

## A Review of Research on Instructional Approach and World Music Preference

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Helping students to understand and appreciate music of the world's cultures is an important long-term goal in music education, a position supported in documents dating from the Tanglewood Declaration (Choate, 1968) to the National Standards for Arts Education (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994). Currently the position is endorsed in the Housewright Declaration (Madsen, 2000), a summation of agreements made during the Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education. Although music teachers believe in the value and benefit of world music instruction, they often are uncertain as to how to provide that instruction effectively (Moore, 1993; Norman, 1994; Young, 1996). This uncertainty remains an ongoing concern.

What constitutes effective world music instruction? One component involves providing music experiences that are likely to increase students' preferences for the music style studied, as this is a desired long-term outcome for music instruction. Reimer (1965) indicated that teaching methods, among other considerations, should be examined to determine how and to what extent the teaching-learning process affects learners in terms of achievement and levels of music preference. LeBlanc (1982) theorized that music preference decisions are "based upon the interaction of input information and the characteristics of the listener, with input information consisting of the musical stimulus and the listener's cultural environment" (p. 29). Musical training was identified as one of several listener characteristics influencing the strategies used in processing input information, leading ultimately to a preference decision. The purpose of the current article is to review research conducted to investigate factors specifically related to instructional approach that may impact and influence students' world music preference decisions. The implications of research findings may provide teachers with sources to be used for improving teaching practices leading to the enhancement of preferences for world music.(FN1)

### **INSTRUCTION AND MUSIC PREFERENCE**

Research indicates that instructional practices have varying effects on students' music preferences. For example, repeated passive exposure to music styles tends to increase liking or preference for those styles through increased familiarity (Getz, 1966; Krugman, 1943; Peretz, Gaudreau, & Bonnel, 1998; Schuckert & McDonald, 1968; Trammell, 1977), yet the effects of repeated passive exposure or no exposure as compared to instruction on music preferences are ambiguous. Some researchers have indicated that guided listening and other instructional methods are no more effective in increasing students' music preferences than repetition or no exposure (Bartlett, 1973; Geringer & Nelson, 1980; Prince, 1974; Zumbunn, 1972), whereas other studies (Bradley, 1972; Peery & Peery, 1986) have revealed an increase in preference as a consequence of instruction. When two or more specific instructional approaches have been compared, no approach seems to substantially increase students' preferences for a particular music style (Burns, 1995; Gross, 1984; Sims, 1986). These conflicting results emphasize the importance of examining instructional procedures and strategies as factors of pedagogical significance when delivering world music instruction.

### **REPEATED EXPOSURE TO WORLD MUSIC STYLES**

As previously noted, research literature suggests that repeated exposure to Western European classical music styles may increase preference for those styles. Additionally, the complexity of music may influence affective judgments. Hargreaves and Castell (1987) reported that the relationship between music preference and music

complexity may be illustrated by an inverted U-shaped curve indicating that preference is low for music of high and low levels of complexity, and at maximum for music of intermediate complexity. The fact that music of non-Western cultures is novel to most listeners and frequently exhibits complex dimensions inspired Heingartner and Hall (1974) to use Pakistani folk music to investigate the effects of repeated passive exposures on fourth-grade and college-aged students' preferences for a non-Western musical style. They found that the use of an unfamiliar music style may have a greater positive effect on preference for music than familiar music styles, and that the tendency for liking may increase with repeated exposure to complex music, such as the Pakistani music excerpts used in their study.

Repeated exposure also has been used to investigate shifts in preference for least preferred music styles (Krugman, 1943; Schuckert & McDonald, 1968). Extending previous research featuring Western European classical music styles to a world music context, Carper (2000) examined the effects of repeated exposure combined with instructional activities on preschoolers' and kindergartners' preferences for traditional Japanese music, the style least preferred when compared to American popular music, children's music, and Western European classical music styles. Carper found that regular intervals of carefully guided repeated listening and teaching activities increased preference for the Japanese music excerpts to a level commensurate with the initially preferred musical styles.

The results of Carper's study suggest that preschool and kindergarten students' world music preferences may be influenced by repeated exposure to an extent on par with initially preferred music styles, including popular music. However, in studies involving older elementary students (McKoy, 1998; Shehan, 1984), repeated exposure in the context of instruction did not increase world music preference to a level corresponding with initial preferences for popular music, although students' preferences for world music after instruction were comparable to pre-instruction preferences for Western European classical music.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MODES AND SPECIFIC PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES**

Music educators routinely use a variety of instructional modes to facilitate student learning. A few research studies featuring world music have focused on answering questions about whether any one approach may be more effective than another in eliciting positive preferences for music of a specific world culture.

Active instructional methods emphasizing performance through singing and playing instruments may increase students' preferences for the world music style being studied to a greater extent than methods employing comparatively passive approaches, such as lectures, visual media, and guided listening (Shehan, 1984). Fung and Gromko (2001) found that the spontaneous movement responses of 7- to 12-year-old students to two unfamiliar Korean music styles were related to their preference for those styles. The researchers suggested that encouraging students to move freely to music exhibiting characteristics that stimulate active movement "may be related to the children's preference decisions, based on their enjoyment of the music listening experience" (p. 12).

In a study involving a two-week unit on Ghanaian drumming, Pembroke and Robinson (1997) compared the effects of using culturally authentic instruments, traditional general music classroom instruments, as well as videotaped and live instruction with a Ghanaian musician on students' preferences for Ghanaian music. Although the researchers reported that no approach substantially increased preference for Ghanaian music, preference for including world music in the curriculum increased from 14 percent to 20 percent among all children involved in the study.

### **SPECIFIC METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACHES**

As with Western European classical music preference research, studies in world music preference have featured comparisons of traditional instructional methods and alternative techniques or approaches based on specific music education philosophies such as those espoused by Carl Orff and Zoltan Kodály. Ghanaian music educators (Addo, 1990; Amoaku, 1982, 1997) have presented persuasive arguments supporting the use of Orff-Schulwerk pedagogy to teach about the indigenous folk music of that country. Consequently, McKoy (1998) examined the effects of an Orff-Schulwerk-based and a traditional instructional approach on fourth graders'

preferences for an untaught selection of indigenous Ghanaian folk music. Although neither approach substantially affected preferences for Ghanaian folk music, the Orff-Schulwerk group demonstrated greater preferences for the Ghanaian folk music than did the traditional group.

In a descriptive study, Bondurant-Koehler (1995) examined the music preferences of third- and fifth-grade students whose customary music instruction was based on pedagogies developed by Orff or Kodály or on traditional methodologies from basal textbook music series. Music teachers were assigned to the respective pedagogical groups based on their responses to a questionnaire pertaining to classroom teaching methods, materials, and activities. Data on students' preferences for world music, art music, avant-garde music, jazz/improvisation, pop/rock, and country/western music were gathered via a researcher-designed preference measure. Bondurant-Koehler found that third- and fifth-grade students instructed using the Orff-Schulwerk approach preferred avant-garde and country music, whereas students instructed in the Kodály method preferred art music, world music, jazz/improvisation, and pop/rock. Thus, the Kodály method yielded the broadest musical preferences followed by the Orff-Schulwerk approach and then a traditional method, respectively.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MODE AND PREFERENCE TRANSFER**

Another focus of research in world music preference and instruction with parallels in the broader music preference literature (Bradley, 1972; Sims, 1986) has been the extent to which preference for a specific music selection studied as a part of instruction transfers to selections of that same style that have not been studied or taught. Including contextual information on the culture of the music being studied may be critical to increasing students' abilities to transfer understanding of a specific piece of music to other pieces of the same genre (Kuhn, 2000). Transfer of understanding, however, does not necessarily result in transfer of preference.

Flowers (1980) found that musical analysis, performance, directed listening, and extramusical information increased college students' preference for specific African music selections to a greater extent than did exposure alone; however, this preference increase did not transfer to untaught selections. Shehan (1985) achieved similar results for African, Asian, Indian, Japanese, and Hispanic music styles using performance-oriented instruction with sixth-grade students. Instruction increased student preferences only for taught selections of each music style. Both Shehan and Flowers acknowledged that the respective five-day and five-week treatment periods may have been insufficient to allow for transfer of preference from taught to untaught selections. Results of Fung's (1997) research with college students suggested that transfer of world music preference from taught to untaught pieces may occur if (a) the instructional period is extensive and intense, (b) various teaching approaches are used, and (c) in-class and out-of-class assignments and activities are included in instruction.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING**

Results of the reviewed studies suggest several instructional options for teachers to consider for purposes of increasing preferences for world music. Traditionally, repeated exposure intended to increase familiarity has been a fundamental and integral component of formal instruction in Western European classical music. The novel and complex character of many world music styles may allow for more frequent exposure intervals than with Western European classical styles before students reach an aural saturation point and an increase in preference is no longer feasible. Repeated exposure to world music also may provide the same benefit as exposure to Western European classical music styles in terms of increasing students' music preferences, particularly if a specific world music style is one for which students indicate an initial dislike as compared to other music styles. Given that shifts of preferences away from Western European classical music styles toward popular music have been observed in children as young as age five (Peery & Peery, 1986), early instructional intervention in the form of repeated exposure to world music appears to be warranted.

Instructional modes and strategies that emphasize active student involvement in music making rather than passive reception of information may increase music preference. Burton (1986) theorized that active participation may be of particular importance in world music instruction in that it provides opportunities for students to develop a greater appreciation for the unique musical processes employed in the performance of

specific world music styles.

Spontaneous movement responses of children to world music styles exhibiting dynamic musical characteristics appear to be associated with positive preference decisions they make about music. According to Schwadron (1973), in many world cultures, music and movement (i.e., in the form of dance) are conceived as an inseparable expressive unit. Thus, incorporating movement into instructional activities featuring music styles from cultures in which this particular aesthetic perspective is the norm not only may assist in increasing students' preferences, but also may provide additional insights related to music and cultural context.

Instructional methods that demonstrate an attempt to preserve culturally authentic aspects of music-making experiences may lead to increased music preferences. The importance of cultural authenticity is reflected in the notion that understanding the character and structure of a culture's music requires understanding the way in which that culture transmits its music (Nettl, 1992). The implication is that world music instruction should incorporate the aesthetic value systems, transmission procedures, and functional contexts of the culture within which specific music operates. Providing such comprehensive instruction in world music is a demanding task considering the limitations of some public school music instructional environments. Research suggests, however, that procedures featuring indigenous instruments and teaching and performance by native musicians can be effective. Teachers also may find that using instructional strategies based on pedagogical philosophies that embrace the aesthetic value systems and musical transmission procedures of a variety of cultures can be helpful in expanding students' musical preferences beyond the framework of the Western European classical tradition.

The positive influence of instruction on children's preferences for an untaught selection of a world music genre may be limited, especially when compared with their preferences for popular music. If children are involved in active learning through a variety of musical experiences, however, their preferences for a specific world music genre may achieve parity with preferences for Western European classical styles traditionally featured in general music curricula. The age at which students are able to transfer preference from taught to untaught selections of world music is not clear, but the process is likely to occur when students have sufficient musical experiences to recognize and identify the specific musical elements characteristic of a genre or style. Additionally, when the study of a world music style occurs over an extended period, students have the opportunity to understand the role that cultural context may play in the music-making process.

Teaching students about the music of world cultures continues to be one of the most challenging responsibilities music teachers face. Nevertheless, the music education profession's mandate to include world music instruction in the curriculum is clear, as stated in the Housewright Declaration (Madsen, 2000):

All music has a place in the curriculum. Not only does the Western art tradition need to be preserved and disseminated, music educators also need to be aware of other music that people experience and be able to integrate it into classroom music instruction. (p. 219)

By taking advantage of the information gleaned from research on the effects of instruction on world music preferences, teachers may develop instructional strategies resulting in musical experiences that have meaning and value for their students.

#### ADDED MATERIAL

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