

Toward Convergence: Adapting Music Education to Contemporary Society and Participatory Culture

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“In the twenty first century as much as people play music, they also play with and through music”. Technology is constantly changing, and our society develops alongside this change by adapting to the current trends. In terms of music, media has changed the way we share and discuss music and has created a concept called “participatory culture”. The article “Toward Convergence Adapting Music Education to Contemporary Society and Participatory Culture” expands on this concept and defines participatory culture as “a public desire to participate within, rather than simply consume media”. Because of technological advancements, several sites have been created to allow people to participate in the sharing of music. An example would be the creation of YouTube where anyone can post a video making it easy to share, discuss and enjoy other people’s music. This has resulted in a shift from performing other people’s music to taking their music and putting your own spin on it. This could be done through covering, remixing it or using it in a mash-up. This article reflects on the new trends and discusses how music educators should update their curriculum to account for these changes. The author feels that music educators should lean towards teaching about the media and the musical trends in our contemporary society.

I found the concept of this article very **interesting**. Speaking as a person who grew up in the technology era, I have never really reflected on how media has impacted music. For most of my life, I have been surrounded by technology. All of the concepts discussed in the article such as YouTube, covering or remixing were concepts that already existed when I was growing up. I think that it is a great idea to incorporate learning about some of the skills mentioned in the article such as remixing, multi-tracking or making mash ups into the present day music curriculums. This is because I believe that one of the main purposes of an education is to prepare you for your career. If trends such as covering or remixing are being used in the music industry today and a student decides they want to have a career in that field, they should be taught how to use these skills.

I was **surprised** to read about the idea of convergence. In the article, the author discussed combining the existing music curriculum with the newer skills that are emerging from the creation of media. In my opinion, the technique used in classical music and the technological skills emerging in popular music are very different. I have never heard anyone suggest to bring the skills from both of these genres of music together because from my experience, people usually prefer the technique used in one genre over the other. While they may expose their students to a variety of genres of music, they will only teach the skills of the genre they feel is the most beneficial to a music education. Another thought that surprised me was the author’s proposal of what the role of a music educator should change to. The author wrote that the purpose of a music educator would no longer be to pour information into the student’s head rather it would be to guide the student’s creative thinking skills and to encourage deeper reflection. They could do this by asking

thought provoking questions such as what aspects of the original song are you highlighting and changing and why? The educator would cater to the student's interests and needs and foster independent learning. This reminded me of the concept of progressive education and the discussions we had in Dr. Elizabeth's Gould presentation about the role of a teacher. In Dr. Gould's presentation she mentioned that the relationship between a teacher and student should be fluid, equal and an interaction/exchange. Both sides of the relationship are equally important which is the exact teaching style the author is promoting.

I was **frustrated** when I read that some teachers do not agree with this method. As soon as I read about incorporating styles of contemporary music into the music curriculum, I imagined some teachers would not agree with this idea and would want to stick to their traditional ways of teaching. However, I do believe that it is important to foster creativity and to cater to the students' interests. If the students are learning about material they are interested in they will be more likely to pay attention, and will therefore retain more of the information they are learning. I think the entire education system should be restructured to a progressive education style of learning and teaching.

Finally, if I could **talk to the author**, I would want to learn more about the copyright aspect of this new method of music education. As soon as I read about remixing songs and making mash-ups, I questioned whether or not this would bring up copyright issues. Later, when I read about it in the article, it seemed unclear what the exact rules are on using existing music to create your own projects. I think that if the author is passionate about incorporating contemporary music into the music curriculum for schools, they should try to get legislature passed that allows students to use other people's work for their own learning and creative purposes. However, this does make me question how an artist will be able to generate their income. I feel that illegally downloading music is a huge problem nowadays and I wonder if integrating this new curriculum into music classes would further contribute to this issue.

Overall, this was my favourite article so far. I really enjoy reading the articles for music education because they encourage me to think deeply about various perspectives surrounding music education. After reading the articles I begin to reflect on the music education I have received and on the years of music education still ahead of me. I hope to continue to learn the best ways to teach music.