Addressing dimensions of "The Great Moral Wrong": How inequity in music education is polarising the academic potential of Australian students.

Abstract

The intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of music education incorporate academic, social, emotional and behavioural spheres. To deny students access to music education essentially locks them out of such benefits, limiting their potential. Music education programs have declined significantly in Australia in the last few decades and access to such programs serves as a reminder of the widening gap of inequality in the Australian school system. The reasons for the decline in music education, both at a pre-service and in-service level, and the political landscape which has influenced and undermined the concept of a level playing field in public education are interrelated. Through extensive data analysis, a picture of how and why music education serves as an example of wider issues of access and equity in Australian schools will be demonstrated.

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality (Article 26.2, UN Declaration of Human Rights)
>
> A truly educated mind has had music as part of its education. Every child in this country should have an opportunity to have a truly educated mind. (Gill 2013)

Introduction

Evidence based research indicates that the benefits of quality arts education can produce significant academic outcomes such as creating positive attitudes to learning, developing a greater sense of personal and cultural identity, fostering more creative and imaginative ways of thinking as well as advancing skills in literacy and numeracy (Bamford, 2006; Eisner, 2002; Robinson, 2001; Lamont, 2012). However recent reviews of arts education in Australia acknowledge a serious deficit, particularly in music education, in primary education over the last two decades (Pascoe et al, 2005). Music education has become 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. (Pascoe et al, 2005; Vaughan et al, 2011) . Importantly, the National Review of School Music Education (2005) recommended improving the equity of access, participation and engagement in school music for all students, teacher pre-service and in-service education, curriculum support services, productive partnerships with music organisations, musicians and the community, increased time for music education in school timetables and improving the overall status of music in schools. Yet in the ten years since it's publication there has been no increase in public investment into music education, and a decline in pre-service music preparation for teachers.

To deny students access to quality music education not only disadvantages them, but also speaks to an equity issue around limiting students academic potential based on a system which is becoming structurally incompatible with the needs and rights of Australian school students. Despite the Federal and State Governments in Australia releasing a momentous joint National Statement on Education and the Arts in 2007 which promised an unequivocal commitment to fostering arts education in schools, the creative arts still seem to suffer the most out of all of the Key Learning Areas in the primary school curriculum. In November, 2012, former prime minister, Julia Gillard spoke to the House of Representatives of "…the great moral wrong which sees some Australian children denied the transformative power of a great education"(Gillard 2012). If music is part of a great education, why is it not being equitably delivered in classrooms across public schools in Australia? The value of studying of music for it's own sake is neither questioned nor the focus of this paper. Rather, this paper sets out to highlight that where music is squeezed out of the curriculum, the concomitant kinaesthetic, aural, oral, visual and emotional experiences which in turn enhance other epistemological and academic skills are denied to students. That this is happening inequitably in public schools in Australia despite following the same curriculum guidelines, speaks of wider political and pre-service educational policies which have further marginalized the subject and contributed to lower teacher confidence. In a political climate which prioritises literacy and numeracy programs, it is prudent to publicise these value-adding elements of music education in order to strengthen music's position in the curriculum both at a pre-service level and in the classroom. As Hansen and Bernstorf state: "There is no doubt that we should teach music for music's sake, but when push comes to shove, we may be wise to also defend our programs by communicating in terms that help link them to the national goals for reading". (2002:20)

This article will outline how music education has become a social justice issue as access and equity polarises students academic potential in Australian primary school classrooms. Drawing from data collected from in-

service and pre-service teachers, this article will present the argument that an ad-hoc approach to music education, shifting political agendas, and insufficient training has lead to a situation where only the "haves" in our democratic society can expect to reap the academic (and other) benefits of music education. Using a case-study of a creatively robust regional town, this paper will demonstrate how polarising this impact can be. With Australia recently losing ground in it's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking, slipping in the area of maths and reading, and with a growing political emphasis put on such standardized testing, questions are being asked about the academic rigour and pedagogy in Australian schools. However music education has been absent from such debates. (OECD, 2012)

Research indicates that one of the most substantial hindrances to effective teaching and learning of the creative arts in primary schools appears to be a lack of confidence in teachers (Alter et al, 2009), with primary school teachers particularly lacking confidence in teaching music, and music being the subject that caused them the most stress in their teaching. The attitudes towards music and general levels of confidence demonstrated in our research is far from unique to Australia. In the UK, Kokotsaki reports that

> Related to … feelings of inadequacy is the well documented lower teacher confidence in teaching music compared to teaching other subjects … which contributes to the perception of music being one of the most difficult foundation subjects to cover at Key Stages 1 and 2 … This negative attitude to teaching music is often exacerbated by music having little time in the curriculum, [and] by student teachers' limited or lack of access to music experience in teaching practice… (Kokotsaki 2012:133)

Acknowledging changes to the time allocated to the teaching of creative arts, particularly music, as part of the pre-service teaching qualifications at the University of New England and drawing on data collected from 160 pre-service teachers, this paper will demonstrate that the expectations of the curriculum are incompatible with the ability of teachers to deliver on syllabus outcomes based on pre-service preparation and inservice support of music education. Research questions to be addressed include why are music education programs not supported? Who misses out and why? Why are teachers lacking in confidence and skills in this area? How has this situation evolved? How have political motivations impacted on arts education? How can a

resource rich region produce inconsistent, inadequate, or non-existent music programs amongst it's otherwise comparable public schools? Can Australia's curriculum be delivered equitably and what agency do school principals have in this process?

Previous research into the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Benefits of Music Education.

The extrinsic benefits of music education are quantifiable (Pascoe et al, 2005; Vaughan et al, 2011), with research indicating improved school attendance, academic achievement across the curriculum as well as improved social and emotional wellbeing. Findings from specific studies listed below include evidence that the involvement of students in arts and music programs increases academic achievement (Bamford, 2006; Catteral, Chapleau and Iwanaga 1999 and Wetter, Koerner, Schwaninger, 2009), IQ (Schellenberg, 2006), attendance (Dreezen, Aprill & Deasy 1999), attitude to attendance (Uptis and Smithrim, 2003), performance on standardised reading and verbal tests (Butzlaff, 2000), verbal skills (Hetland & Winner, 2001), reading for pleasure (Uptis and Smithrim, 2003) and literacy (Bamford, 2006; Hunter, 2005 and Spillane, 2009). Hansen and Bernstorf (2002), whilst cautious about the link between musical learning effecting mathematics and reading skills, acknowledge the literacy links, stating "Certainly, learning in music and the arts opens doors to a vast array of enlightening influences and life-changing experiences that can contribute to reading skills". (2002:17). Additionally, research has demonstrated that an improvement in behavioural indicators and characteristics has been observed in students who actively participated in various arts programs. Qualities such as tolerance (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga, 1999), empathy, collaboration and communication (Hunter 2005) have been developed following engagement in arts programs. Interestingly, the research of Butzlaff (2000), Catteral (1999), Dreezen (1999), Vaughan (2011) and Eisner (2002) was conducted amongst students from traditionally low socio-economic status (SES) settings, therefore debunking theories around the link between highly motivated and higher SES students with access to music being the only students receptive to the positive benefits of creative arts education. Whilst much literature focuses on the benefits of "creative arts" education, literature specific to explicit music instruction includes the work of Butzlaff (2000); Lamb and Gregory (1993), Jalongo and Ribblett (1997), and Hansen and

Bernstorf (2002).

In Australia, following on from the Seares report, an independent report into the impact of the arts on the gap in school achievement was commissioned in 2011 and approved through the NSW Department of Education. The *Bridging the Gap in School Achievement through the Arts* Report (Vaughan, Harris and Caldwell 2011) had a specific emphasis on schools engaging The Song Room, a national not for profit organisation providing free music and arts-based programs, to develop a robust music programs in school contexts where students have experienced disadvantage and hardship. Results from data collected as part of these programs indicated higher rates of school attendance, improved National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and higher rates of Social-Emotional Wellbeing as measured by the Australian Council for Educational Research survey (Vaughan et al 2011:13). However the wider academic benefits of music education still seems to be unacknowledged or unknown to those in a position to include meaningful music programs in schools, namely the principals.

Case Study: Armidale

With a population of 22 000 people, Armidale, in the North West region of New South Wales, Australia, is often defined as a cosmopolitan town, a regional hub of creative activity. The presence of the University of New England makes Armidale an academic town, with an average of 57.8% of it's population having post-school qualifications, compared to the national average of 49.9%. The University of New England and the town of Armidale is also the site of employment and residence of the authors of this article. The main employing industry in Armidale is Education and Training (20.7%) (ABS, 2012). Armidale has a thriving arts and cultural scene and resources including the New England Conservatorium of Music, New England Regional Art Museum, as well as a symphony orchestra and youth orchestra, multiple choirs, dramatic society, brass band, pipe band, extensive instrumental ensembles and more than 70 registered private music teachers. In addition, the town's leading regional university offers courses in the creative arts, music and music education and a vibrant residential college scene.

> The New England North West Region is a diverse arts region with excellent grass-roots networks, regular events, established artists and strong cultural identity that is often place-related. … There are numerous groups and organisations working in the arts and community cultural development, with new groups emerging and changing all the time. With three regional art galleries … and three conservatoriums, there is strong focus on visual art and music across the region (Regional Arts NSW 2014)

Yet with a reputation as a creative locus, so many community resources and professional arts practitioners, particularly in the area of music, music education in schools has decreased in recent times, a trend observed locally, nationally and internationally (Russell-Bowie, 2010). The significance of Armidale as providing an interesting context for case-study observation is that if a supposedly creatively strong and musical region cannot provide consistent and quality music education to it's students, what hope do less-resourced and creatively focused regions in Australia have? And even within one town, the disparity in music education delivery was stark. Our research focused on the primary, public school context as even in the supposedly classless structure of state-based education there are "haves and have nots" or those that can and those that can't reap the benefits of music education. There are 7 public primary schools in Armidale, with varying music programs taking place. Research indicates that decisions about how, what, and whether music programs take place in primary schools is discretionary, ad-hoc and unregulated (Alter et al, 2009; Pascoe et al, 2005; Vaughan et al, 2011). Whether music takes place during teaching relief time, or is integrated into other Key Learning Areas or taught as a stand-alone subject, is allocated a specialist teacher and resources and the support of extra-curricular musical activity are decisions made by the principal of the school, irrespective of community advocacy or P&C activism.

The difference in application of music programs in schools is evident in the attitudes of three of the principals interviewed. Principal A, frustrated by overcrowded curriculum and departmental constraints on developing the "whole child", and citing the creative arts as one of the most important and under-resourced Key Learning Areas, personally conducts a choir at lunchtime. Principal A has also instituted *flash dances* where music is spontaneously played across the school, put together by teachers, to encourage staff and

students to stop everything and dance, fostering fun and creating a culture of music and movement in the school.

> It's an appalling state of affairs. We are up against the rigid literacy and numeracy focus. Music is a specialist area that needs to resourced accordingly, but it's radio silence from [the Department of Education and Communities] when it comes to music. (personal communication, August 1st, 2013)

Principal A cited Ted Robinson's famous TED talk on creativity, believing that current educational priorities kill students' creativity (Robinson 2006). Principal A's school has a significant number of students with high support needs, impacting their funding model and NAPLAN results. Most external and community support was to assist in meeting the academic and physical needs of the students requiring additional assistance. This principal was attempting to incorporate music wherever possible within the school despite a lack of departmental support, however believed that the delivery of quality music education was beyond the capacity of their teachers. This school did not currently have music as a stand-alone subject, private instrumental teachers, nor any ensemble instrumental groups, but serves as an example of a Principal who believed in the power of music education, yet felt hamstrung in being able to deliver it in the current educational and political context.

Principal B on the other hand threatened to mark absent students who attended private music lessons at the school, gradually discouraging all peripatetic music teachers from providing services at the school (school newsletter, August 15, 2013). Survey data collected showed an extraordinary bias towards sport and PDHPE in both time allocation and structural support and Principal B's school had a higher emphasis on sport. Parent activism and advocacy for strengthened music programs at the school resulted in Principal B, actually decreasing the musical activity of the school in order to focus on literacy and numeracy. This despite letters from parents across all stages requesting the school strengthen music in the classroom, support extra-curricular activity and private instrumental teachers being able to use the school and creating a culture of music in the school. Due to it's central geographical location, this school drew from a very wide socio-economic pool of families, but had a high proportion of students who were the children of academics at the

nearby university and conservatorium of music. Therefore, importantly, in the resource-stretched public school context, exceptionally qualified parents, including music teachers, academics, drama teachers, and professional musicians, had offered to volunteer their time at the school. However this was seen by the principal as a criticism of the ability of staff to deliver curriculum outcomes and not in keeping with the school's focus on literacy and numeracy and accordingly, dialogue was shut down and programs cut as piano, violin, recorder and brass teachers withdrew their services citing insufficient support from the principal.

Principal C, however, has found a creative way to access funds to support music where possible, including developing a K-2, 3-4 and 5-6 choirs, an orchestra and a marimba group, through using school equity funds. A keen supporter of Scandinavian models of approaches to deeper curriculum, Principal C decided that rather than being quarantined for use for intervention programs for individual students at the lower end of academic achievement, resources would be spread wider, through music education and engaging music specialists in the school.

> I'm looking at how we can utilize equity funding in a different model for music programs as research proves that if you provide that, it opens up different brain patterns and benefits a wider range of students so we're not only benefiting 5 or 6 students in a particular year, but you might get 50 or 60 students in a year who will experience all the benefits of music education. Students benefit enormously in their learning by participating in music programs or learning instruments, it encourages them and they become more inquisitive. (Personal communication, October 10th, 2014)

The bold approach taken Principal C, in using equity funds to allow music education to be delivered across the whole school rather than only allowing students who can afford private music lessons to experience music's benefits, is remarkable in that equity funds are traditionally used for such programs as reading recovery, which benefit but a few individual students. Full school extra-curricular music programs which are funded outside the school budget are usually supported by resource-rich Parents and Citizens (P&C)

committees, that is, at higher SES metropolitan and inner-city public schools. Principal C's approach demonstrates a commitment to equity and access to the benefits of music education for all students, which challenges orthodoxy in how equity funds are viewed and used. What each of these case studies also highlight is that even where principals in the public system are aware and supportive of the benefits of music education, they are still severely restricted in their abilities to realise the educational ideal of a holistic education for each student via music education due to an overcrowded curriculum, lack of resources and dearth of confident and competent music educators amongst their generalist staff.

Pre-service preparation

An examination of current policy and practice of music education in Australian and British primary schools reveals that music education at the primary level is still in an unsatisfactory state. In many instances music is not taught at all (Alter et al., 2009). Factors teachers claim contribute to this unsatisfactory situation include a perceived lack of preparation time as well as time in the teaching day to teach music; a lack of resources and support by 'specialist' or resource teachers; the low priority given to music in primary schools compared with other curriculum areas; and a lack of confidence and competence by general classroom teachers to teach music. This reported inadequacy by teachers to teach music is principally attributed to the type of music education received at university as part of their undergraduate training (Temmerman 1997).

In 1997, Nita Temmerman reported on the variability in the total number of hours allocated to music education, with face to face contact hours for pre-service teachers ranging from three to eight hours a week over two semesters of 12 to 14 weeks duration. This would equate to between 72 – 224 total hours of instruction as part of an undergraduate degree in primary education at Australian universities nationally. Her conclusions were clinical in their criticisms and recommendations, "Improvement of the current unsatisfactory school situation in inescapably linked to improving teacher education programs."(1997:34)

Looking at the University of New England in Armidale, research shows that the number of face to face hours

in pre-service primary education has declined substantially over the last half century, and the situation has deteriorated significantly since Temmerman's research. In 2015 at the University of New England which specialises in distance education and offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees in primary education, the total number of face to face hours students experience can be as few as 12 hours.

Archival data from the handbooks for each year of the Armidale Teachers College, which subsequently amalgamated with the University of New England, reveals the following pattern:

1951 In a two year course there were 135 hours of music. In addition students could access 9 – 18 hours of remedial music in piano and/or singing.

1963 Two year course. 81 hours of music. Students could however choose two electives and a special study each of which lasted 54 hours.

1970 Three year course. 27 hours of music. Students could however elect music as a major study of 84 hours, and do a music elective of 27 hours.

1977 Three year course divided into semesters rather than terms. 26 hours of music. Options of 78 hours of major study and 26 hours of elective.

1983 Music combined with the other creative arts subjects (visual arts, drama, dance and physical education) as "Expression". One semester had a purely music course of around 51 hours. The postgraduate Diploma of Education course had 26 hours of "Expression" which might only account for 6 hours of music.

2015 The current situation (2015) at the University of New England is that for the on-campus undergraduate course music is combined with dance for 30 contact hours. This gives 15 hours of music. The postgraduate course, and also the K-12 undergraduate course, which are both only offered off-campus have an equivalent of 12 hours, which is also meant to include some dance.

Porter and Brophy (1988) define effective teachers as being knowledgeable in content and teaching strategies, to have clear instructional goals, knowledgeable about student needs, making expert use of available instructional materials, and are reflective about their teaching. These general characteristics can be further (refined) to accommodate the specific competencies required of effective music teachers, namely being able to sing, conduct, use instruments and plan lessons, use a variety of methods, connect learning objectives to student interests and needs and make use of student ideas (Porter and Brophy 1988). In 1997, Temmerman questioned the ability of pre-service programs to adequately prepare effective music teachers in their curriculum, as well as the achievability of identifying and developing the characteristics and

competencies required of music educators given “limited time and the prevailing condition of many student teachers having no or very little background in music” (Temmerman 1997:34). Given Temmerman was referring to an era where pre-service teachers were given between 72 – 224 total hours of instruction in music, the situation has clearly deteriorated even further with the reduction of music teaching hours to between 12-15 hours.

Historically, The Armidale Teaching College courses included singing and recorder playing, in addition to a substantial component of music appreciation of the classical music repertoire – much of which would not be considered appropriate to the contemporary primary classroom or current curriculums in place in primary schools. In 1951 as evidenced by the remedial courses, students were expected to be able to sing in tune and have some piano skills. In the 1960s the major music assignment was the compilation of a collection of 200 songs. The current courses have a much stronger emphasis on creativity and composition while continuing singing and some instrumental playing (mainly tuned and untuned percussion), however these are obviously on a much smaller scale.

Research Aims and Methodology

In 2013 and 2014, qualitative and quantitative data was collected from both current teachers and pre-service teachers (university students) enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Primary program at the University of New England, Armidale, Australia. As the University of New England has an extensive online delivery program, students who were studying both internally and externally were included in the study. This is significant as the external degree program structure requires students to have already undertaken an undergraduate degree, and the profile of external, or “off-campus” students in this program differs somewhat in demographic and experiential statistical information. In addition to surveys, samples of work and online forum participation data was collected from pre-service teachers enrolled in the B.Ed Primary degree. The total number of participants in the research was 231, comprising 160 off-campus pre-services teachers, 40 on-campus pre-service teachers, 3 principals and 28 in-service teachers. Interviews conducted with principals

were semi-structured and informal in nature, following the same thematic structure as the surveys. Surveys were completed both online and in hard copy (see Appendix A). The sample sizes depict a sound representation of participant groups with 35% of total off-campus and 40% of on-campus students completing the survey. Participation was voluntary and all data collected complied with ethical jurisdictions determined by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans and internal University of New England Human Research Ethics protocols.

Both pre-service and in-service teachers were asked a series of questions which were categorised into sections:

- General questions on attitudes towards and prioritisation of music education
- Questions based on their practicum classroom experiences and observations
- Questions based on pre-service preparation
- Questions based on personal skills or comfort levels in teaching music

Pre-service teachers were chosen based on having completed their Creative Arts (and therefore Music) units as part of their degree, and had, in addition, undertaken practicums at schools in order to have an experiential engagement with the delivery of music (or not) in primary schools. Both pre-service and in-service teachers completed a survey and interviews were conducted with principals in order to establish the context in which the surveys were completed and gauge the schools receptiveness and support of music in the curriculum and extra-curricular context.

In-service teacher surveys included information on the relevance of music education as well as the importance of various elements of music education; details on in-class activity; pre-service preparation; Factors inhibiting music delivery; enjoyment of music teaching and activities; issues of professional development; and the strength of the school's music programs. Music as a stand-alone and integrated unit was investigated, and curriculum based music as well as extra-curricular activity and the development of a "culture" of music at the school was investigated. Data collected was from NSW Department of Education

primary schools in the region that represented a broad spectrum of cultural and linguistic diversity, Indigenous background and socio-economic circumstance. Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) values of the public primary schools in Armidale range from 781 – 1053, with the national average being 1000. (Source: *My School* website 24/9/14) Data from the local independent and private schools is not included as the aim of this research is to intentionally limit the scope to the musical activity happening in public schools in the region, in order to examine whether in a system which seeks to serve all Australian children regardless of socioeconomic background, inequity still exists. Sadly, the comparison between private and public school music education is like comparing apples and elephants. In Australia, the government sector, or public schools educate 66% of all students, incorporating 79% of the bottom quarter of socio-educational advantage (Gonski, 2011; Kenway, 2013). In other words, the large majority of disadvantaged students attend public schools.

Research Findings

The statistical results were largely congruent between on and off-campus students, however there were some particularly surprising differences, significantly in the attitudinal and experiential responses, which is possibly due to the differences in demography and student profiles between on and off-campus students. Research findings will now be presented under the general categories of Attitude; Skills and Prioritisation. Results were analysed and ranked based on participant responses to multiple choice questions, and responses between on and off campus students and in-service teachers were analysed and triangulated, incorporating demographical disjunctures.

Attitude

Elements of music education which were considered important and in turn rated highly for both on and off-campus students included participation (92%), fun (91%), creative expression (83%). Interestingly, and possibly reflective of experience and awareness of meta-issues and research linking music education to academic achievement, 64% of off-campus students believed that music “greatly influences overall academic

ability" and 32% believed in "marginally influenced academic ability", with a combined total of 96% of respondents believing that music education had some positive impact on academic ability. This is compared to On-campus students of whom only 17% believed music "greatly influenced academic ability". This difference in attitude was also reflected when assessing the importance of music in the primary curriculum with 68% of off-campus students rating music as "very important" and 25% as "reasonably important" (combined total of 92% of respondents believing that music was an important part of the curriculum) compared to the on-campus students, of whom only 17% rated music as a "very important" inclusion in the primary curriculum and 55% rated it as "reasonably important", with a combined total of 72% believing music was an important part of the curriculum to some extent.

Our hypothesis on the difference between on and off-campus responses relating to attitude and prioritisation of music education is that the average age and experience of enrolled students varies significantly, as does their life experience. External students over the age of 24 are often likely to have children themselves or have experienced greater music education as part of their own school experience. Statistically, 94% of on-campus B.Ed Primary students were under the age of 24. Conversely, 79% of off-campus B.Ed Primary students were over the age of 24, indicating that the vast majority of off-campus students are mature-age enrolment. Pre-service teachers articulated the importance placed on music in the wider curriculum as follows:

Table 1. Importance of music in the curriculum

	Off-Campus	**On-Campus**
Very	68%	17%
Reasonably	25%	55%
Marginally	5%	24%
Not at all	2%	3%

The perceived degree to which music influences academic outcomes amongst survey respondents produced interesting results. 64% of off-campus students believed music greatly influences academic outcomes, compared to just 17% of on-campus students and 42% of current teachers. 76% of on-campus students, that is, statistically younger students, believed music education only marginally influences academic outcomes,

compared to 32% of off-campus students and 50% of current teachers. This indicates that research into the academic benefits of music education has not adequately reached the younger cohort of pre-service teachers, nor current teachers in the profession.

Skills

As pre-service courses are so limited in time, it is difficult to develop meaningful musical skills within the course. The musical skills that students bring to the course, as opposed to pedagogical skills and strategies, are what they take out and use in the classroom with concomitant effects of teaching effectiveness. Pre-service teachers, both on and off-campus, were evaluated based on submitted work for an unrelated assessment task, in the area of singing. Evaluation incorporated confidence and accuracy. The results were interesting in terms of how the students were externally evaluated, compared with their self-analysis on the survey.

Collected data showed that 63% of pre-service teachers are "reasonably confident" singers, which is encouraging, however 37% of them have "poor accuracy" in singing. The music curriculum does, however, incorporate areas other than singing such as playing instruments, listening to music, composition and listening, so those confident yet inaccurate singers need not lose hope! On the other hand we do need to recognise that a significant deficit in a key musical skill is going to short change students unless there is some strategy for amelioration within the school, such as the use of teachers with specific musical skills used across all classes, who may be employed as music specialists, as Case Study Principal C has done, or as generalist teachers. As evidenced by the creative redistribution of equity funds and prioritisation given to music by Principal C, such an approach is the exception rather than the rule in public schools, and engaging specialist teachers is much more likely to occur in private schools. Inequity of opportunity is therefore a factor both of chance, in terms of having a particular teacher and/or principal with an interest in music and therefore strategies to open up musical opportunity to all, and economic circumstances. Additionally, a lack of skills in one musical area, such as singing, may also affect willingness to engage in others.

Interestingly, 83% in-service teachers seem to have somewhat overcome fears of singing in front of their class stating that they “sometimes” or “always” felt comfortable singing in front of their class, possibly through general confidence that comes with teaching experience. 32% of pre-service teachers responded that they "never" felt comfortable singing in front of their class, and are therefore presumably unlikely to ever sing in the classroom once the graduate as teachers (Appendix A, Table 2). Table 3 demonstrates the type of professional development suggested to participants, both pre- and in-service, which may increase their confidence and likelihood to teach music in the classroom. Each of these suggestions, however require a significant time commitment which, if not available during the teaching degree, is unlikely to be available in an already time-poor school context. In addition, all recent funding allocated for professional development has been geared towards literacy and numeracy (NSW Department of Education, 2014:6).

Prioritisation

As became clear in interviews, there are a number of inhibiting factors to the inclusion of music in the curriculum, with the main one reflecting the current prioritisation of literacy and numeracy in the curriculum, with all other Key Learning Areas competing for the little remaining time in the teaching day. The New South Wales syllabus mandates that 50% of teaching time be allocated to English and Mathematics, with the remaining 50% divided between Science and Technology; Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDH/PE); Human Society and it's Environment; and Creative Arts, each receiving between 6-10% of available teaching time (Appendix A, Table 4).

The teaching time allocated to the Creative Arts which equates to around 1.5 – 2.5 hours/week must then be divided between music, visual art, dance and drama. Even allowing for the inclusion of visual arts, dance and drama in the Creative Arts KLA, half an hour should be the minimum time allocated to music, with integrated approaches to the curriculum extending the time further. The contrast in time allocation to Music (Creative Arts KLA) compared to Sport (PDH/PE KLA) was stark:

Table 3. Time allocated to Music compared to Sport

Time per week	Music	Sport
None	6%	-
< 15 mins	12%	2%
15-30 mins	22%	4%
30-60 mins	42%	35%
> 60 mins	18%	60%

52% of respondents stated that when music was taught, it was integrated into other key learning areas, which, whilst adding a creative component and pedagogical approach to other disciplines, does not replace music being taught as a stand-alone subject in its own right. Additionally, meaningfully meeting the curriculum outcomes of the creative arts syllabus is more difficult when incorporating outcomes from other learning areas, and integrationist approaches are often criticized as "watering down" content in order to simply cover all curriculum requirements. Integrationist approaches do, however allow for different learning styles and provide different ways of considering issues, encouraging higher level processing and critical engagement of subjects through creative perspectives and applications.

In Australia, 65% of all students attend public schools, compared to 35% who attend non-Government private or independent schools (ABS 2015). The *Bridging the Gap* Report (Vaughan et al., 2011) found that 78% of private schools enjoyed more than 1 hour of music/week. The National Review (Pascoe et al., 2005) also found that 88% of private schools offer *a meaningful music education* program whilst only 23% of public schools offer the same. Our research was somewhat less encouraging than findings of both the *Bridging the Gap* Report and the National Review in terms of the time spent on music, with 44% of private or independent schools offering more than 1 hour per week of music, and only 10% of public schools offering the same, however our sample size was considerably smaller, demonstrating regional rather than national averages. Alarmingly, 20% of respondents in the public school sector confessed to offering less than 15 minutes or no music each week (Appendix A, Table 6). Given the majority of Australian students attend public schools, the reports above show that on average these students are receiving significantly less meaningful music education than students attending private schools, and are therefore largely missing out on

the benefits of music education on the basis of wealth and opportunity. Also, as demonstrated in the case study section, a wide variation exists within the public system of the prioritization and resourcing of music education offered within the public school sector.

The Music aspect of the Creative Arts curriculum comprises singing; playing instruments; moving to music; composition and listening. As Principal A stated: “We have a very crowded curriculum, with 2 hours dedicated to literacy and 1 hour dedicated to numeracy each day. So the remaining 4 Key Learning Areas have to be worked into the remaining time” (interview, 1/8/13). The main inhibiting factors to the inclusion of music in the curriculum produced different results across the on-campus and off-campus pre-service teachers and current teachers surveyed. The highest response amongst current teachers (92%) and on-campus pre-service teachers (76%) was "Too little time to cover all KLAs". Off-campus pre-service teachers' highest response was "Lower priority than other KLAs". Other notable reasons were "Lack of confidence"; "Lack of resources"; "Insufficient expertise in the school"; and "Insufficient professional development" (Appendix A, Table 5).

Our survey also wanted to gauge expectations around music in classrooms compared with what is happening in practice. Surprisingly, the anticipated time spent singing (hypothesised by pre-service teachers) versus the actual time spent singing (reported by in-service teachers) varied significantly, with 71% of pre-service teachers anticipating they would spend 30 minutes or more a week singing, yet only 8% of in-service teachers reporting this to happen, with the large majority of time in current classrooms spent singing being less than 15 minutes a week.

Equity, access and class

> A truly extraordinary school will provide a music program (Gillespie 2014)

In addition to article 26.2 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights on education being directed to the full development of human character, the social and cultural rights of children are also protected in the UN

Convention on the Rights of Children. Article 29.1 (a) states that education shall be directed to "the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential". Article 31.1 states that children have the right to "participate freely in cultural life and the arts". Article 31.2 goes on to state that signatories of the convention, of which Australia is one, "shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall **encourage** the provision of appropriate an **equal opportunities for cultural, artistic**, recreational and leisure activity".

Nationally, the 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling, colloquially known as the Gonski Report highlighted the entrenched inequity in the current Australian school system, identifying that in addition to declining performance across the board, Australia has a significant gap between its highest and lowest performing students. So significant was this report that public education advocates and concerned parents still sport "I Give a Gonski" bumper stickers on their cars, in a country which rarely overtly expresses its political or ideological views. The Gonski Report's arguments for a complete revision on school funding covers comparative, economic and moral imperatives (Kenway, 2013). Comparative as Australia does not compare favourably with other countries assessed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in terms of quality and equity in education. The economic imperative comes from the need for more targeted spending which redistributes funding and yields better long term investment into individuals educational futures. The moral dimension of the report, which speaks to former prime minister Gillard's "great moral wrong" (2012) comment, emphasises that:

> …ensuring that all Australian children, whatever their circumstance, have access to the best possible education and a chance to realise their full potential can also be considered the moral imperative of schooling. (Gonski et al,. 2011:105)

The Gonski Report provides a meta-narrative of the broken system of entrenched inequality across all sectors of primary and secondary education in Australian schools. Yet our research into the delivery of music education in this study identifies that in one small area of the current curriculum, a further polarisation

occurs in the supposed level playing field of public education, with students missing out on the quantifiable academic and social benefits of music education, depending on series of not unrelated but under-reported contributing factors. All Australian parents have an expectation that their children will receive the rounded education offered as part of the curriculum, which includes music, regardless of whether they attend a public or private school. Clearly, a two-speed economy has developed in access to quality music education between private and public schools in Australia. (Vaughan et al, 2011; Gillespie, 2014) This despite the growing body of literature linking music education to higher academic performance. However our research and case study examples reveal that even within the public sector, there is wide variation in the access, resourcing and delivery of music education and its associated benefits.

One of the critical reasons for music education dropping off the radar is the cumulative impact of successive Governments measuring themselves against comparable OECD countries and introducing criteria which largely are unrepresentative of the whole child nor the whole articulation of academic success, namely the introduction and adherence to standardised national literacy and numeracy testing and a reductive measurement of students ability. The same drop in international ranking, which was highlighted in the Gonski report, appears to have stimulated a more rigid focus on comparative analysis of student performance. Following the Labor Government coming to power in 2007, and the much hyped promise of an "education revolution" (Rudd, 2007), outside of major capital works in schools across the country during Kevin Rudd's term as prime minister, the main legacies of the revolution have been the introduction of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and the related *My School* website, run by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) on which test results are made public.

Although Governments on both political sides have consistently denied that the publication of data such as in *My School* would lead to league tables, and competition in terms of enrolment, any principal of a school which is publicly underperforming in relation to national averages in literacy and numeracy is unlikely to

channel precious funds and limited available time or professional development resources to music education. Principals interviewed as part of this research project unanimously expressed their frustration and powerlessness at the limitations the current system with its focus almost entirely on literacy and numeracy and the political forces driving curriculum priorities following the introduction of NAPLAN and *My School*. Yet ironically, in reference to Australia's drop in OECD rankings, it was precisely the inequality or stratification of the education system itself which contributed to this situation, as acknowledged by Ken Boston, a member of the Gonski review committee (2013:16). The Gonski report highlighted a funding model which disadvantages the already socially disadvantaged. And those schools who stand to gain the most academically from music education programs are in the worst place to invest or access them through specialist teachers, resources and expertise as well as the institutional constraints of a literacy and numeracy focused curriculum. As our survey results demonstrated, there are a number of reasons largely related to timetabling and Key Learning Area prioritisation, which inhibit music education, yet 92% of current teachers cite the main reason for not including music in the curriculum is "Too little time to cover all Key Learning Areas" (Appendix A, Table 5). This, combined with the "rigid literacy and numeracy focus" cited by Case Study Principal A and the impact and importance of teacher confidence, highlighted earlier, is also linked to the division of classes which Gonski sought to address. Private schools are better resourced to employ specialist music teachers who are confident and competent in the delivery of the curriculum than public schools who, research indicates, must rely on generalist teachers who lack such confidence (Alter et al, 2009; Kokotsaki, 2012).

Rather than a focus on outcomes-orientated league tables such as PISA, another international comparison could be to look to Finland as the results of Finnish music education have recently been attracting a great deal of attention internationally (Australia Council, 2005). In Finland, general arts education, including music, is compulsory from the age of 7. The music curriculum and music theory is learnt where possible through live performance, and all basic education in music is delivered by specialists, in specialist institutions, resulting in some 140 music institutes (music schools, conservatories and music playschools),

with 84% of music tuition fees being covered by Government or local authorities (Partanen, 2001:2). For those interested in PISA rankings, Finland sits in 12th position, compared to Australia's position of 19. If examples like Finland, who rank higher in the very measurements Australia wishes to improve upon, have seen the importance and benefits of investing in music education, policy makers need only learn from the model of the Finnish experience and re-prioritise accordingly.

Strong advocates of music education are silenced as the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of music are still largely seen as less quantifiable and tangible than the three Rs, therefore relegating music to the periphery of the curriculum. Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony education program, Richard Gill asks:

> So why music? We teach music because it is unique and good. We teach music so that children can make their own music. We teach music because it acts in a unique way on the heart, mind, soul and spirit of the child, stimulating thought and imagination in very special ways. (SMH12.8.13)

In addition to the body of research reporting the academic and social benefits listed above, Gill goes on to list the cognitive and tangible benefits to music education which begin prenatally, including the development concentration skills through listening as well as deeper and heightened perceptions which impact all learning areas in children. The second goal of the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians which informs the National Curriculum, states that All young Australians are to become "confident **and creative** students" (MCEETYA 2008). Creativity should be considered a feature of success across all learning domains, and the easiest way to develop a creative mindset in the primary school is through the creative arts. If students are accustomed to being creative, in music or other creative arts subjects, they are more adept at applying creative solutions to other domains.

In a 2008 study, found that 3.5 year old children were actively experiencing approximately twice the amount of music through a variety of different media as adults do in their waking hours. "Children grow with and through music as they make it themselves or are immersed in the sounds that surround them, in a way that

feeds their identity. Its personal, social and emotional impact is vast" (Lamont in Kokotsaki 2012:131). Yet despite preschool age being the peak of active musical experience, the lack of follow-through at the primary school level means that the benefits of musical engagement decline as exposure and engagement declines through a lack of opportunity and access to music education. The early primary years are when students develop skills in deriving meaning from abstract concepts, and musical literacy, with the concomitant benefits to other literacies should also be developed at this stage. Whilst this is the case in Independent schools, in public schools, the attitude and support of the principal is critical and music programs can wither rapidly with changes at the top.

Indeed in Australia, the recently mandated Early Years Learning Framework states that children express ideas and make meaning … when they "use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning" and instructs educators to "provide a range of resources that enable children to express meaning using visual arts, dance, drama and music" (MCEETYA 2008:42). There are numerous references in the EYLF to meeting the needs of children through the use music and resources available to educators to enable this. More broadly, the EYLF supports the second goal of the Melbourne Declaration stated above, to develop confident and creative students at a pre-school level.

Yet in spite of the many reports and recommendations both developed by and for successive Governments in Australia on either side of the political spectrum which identify the creative needs of students (the Melbourne Declaration), the moral imperative of access and equity in resources (the Gonski Report) and indisputable benefits of quality music education (the National Review), the actual situation in classrooms across Australian primary schools, and in teacher education programs at universities, is that music is under-valued, under-resourced, under-timetabled and under-regulated.

Conclusion

Despite a growing body of evidence to support the academic and psycho-social benefits of music in the primary aged child, music education continues to decline in classrooms in public schools across Australia, in spite of it being the sector which has the most to gain in terms of redressing the academic needs of the high proportion of disadvantaged students. The class divide widens in the area of music as private schools are able to resource the area appropriately, enabling their students to reap the benefits of quality music programs. Significantly, however, even amongst public schools, our data has shown a large spectrum in how and whether music education is supported. The driving force of this is two-fold – a curriculum which prioritises literacy and numeracy disproportionally to the other Key Learning Areas offered, which is undoubtable a result of politically motivated changes to Government policies and priorities, and an ill-prepared workforce of primary teachers in the area of music and the creative arts more generally. Whilst the current political emphasis on skill acquisition over holistic development exists in both the public and private school domains, only the private sector is equipped to resource skilled and confident specialist teachers to deliver music programs, indicating a schism in the ability to realise educational ideals. With the steep decline in both face to face teaching hours dedicated to music education at university for pre-service teachers, and an associated reduction in the quality and depth of music education offered in such courses, teachers are unsurprisingly lacking in confidence and reluctant to engage in music teaching in their classrooms. Professional development for in-service teachers in the area of music is under-supported and increasingly the syllabus requirements and mandated time allocated to music is dramatically falling short.

Whilst Australian parents, teachers and principals have been told repeatedly that the creative development of their child is an important educational goal of the system they inhabit, the reality is quite different.

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Appendix A

Table 2. Survey question: do you feel comfortable singing in front of your class?

	Off-Campus	On-Campus	Current Teachers
Yes, always	20%	20%	50%
Sometimes	69%	59%	33%
Never	11%	21%	17%

Table 3. Survey Question: would any of the following influence your inclination and confidence in teaching music?

Professional Development	Pre-service	Current teachers
Workshops in practical music in classroom	85%	42%
Developing repertoire and resources	80%	67%
Workshops on basics of music	58%	25%

Table 4. Proportion of time allocated to each Key Learning Area (KLA)

Subject	Percentage of time spent on the subject
English	Between 25 and 30%
Mathematics	20%
Science and technology	Between 6 and 10%
Personal development, health and physical education (PDH/PE)	Between 6 and 10%
Human Society and its environment	Between 6 and 10%
Creative Arts	Between 6 and 10%
Additional activities	Up to 20%

Table 5. The main inhibiting factors to the inclusion of music in the curriculum

	Off-Campus	On-Campus	Current teachers
Too little time to cover all KLAs	50%	76%	92%
Lack of confidence	47%	72%	33%
Lower Priority than other KLAs	59%	59%	67%
Lack of Resources	31%	55%	25%
Insufficient expertise in the school	52%	55%	25%
Insufficient Professional Development	41%	31%	50%

Table 6. Time spent on music across sectors

Time spent on music	Public	Catholic	Private/Independent	Average across schools
None	10%	-	-	6%
<15mins/week	10%	20%	11%	12%
15-30 mins/week	30%	20%	-	22%
30-60 mins/week	40%	60%	44%	42%
>1hour/week	10%	-	44%	18%