: The arts*. Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority Retrieved April 14, 2021, from <http://acara.edu.au/arts.html>.
- ACARA. (2012a). Curriculum development process (version 6). Retrieved May 15, 2021, from <http://curriculum-development-process-v6-0-final-acara.pdf>.

- ACARA. (2012b). *Draft Australian curriculum: The arts foundation to year 10 consultation report*. Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority. Retrieved on May 15, 2021 from http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/learning_areas/arts.html.
- ACARA. (2013). *The curriculum design paper*. Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.
- ACARA. (2015a). *Australian curriculum: The arts, music*. Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority. Retrieved July 11, 2021, from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/music/rationale/>.
- ACARA. (2015b). *Australian curriculum: The arts, music structure*. Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved July 11, 2021, from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/music/structure/>.
- ACARA. (2015c). *Understand how the arts works*. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved April 3, 2021, from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/>.
- ACARA. (2021a). Aims. Music (version 8.4). Retrieved September 20, 2021 from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/music/aims/>.
- ACARA. (2021b). Implementation of the Australian curriculum. Retrieved September 20, 2021 from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/implementation-of-the-australian-curriculum/>.
- Alter, F., Hays, T., & O'Hara, R. (2009). Creative arts teaching and practice: Critical reflections of primary school teachers in Australia. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 10(9), 1–21.
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytical autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373–395.
- Anderson, M., Fleming, J., & Gibson, R. (Eds.). (2016). *How arts education makes a difference*. Milton Park: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315727943>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2015). Government responsibilities in education. 1301.0—year book Australia, 2009–10. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs%40.nsf/0/5D95A3812434F32DCA25773700169C8E>.
- Australian Government. (2013). *Creative Australia: National cultural policy*. Retrieved May 26, 2021 from <https://www.nck.pl/upload/attachments/302586/creativeaustraliapdf2.pdf>.
- Australian Government. (2021). Job-ready graduates package. Retrieved May 1, 2021 from <https://www.dese.gov.au/job-ready>.
- Baguley, M., Kerby, M., MacDonald, A., & Cruickshank, V. (2021). Strangers on a train: the politics of collaboration. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 48, 183–208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-020-00386-9>
- Barrett, M. (1997). Invented notations: A view of young children's musical thinking. *Research Studies in Music Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X9700800102>
- Barrett, M. (2003). Musical children, musical lives, musical worlds. In S. Wright (Ed.), *Children, meaning-making and the arts* (pp. 63–89). Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Barrett, M., & Westerlund, H. (2017). Music education in the global context. In G. Barton & M. Baguley (Eds.), *The palgrave handbook of global arts education* (Vol. 1, p. 572). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Blalock, A. E., & Akehi, M. (2018). Collaborative autoethnography as a pathway for transformative learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 16(2), 89–107.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2002). *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics*. AltaMira.
- Brasche, I., & Thorn, B. (2018). Addressing dimensions of “the great moral wrong”: How inequity in music education is polarizing the academic potential of students. *Art Education Policy Review*, 119(3), 124–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2016.1201029>
- Brennan, M. (2011). National curriculum: A political-educational tangle. *Australian Journal of Education*, 55(3), 259–280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000494411105500307>
- Buldu, M., & Shaban, M. S. (2010). Visual arts teaching in kindergarten through 3rd-grade classrooms in the UAE: Teacher profiles, perceptions, and practices. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 24(4), 332–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2010.510073>
- Chang, H., Ngunjiri, F., & Hernandez, K. C. (2012). *Collaborative autoethnography*. Taylor and Francis.
- de Bruin, L. R. (2019). Improvising musicians' self-regulation and distributed creativities: A phenomenological investigation. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 32, 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2019.03.004>

- de Vries, P. (2011a). *First year generalist primary school teachers : What music are they teaching?* Australian Society of Music Education National Conference, Gold Coast.
- de Vries, P. (2011b). The first year of teaching in primary school: Where is the place of music? *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(2), 1–26.
- de Vries, P. (2013). Generalist teachers' self-efficacy in primary school music teaching. *Music Education Research*, 15, 375–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.829427>
- de Vries, P. (2017). Self-efficacy and music teaching: Five narratives. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v18n4/>.
- Dinham, J. (2007). Delivering primary visual arts education: Where rhetoric meets reality. *Australian Art Education*, 30(1), 16–30.
- Ditchburn, G. M. (2012). The Australian curriculum: Finding the hidden narrative? *Critical Studies in Education*, 53(3), 347–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2012.703137>
- Duffy, P. (2016). Theatre curriculum in the US: A great tasting sandwich on stale bread. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 21(1), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2015.1127147>
- Efland, A. D. (2004). Art education as imaginative cognition. In E. Eisner & M. Day (Eds.), *Handbook of research and policy in arts education* (pp. 751–773). Lawrence Erlbaum & National Art Education Association.
- Eisner, E. (2000). Arts education policy? *Arts Education Policy Review*, 101(3), 4–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632910009600242>
- Eisner, E. (2002). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ewing, R. (2010). *The Arts and Australian education: Realising potential*. Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Ewing, R. (2020). The Australian curriculum: The arts. A Critical Opportunity. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 40, 75–81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-019-00098-w>
- Griffen-Foley, B. (2020). Let's join in: Children and ABC radio. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 40(1), 185–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2019.1610267>
- Harris-Hart, C. (2010). National curriculum and federalism: The Australian experience. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 42(3), 295–313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2010.492965>
- Horton, A. P. (2020). Why Australia is doubling fees for arts degrees. *BBC Worklife*. Retrieved March 21, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200728-why-australia-is-charging-more-to-study-history>.
- Irwin, M. R. (2018). Arts shoved aside: Changing art practices in primary schools since the introduction of national standards. *The International Journal of Art & Design Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12096>
- Japp, A., & Patrick, F. (2015). Teachers' concepts of musical talent and nurturing musical ability: Music learning as exclusive or as opportunity for all? *Music Education Research*, 17(3), 262–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2014.950559>
- Kerby, M. C., Baguley, M. M., Batorowicz, B., & Clark, L. N. (2018). Implementing a new doctor of creative arts program in the Chinese Year of the Fire Monkey. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 17(3), 323–344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022217715274>
- Lamont, A. (2011). The beat goes on: Music education, identity and lifelong learning. *Music Education Research*, 13(4), 369–388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2011.638505>
- Lapadat, J. C. (2017). Collaborative autoethnography: Ethical inquiry that makes a difference. *13th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry*, May 17–20. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Leppert, R., & McClary, S. (Eds.). (1989). *Music and society: The politics of composition, performance and reception*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lorenza, L. M. (2018). *Curriculum change and teachers' responses: a NSW case study* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Sydney]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/18901>
- Lorenza, L. M. (2021). *Arts curriculum are better resourced and supported when the principal is focussed on the student experience*. Curriculum Perspectives. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-021-00139-3>
- Meiners, J. (2014). So we can dance! Towards a new inclusive Australian dance curriculum—power, contestations and settlements. *International Journal of Education through Art*, 10(2), 221–234. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta.10.2.221_1
- Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs . (1989). *The Hobart declaration on schooling*. Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and

- Youth Affairs. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from <http://www.educationcouncil.edu.au/EC-Publications/EC-Publications-archive/EC-The-Hobart-Declaration-on-Schooling-1989.aspx>.
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (MCEETYA). (1989). *The adelaide declaration on national goals for schooling in the 21st century*. Retrieved March 21, 2021, from <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/1999/adelaide-declaration-national-goals-schooling-twenty-first-century-4183>.
- Ministerial Council of Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MEECDYA). (2008). *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*. MCEETYA. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf.
- Ministers' Media Centre. (2012). Every student benefits from arts education under new National Curriculum. [Joint Media Release—The Hon Peter Garrett MP, Minister for School Education; The Hon Simon Crean MP, Minister for Early Childhood and Youth]. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/garrett/every-student-benefits-arts-education-under-new-national-curriculum>.
- Moss, J., Godhino, S. C., & Chao, E. (2019). Enacting the Australian curriculum: Primary and secondary teachers' approaches to integrating the curriculum. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(3), 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v44n3.2>
- Norton, A. (2020). 3 flaws in Job-Ready Graduates package will add to the turmoil in Australian higher education. *The Conversation*. Retrieved 15 May, 2021 from <https://theconversation.com/3-flaws-in-job-ready-graduates-package-will-add-to-the-turmoil-in-australian-higher-education-147740>.
- O'Connor, K., & Yates, L. (2010). Classifying curriculum scholarship in Australia: A review of postgraduate theses 1975–2005. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 37(1), 125–143. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03216917>
- O'Toole, J. (2015). Establishing drama in the curriculum. In M. Fleming, L. Bresler, & J. O'Toole (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of the arts and education* (pp. 185–193). Routledge.
- O'Toole, J. (2018). The Australian curriculum for the arts—five years old: Its conception, birth and first school report. *Australian Art Education*, 39(3), 427–440.
- O'Toole, J. (2019). Mind the gap—some implications of the Australian Curriculum: Arts for policy change in tertiary arts and education training. NTRO [Non Traditional Research Outcomes]. Retrieved April 11, 2021, from <https://nitro.edu.au/articles/2019/3/1/mind-the-gap-some-implications-of-the-australian-curriculum-arts-for-policy-change-in-tertiary-arts-and-education-training>.
- Pascoe, R., Leong, S., MacCallum, J., Mackinlay, E., Marsh, K., Smith, B., Church, T. Winterton, A. (2005). *National review of school music education: Augmenting the diminished*. ACT. Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Peters, G. (2016). Do students see themselves in the music curriculum? A project to encourage inclusion. *Music Educators Journal*, 102, 22–29.
- Piper, K. (1997). *Riders in the chariot: Curriculum reform and the national interest 1965–1995*. Australian Education Reviews, No. 38. Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Robinson, J. (2020). Australian super veteran secondary school music teachers: Motivated and valuable. *International Journal of Music Education*, 38(2), 226–239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761420902870>
- Roulston, K., & Misawa, M. (2011). Music teachers' constructions of gender in elementary education. *Music Education Research*, 13(1), 3–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2011.553275>
- Roy, R., & Uekusa, S. (2020). Collaborative autoethnography: “Self-reflection” as a timely alternative research approach during the global pandemic. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 20(4), 383–392.
- Wansink, B., Akkerman, S., Zuiker, I., & Wubbels, T. (2018). Where does teaching multiperspectivity in history education begin and end? An analysis of the uses of temporality. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 46(4), 495–527.
- Watt, M. G. (1997). National curriculum collaboration: The state of reform in the states and territories. *Biannual meeting of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association*, 10–13 July. Sydney, NSW. Retrieved on 15 August, 2021 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED409258.pdf>
- Wiggins, R. A. & Wiggins, J. (2008). Primary music education in the absence of specialists. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 9(12). Retrieved 21 July, 2021 from <http://www.ijea.org/v9n12/>.
- Yates, L. (2008). *School knowledge, working knowledge and the knowing subject: A review of state curriculum policies 1975–2005*. Australian Research Council Discovery Project 2007–2008. Curriculum Policies Project, Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Retrieved on 15 August, 2021 from <https://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/curriculumpoliciesproject/outcomes.html>

Yates, L., Collins, C., & O'Connor, K. (2011). Australian curriculum making. In L. Yates, C. Collins & K. O'Connor (Eds.), *Australia's curriculum dilemmas: state cultures and the big issues* (1st ed., pp. 3-22). Melbourne University Press.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Linda Lorenza is a Researcher and Senior Lecturer in theatre at Central Queensland University. Her teaching areas include acting, drama, theatre studies and arts education. Her 2018 PhD thesis, *Curriculum change and teachers' responses: a NSW case study* has more than 3000 downloads. Her research interests include music, drama and applied arts. Most recently Dr Lorenza was a councillor for Music Australia and is a music representative on the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE).

Margaret Baguley is a Professor in Arts Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research areas of interest include visual arts education, creative leadership, creative collaboration and group dynamics. She is currently the President of Art Education Australia (AEA) and the visual arts representative on the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE).

Martin Kerby is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. His specialisation is in History with a particular focus on artistic and cultural representations of conflict. His research areas of interest include biographical research, case study, narrative inquiry and arts-informed research. He has sole authored six books and has been awarded two competitive Queensland Anzac Centenary grants (2014; 2017): a national Australian Government Anzac Centenary Arts and Culture Fund Public Grant (2015), and a State Library of Queensland Fellowship (2018). He has co-edited *The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War: Australasia, the British Isles, and the United States*, and is the current Editor of *Australian Art Education*.