

# A snapshot: multicultural music teaching in schools in Victoria, Australia, portrayed by school teachers

Rohan Nishantha Nethsinghe

Monash University

## Abstract

Due to the changing demographic factors and as demanded by the governmental policies and regulations, schools in Victoria, Australia, are expected to foster multicultural educational programs that address the diverse needs of students. Research has found that school teachers in Victoria struggle to provide the aspired to multicultural education for pupils, especially in the area of music education. An online survey was conducted to identify the reasons for this and to provide a snapshot of the current situation in Australian schools. This survey found that, as many teachers do not possess appropriate knowledge, resources and educational background, artists in residence are often invited to teach multicultural music in schools as an alternative strategy. The participant teachers identified the involvement of these culture/tradition bearers as the most authentic method to teach world music and their presence in schools as the most accessible resource and more engaging approach for students. This study explores how governmental regulations and policies, including curriculum frameworks that address multiculturalism and multicultural (music) education, effect current practices in Victorian schools. The voices of teachers at the 'chalk face' are rarely heard in such discussion and this survey attempted to address this hiatus.

**Key words:** artist in residence; authentic transmission and pedagogical practices; cultural diversity; inter-contextualisation; multicultural music; music teachers; proximal simulation.

*Australian Journal of Music Education* 2012:1, 57-70

## Introduction

Australia is a country of migrants and many cultures (Bowen, 2011). From the Second World War to 2006–2007, more than 6.6 million migrants from around 230 countries have settled in Australia. The Australian Government's commitment to a multicultural Australia is assured in the Australia's latest multicultural policy introduced last year (Bowen, 2011). The Australian (Fact Sheet 6, 2011) and State Governments have developed a set of regulations and policies to enhance multicultural practices including a set of curriculum guidelines for schools. The Australian federal government

mandates that schools should foster teaching and learning that will create future citizens who are "caring, tolerant fair and compassionate" (Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2005, p. 2). All Australian schools are expected to promulgate the Nine Values articulated by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST, 2005). The Nine Values are care and compassion, doing your best, 'fair go', freedom, honesty and trustworthiness, integrity, respect, responsibility and understanding. These Nine Values comply with the expectations of Australia's new multicultural policy commended to Australians by the Prime Minister Julia Gillard. The policy addresses the

importance of fairness and inclusion as National interests and “enhances respect and support for cultural religious and linguistic diversity” (Bowen, 2011, p. 2). Victorian researchers Joseph and Southcott (2009a) suggested that multicultural music education can be a vehicle which could incorporate the Nine Values such as respect and understanding (DEST, 2005).

Victoria is the most culturally diverse state (Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2009) in Australia where most migrants have settled. Its capital Melbourne is claimed to be the “most liveable city of the world” (American Broadcasting Company, ABC News, 2011). The majority of migrants live in the surrounding suburbs of Melbourne. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that “Victoria is characterised by a large migrant population, 24% of population were born overseas and 44% were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas” and the majority, about 70%, reside in Melbourne” (OECD, 2010, p. 12). Echoing the federal government the Victorian state government also attempts to promote and safeguard the values of multiculturalism by developing a broad legislative and policy framework focused on the protection and enhancement of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity<sup>1</sup>. The cultural

diversity of the society is also represented in its school communities and schools must cater for the diverse educational needs of students. The latest Victorian educational reform Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship outlines the vision for multicultural education practices for Victorian government schools, 2009-2013 and highlights that “global and multicultural citizenship education has an important role to play in supporting social cohesion” (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD), 2009, p. 5). Policy statements initially intended for government schools will ultimately influence all school. The document defines multicultural education as “a whole school process that prepares all students for their roles and responsibilities in an interdependent world” (DEECD, 2010a, para. 1). Multicultural education should permeate all aspects of school practices and policy and places students at the centre of all school practices that promote multi-perspectives and an appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity within a democratic society. The department further states that “Multicultural education aims to ensure all Victorian students contribute to and benefit from cultural and linguistic diversity and a shared social cohesion” (DEECD, 2010, para. 1). Joseph and Southcott (2006) argue that education plays an important role “in bridging difference and promoting mutual respect, tolerance and understanding between people of different races, cultures and religions” (p. 66) thus upholding the Nine Values (DEST, 2005). In these regulations and policies the importance of appropriate multicultural education practices in the enhancement of cultural diversity is recognised and many researchers have identified music education as the most suitable medium for achieving those goals (Forrest & Watson, 2010; Joseph & Southcott, 2009a).

## Importance of music education

Gould (2009) identified “music education as an important professional space for social change”

---

1. **Legislations:** Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001, Multicultural Victoria Act 2004, Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Multicultural Victoria Amendment Act 2008 (DEECD, 2009, p.6). **Policies, Strategies and Initiatives:** Valuing Cultural Diversity Policy 2002, Multicultural Communications Policy (revised in 2002), A Fairer Victoria: Progress and Next Steps 2006, Global Skills for Victoria 2008-2011 (Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2009). Growing Victoria Together: A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond (2005), A Fairer Victoria 2008: Strong People, Strong Communities (2008), Strengthening Outcomes: Refugee Students in Victorian Government Schools (2008), Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future (2008), Guidelines for Managing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Schools (2008), Cultural Diversity Plan, 2008–2010 (2008) (DEECD, 2009, p.6).

(p. xi) and Kushner (1994) challenged, “those who argue for music [especially multicultural music] in schools must justify its place in the curriculum on educational backgrounds” (p. 35). Responding to such a challenge, the National Review of School Music Education (NRSME) (2005) also identified the growing need for school music “to address the issue of diversity, inclusive repertoire, recognition of home and community cultures” (DEST, 2005, p. 27) and emphasized the significance of music education in “transmission of cultural heritage and values” (p. v). In Victoria the Essential Learning Standards (Victorian Essential Learning Standards-VELS) provide a curriculum framework for years Preparatory to Ten. In the VELS multicultural (music) practices are recommended (VCAA, 2008). The most recent curriculum development in the Arts, the shape paper of the Australian national curriculum suggests that the provision of music education in schools should include “the multiple and culturally diverse practices of music, locally, nationally and globally” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2011, p. 19).

Conversely it is evident that there are issues surrounding the provision of multicultural education in schools. More than two decades ago, Rizvi (1994) identified “how little schools in Australia have done to address the issues of cultural difference” (p. 55). Southcott and Joseph (2007) pointed out that many music teachers in Australian schools have a background in Western arts paradigms and practices as many would have been either schooled or trained in that fashion which would not support curricular expectations are that “teachers will include multicultural practices in schools” (Joseph, 2007, p. 28). Unfortunately this situation seems to remain the same. To give a very specific, local example, as a practising teacher I have recently witnessed a multicultural music workshop in a school which was demonstrably unauthentic and I have attended two Professional Development (PD) sessions for teachers with doubtful content of

‘African’ music presented by musicians who were non-culture bearers. As a result of experiencing these concerns I decided to investigate the current provision of multicultural music education in Victorian schools.

## Teaching multicultural music: the theoretical underpinning

Teaching different musics in various educational environments is complex and potentially problematic. Schippers (2006) pointed out that “almost all music is transmitted out of context” (p. 347). The most important aspect of concern is the repetition/re-presentation of a musical work in dissimilar contexts to its origin for educational purposes such as demonstrating, listening, rehearsing and practising. Nethsinghe (2011) describes this process as “inter-contextualisation” which is understood as a process that represents, re-performs or reproduces a musical work in a foreign environment/context that is different to its original setting/context and time “for people from different backgrounds such as cultures, religions, ethnicities, and race including diverse traditions and socio-political backgrounds” (p. 10). Määttänen and Westerlund (2001) explained that music can be understood differently or not at all by people from different cultures at different times and situations. They pointed out that “Under different conditions and different times within different cultures and situations, music organizes our experience differently” (p. 263). Providing an example for this from the field of teacher training, Joseph and Southcott (2006) argued that, fully understanding musics of another culture is “highly unlikely for most teachers” in the Australian context without having proper training and background knowledge including appropriate professional development (p. 69). Abril (2009) highlighted the importance of culturally responsive practices in music education to enhance understandings of multicultural music.

In the *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, schools students should learn about cultural, social and historical contexts of music. For example from year 7-10 it is expected that "Through listening, performing and composing they [students] will begin to identify cultural, social and historical contexts of music" (ACARA, 2011, p. 15) and from year 9-10 it is anticipated that "Through research and critical study they will develop a rich knowledge of the contemporary and historical contexts of musical works and practices" (ACARA, 2011, p. 15). Therefore in the process of inter-contextualisation of music, Nethsinghe (2011) argues that "it is necessary to educate the audiences/learners/ participants appropriately by offering sufficient and comprehensive intercultural background knowledge/education including guidelines (of the original context of a musical work) to provide an authentic experience that leads to a meaningful engagement" (p. 10). Nearly twenty years ago, Tucker (1992) pointed out that "in teaching multicultural arts education, there must be an authentic voice in the development of what could be an effective pedagogy" (p. 38). Many authors including the most influential researchers in the field have precisely pointed out the importance of authentic multicultural music performing, teaching and learning practices (Blacking, 1973/1995; Belz, 2006; Campbell, 2004; Clements, 2006; Palmer, 2002; Reimer, 2002; Tucker, 1992; Volk, 1998/2002). The weight of scholarly opinion suggests that it is vital to teach multicultural music as authentically as possible. Employing this understanding and based on his own experiences and expertise, Nethsinghe (2010) introduced the concept of "Proximal Simulation" which addresses authentic transmission and pedagogical practices and offers a set of strategies intended to provide an effective learning experience of world musics for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. As discussed before in the Victorian multicultural context it is essential to provide appropriate education and such practice seems to

be problematic for many reasons. It is essential to investigate the issues involved in this process, in order to better understand the involved difficulties in the provision of multicultural music education in schools, and how to enhance authentic, effective pedagogical strategies in multicultural music education. Green (2002) pointed out the need for research into the changing attitudes amongst teachers apropos of the inclusion of multicultural music in their classrooms thus it is important to seek for the voice of teachers and consider their opinions in decision making. Without such an understanding, programs and approaches may not be effective in the long term. Hence this study employed an online survey to enquire about the concerns.

## **The methodology**

### **Survey**

A single non-experimental ex post facto survey was selected for this enquiry (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005) This cross-sectional design is concerned with the collection of data at one point in time from a random sample representing some given population at the time (Wiersma, 2000). The survey designed for this study contained a set of questions that investigated if and how multicultural music is taught in schools (especially to study the strategies used to provide an effective, authentic experiences), teachers' attitude towards teaching different types of music including working with artists and the difficulties associated with such practice and most importantly to provide a snap shot of the current situation. The survey contained closed single answer questions (for example: Are there resources available to teach multicultural music in your school, requesting a single answer yes or no), single answer questions with follow-up descriptions (for example: should schools be required to teach music from other cultures, requesting a single answer yes or no and please explain why), multiple answer questions with

an answer choices and explanatory questions. This survey was designed to generate mostly quantitative data but clarifying explanations generated qualitative data. The questions posted in the online survey were pre-tested for reliability, efficiency and effectiveness and then refined.

Teachers who currently teach music in Victorian schools were surveyed with ethical approval from Monash University and other appropriate authorities such as the DEECD, the survey was posted on the web site of the Association of Music Educators (aMuse) in Victoria. Many music teachers in the state access this web site to search for professional information and resources. The survey was created and posted on the web using an online survey software and questioner tool named Survey Monkey. Describing the advantages of Web-based surveys Wiersma and Jurs (2005) pointed out that, "there are savings in the time there also are cost savings" (p. 183). Web based surveys are fast, cost effective, and flexible and, on average, people give longer answers to open-ended questions on Web page questionnaires than they do on other kinds of self-administered surveys (Creative Research Systems, 2010). Knobel and Lankshear (1999) suggested that by employing surveys it is possible to gather a range of responses, large sets of data, useful for identifying trends and preferences across a large number of people" (p. 71). The online survey generated information about the broader context, about teachers practicing multicultural music and investigated the restrictions and difficulties of practising this type of music in schools. The collected data were analyzed statistically using the tools provided in the SurveyMonkey. In addition the text analysis tool in the same software was used to analyse the collected qualitative explanations to find common patterns in data. In presenting analyzed quantitative data Creswell (2008) suggests that "whether the analysis consists of descriptive or inferential analysis or both, the researcher presents results in tables, figures, and in a detailed discussion of the results" (p. 209) and

most appropriate techniques selected will be used to present the data accompanied with general statements in this paper.

## The survey responses

The online survey 'The evaluation of Multicultural Music Programs in Victorian schools that include visiting artists' was posted and one hundred ( $N=100$ ) responses were collected during a period of eight months. At this point it was decided to close the survey, determined the collected sample size is sufficient to generate a snap shot of the current situation in the state. Sarantakos (2005) suggested that "the sample must be as large as necessary and as small as possible" and he claimed that, "the study will stop when saturation is achieved" (p. 170). A similar study with fewer participants ( $n=52$ ) in the Higher and Further Education Sector was conducted successfully in the United Kingdom (Virtual World Watch, 2009).

This survey contained a set of 42 questions under seven themes presented in different web pages. A discussion of selected and most relevant data is presented in the following section using a similar approach to Taylor and Hallam (2011).

## Background information of respondents

The first set of questions posted in the survey was aimed to collect demographic (about the schools they work for) and biographical (mainly music teaching qualifications) information from the participants. Among the respondents 41 teachers taught in Secondary schools, 27 teachers in Primary schools and 25 participated from Primary to Year Twelve (P-12) schools and the rest, 7 respondents were from Senior Secondary Colleges<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). There are three

- 
2. Victorian schools: Primary Schools Year 1-6, Secondary/High Schools Year 7-12, Junior Secondary Schools Year 7-10 and Senior Secondary Schools 11-12.

school systems operating in Victoria. They are Government, Catholic and Independent schools. Most participants (50%) teach in Government schools and 25% from Independent schools and 20% from Catholic schools. The remaining 5% of teachers indicated that they teach instrumental music part-time, in a combination of those schools types (Figure 2). Independent schools/ colleges in Victoria mainly teach students from Primary to Year Twelve and this ratio is clearly represented in the survey responses, 25 teachers (from P-12 schools) equal to the 25% participation of Independent schools. Furthermore this distribution of participants can be seen as representative of the three types of schools. According to the Australian schools directory there are 2500 schools in Victoria, of which about 1375 are located in Melbourne, and the majority is government schools (Australian

Schools Directory, 2011). Catholic schools are the next largest group and the Independent schools constitute the rest (Australian Schools Directory, 2011). It was requested to provide the school's postcode where they teach in order to find about the community demographics of the schools. Among the respondents 85% of teachers taught in schools located close to the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) and the rest (15%) taught in schools situated in suburban, outer suburban and rural areas.

The next question explored the different cultural backgrounds of students attending respondent's schools and 88% answered that they have students from a variety of cultural backgrounds in their class rooms. The respondents further explained that these students come from Asian, Middle Eastern, American, European, African and other backgrounds representing many countries of the world creating highly multicultural school communities. Confirming this from the context of government schools The DEECD (2009) claimed, *In 2007, approximately 15 per cent of students in Victorian Government schools spoke a language other than English at home. Migrants and refugees continue to arrive from every corner of the globe, including, most recently, from Africa and the world's most populous countries, China and India (p. 5).*

With this evidence it is possible to understand that the community diversity of Victoria is reflected in schools where the majority of migrants live (around Melbourne and its suburbs), although 12% of teachers were from rural schools. Teachers used very non-specific terms to describe their students such as 'Australian', 'European', 'Anglo-Saxon' and several mentioned 'aboriginal' students but gave no further information. In this cohort of teachers from rural schools, there are five teachers from Government schools, four from Independent schools, two from Catholic schools and one from a Senior Secondary College. It is important to mention that Aboriginal students are not designated as multicultural since they

Figure 1: School Types.  
Where do you teach?

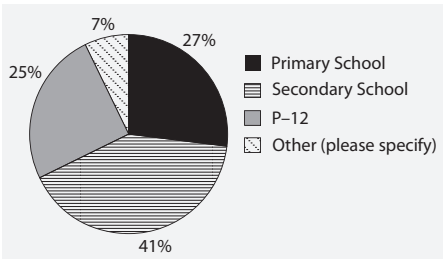
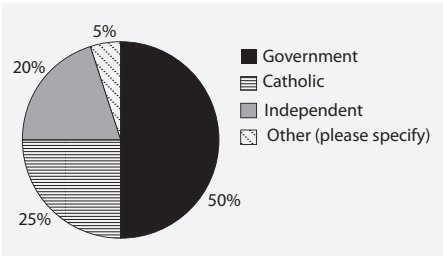


Figure 2: School Sectors.  
What is the type of school?



are the first owners of Australia. In the Australian context multicultural music is defined as the musical traditions of immigrants and Western music is considered as the mainstream music.

It was hoped that identifying the teaching qualifications of respondents would offer insight into their capabilities of teaching multicultural music and a few questions were used in this process. All responding teachers had formal teaching qualifications including qualifications in Western Music. This is a common expectation as Countryman (2009), referring to the Canadian context, pointed out, "one still requires a rigorous background in Western European music in order to become a music educator" (p. 24). To further clarify whether they have any training in teaching other types of music, the teachers were requested to provide information about any extra qualifications that they might possess. Most respondents specified that they hold qualifications such as Kodály, Orff, Suzuki methods certifications and Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) certificates that are related to Western Music. As revealed in the beginning of this paper a few years ago this issue was raised by Victorian researchers Joseph and Southcott (2007) and regarding a similar multicultural context. In South Africa, Petersen (2009) claimed that, "The key problem is that many music teachers have, and still continue to be, trained in Western- based approaches to music education" (p. 163). Joseph and Southcott (2009) teacher educators from two major Victorian tertiary institutions claimed that they do not have enough time and resources to provide comprehensive multicultural music education for pre-service teachers to become competent in different music styles and this situation is confirmed as still the same by the evidence collected from these currently practicing teachers.

## Teaching practice

As a result of such pre-service teacher education 60% of teachers indicated that they do not teach different types of music other than Western

music. O'Neil (2009) pointed out that "many music teachers avoid making music choices that they feel uncomfortable, inadequate or less efficacious teaching" (p. 72) and "often this includes music from cultures that they themselves have no direct experience or musical expertise to draw on" (p. 73). The remaining 40% of teachers who responded to above question mentioned that they employ knowledge gained from PD to teach other types of music but access to this type of PD is very limited. Highlighting the importance of appropriate PD and its rare availability Countryman (2009) pointed out that "a rigorous, sustained program of PD is one necessary and currently absent requirement" in the field of multicultural music education (p. 25). Explaining reasons for this he claimed that "PD during the school year has become increasing difficult because funds for individual professional growth initiatives have largely evaporated" (p. 24). Following up on their knowledge of different music styles the teachers were asked whether they have experience in performing music of other cultures and 60% answered that they do not. Countryman (2009) claimed that "opportunities for sustained professional conversations [where teachers can work together with professionals] do not exist" for most music teachers (p. 24).

The next set of questions was intended to investigate authentic practices of multicultural music and the attitudes of teachers towards teaching different types of music. First they were asked whether schools should be required to teach music from other cultures and 85% of respondents agreed that the schools should teach different types of music. The rest (15%) mentioned that the schools should not do this. In the explanations provided for their choices, these participants pointed out without appropriate knowledge, the teachers should not attempt to teach unfamiliar musics. This statement again raises concerns about inadequate teacher education in multicultural music. Among the majority who agreed that



schools should teach multicultural music, a few teachers were enthusiastic. It is important to present their opinions as these data indicated a broader understanding of multicultural issues. One teacher mentioned that:

*I think that all students should have a broad knowledge base of musics around the world. Students currently are enjoying playing West Indian arrangements on Orff percussion. They are beginning to see links between African Musics and Music of the Caribbean. They enjoy using syncopation; singing in harmony; working on patterns etc. There are so many, many concepts that can EASILY be introduced, explored by studying music of the world. (survey participant, 2011)*

This teacher seems to employ an interesting approach to teach Western musical concepts such as syncopation and harmony through different types of music. Another teacher explained a broader idea about the functions of music by pointing out

*The role of music in other cultures is important to understand because it tells us something about the fundamental and intrinsic nature of music in our lives. It teaches that music is not just for entertainment but encompasses all aspects of our lives. Recognizing this in other cultures brings a new perspective to the role of music in our lives in Australia. The music we listen to and experience today is influenced by many historical and cultural aspects and I think it's important for students to understand where the influence is coming from and its significance. (survey participant, 2010)*

These opinions discussed by teachers are compliant with the expectations of the governmental multicultural policies, regulations and most importantly with the expectations of curricular explored before. Confirming these concepts further, a another participant described that

*Students learn that all cultures have music in common and they can see and learn the pride other students have for their culture. Students all enjoy the various practical performances from many*

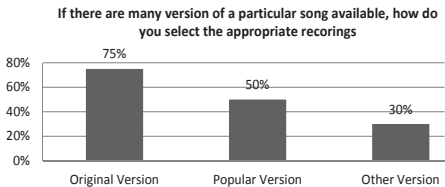
*cultures. They build a healthy respect for all cultures and make a connection to them. Without this unit of work our students wouldn't learn about the rest of the class, the skills they have (demonstrations of Indian drumming etc) and be impressed with the knowledge they are willing to share. (survey participant, 2011)*

To enquire about the authentic approaches of teaching multicultural music from a different perspective, information about available resources and methods employed by participants in teaching, were collected through a set of questions. Only 15% of the teachers mentioned that they have some resources in their schools to teach multicultural music. From this cohort just two teachers claimed that they have some multicultural musical instruments such as drums (African Djembes) and the rest mentioned that they have resources such as books and recorded music material such as CDs and DVDs. Regarding the recorded music/songs it was requested to point out which versions the teachers would prefer to use in their teaching.

Resources for teaching

The teachers had the option to choose more than one version presented above and they were asked to provide reasons for their choice (Figure 3). Almost 50% preferred the popular version and 75% chose the original versions of multicultural songs/music. These teachers highlighted that they choose original versions due to the authenticity factor and some teachers who chose the popular version mentioned that, as students may favour (or request) the popular version they

Figure 3: Resources used for teaching



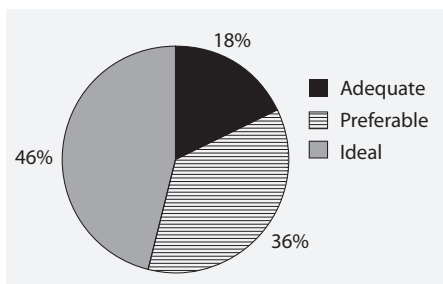


have no other options, but they suggested that they can always introduce the original version even if they will not use it in teaching. Among them the 30% teachers mentioned that they may use other versions explaining, regardless of searching for the authentic version (due to many difficulties such as lack of resources and funding) they would use any version available in their lessons. These teachers claim that the exposure to different types of music is vital for students who live in a culturally diverse society. Anderson and Campbell (2010) confirmed this approach by advising “early exposure to different sounds is essential in helping students to become receptive to all types musical expression” and musical traditions (p. 3). Some teachers precisely pointed out that a live demonstration from an expert is the best way to provide an authentic experience for students, for example one teacher indicated that

*If an appropriate artist is available then they should be seen as a resource. This is a more authentic approach to multicultural music teaching and often bringing someone in to discuss a particular culture will be exciting and more engaging for students. It's of benefit to the school community to engage with the wider community through these exercises (survey participant, 2010)*

These programs are also called artists in residence/artist in school programs and the next set of questions was aimed at exploring the use of artists as a teaching resource.

Figure 4: Opinions about Artists in School programs.



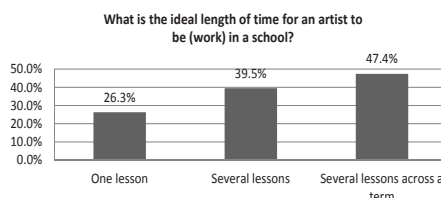
## Inviting experts

The teachers were asked whether, if they possess the apposite expertise to teach a particular type of music, it is appropriate to invite community and/or professionals artists to do so. In reply 75% teachers recommended that it is the best approach to employ an expert/artist if possible. The other 25% indicated that it is unnecessary to employ artists and this will be discussed further below. Next the teachers were asked to indicate the opinions about using artists in school music programs.

Only 72% participants (Figure 4) responded to this request and it was clear the teachers (75%) who agreed to invite artists for school music programs did so. According to the data 18.1% ( $n=13$ ) indicated that this practice is adequate, 36.1% ( $n=26$ ) showed that it is preferable and 45.8% ( $n=33$ ) pointed out that inviting experts to teach multicultural music as the ideal option. It was interesting to enquire whether these respondents have experienced working with an artist in a school and  $n=84$  answered the question. Among them 42.9% ( $n=36$ ) replied no and the rest 57.1% ( $n=48$ ) answered yes. Then it was important to investigate effective and appropriate duration for these programs. 76% of participants replied to this question:

The majority of teachers 47.4%, ( $n=36$ ) recommended having several lessons of music across a term and the next larger group preferred 39.5%, ( $n=30$ ) a several lessons but no time frame was specified (Figure 5). The remaining 26.3% ( $n=20$ ) teachers favoured to have at least one lesson to introduce (expose students to) different musical genres with different sounds. Joseph

Figure 5: Preferred duration of engagement.



and Southcott (2010) argue that even a short engagement with an unfamiliar music style is generally better than not having that opportunity at all. The survey respondents explained that it is difficult to afford such lessons due to time limitations of a busy school (crowded curriculum), insufficient funding, and a lack of other resources. One teacher further explained "Organising payment from students to cover the cost is always difficult as not all students pay" (survey participant, 2011). Another teacher pointed out that "finding money and having to set a time and additional organisation" as difficulties involved (survey participant, 2011). But encouragingly the majority of teachers recommended the employment of artists to teach multicultural music in schools for many reasons.

## Program feedback

In order to assess the benefits of inviting artists to teach in schools it was questioned whether and how do they collect feedback about these programs. Among the participants ( $n=77$ ) who responded 41.6% ( $n=32$ ) indicated that they do not and 58.4% ( $n=45$ ) indicated they do collect feedback from Students (96.8%), Teachers/ Colleagues (87.5%), School Administration (28.1%) and Parents (43.7%). Following this, the respondents were requested to provide more information in the explanatory box included in the survey. Describing the benefits of artists in school programs a teacher wrote

*Mainly performance incursion followed by workshops with the artist which becomes the launching pad for further exploration leading to performance by students. Some artists are willing to come back at a later date for that performance event and contribute to the 'authenticity' of it by bringing their instruments/voices/costumes, etc. (survey participant, 2011)*

Another respondent explained that artists are capable of providing "An exciting and satisfying learning time for students and staff and a great opportunity for parents to be able to attend the display at the end of the unit" (survey participant,

2010). A different teacher claimed that, "The program fulfilled all the requirements we needed, like active participation in singing and dance and a mini concert for parents and interested visitors at the completion of the unit" (survey participant, 2011).

It is important to explore the opinions and attitudes of the above discussed 25% teachers who resisted artists teaching multicultural music in schools. Some teachers were suspicious about the teaching abilities of these experts, for example a particular teacher argued "simply being a professional artist from a particular cultural background does not automatically make someone a good teaching artist to teach in a school" (survey participant, 2010). Another teacher claimed that "they [artists] won't necessarily know the appropriate level to pitch their teaching, not always good presenters, and of course they confuse students" (survey participant, 2010).

A very enthusiastic teacher questioned "Can such people relate to the children at the level required to enthuse and engage the students? Can they allow children a hands-on presentation if instruments are involved?" (survey participant, 2010). This teacher clearly seems to have certain doubts about artists and their abilities in teaching including discipline management of students. From a different perspective two teachers admitted that "the expertise of artists may confuse students, that their teacher is not good enough [c] ompared to the artist" (survey participant, 2010), with one teacher confessing "as artists are always better" (survey participant, 2011). Eisner (1974) claimed that "the people who can best teach a subject are those who know the subject best" (p. 19) and he argued that the "Artists are presumably able to do what art teachers are not competent to do" (p. 22). A survey participant from this study who had experienced an artist in school program confirmed this by mentioning that, "They have energy and expertise that we don't. The students were very engaged and talked about it later on. It also made teaching the unit of work easy because they [students] have had their first lesson from the experts" (survey participant, 2011).

However it was possible to find that different opinions exist amongst teachers about using artists in school music teaching. Roberts (2007) framed the conflict between musicians and teacher identity as a “never ending personal war between our musician and our teacher identities” (p. 7). These tensions between artists and teachers were carefully discussed in Nethsinghe (2010a). As revealed some teachers are reluctant to invite artists to teach in schools and this may cause difficulties for authentic educational practices discussed above by the majority of respondents. Erwin et al. (2003) pointed out that a guest artist provides an “insider’s view of a culture that no other form of world music instruction can” (p. 135). From a broader perspective, Donelan et al. (2009) found that personalised learning provided by arts participation programs increased involvement of parents and families in student learning and enhanced “the ability of arts programs to engage students in authentic learning tasks” (p. 2). Many other researchers also confirmed that these programs can be extremely beneficial for students (Belz, 2006; Gordon, 1993; Kushner, 1994; Mabh, 2009; Menzies, 2005). Furthermore some researchers recommend that teachers also can learn from artists in the form of PD and use their expertise and knowledge as resources for teaching multicultural music in schools (Griffiths & Woolf, 2009; Hall et al., 2007). O’Neill (2009) pointed out that “many music teachers struggle to find ways to identify and implement an authentic or meaningful culturally diverse music curriculum against the barriers and constraints imposed by different musical, cultural and educational structures, traditions, and values” (p. 71). In this situation, Campbell (2004) advised “to study unfamiliar music cultures by listening, reading, viewing, tapping in to the experience of local musicians, culture-bearers and scholars as resources” (p. 14). Before moving to final section it is important to present a few beneficial aspects pointed out by some respondents. For example a teacher pointed out that “After working in multicultural schools I have found that so many

cultures make up Australia and that students are very interested in learning about other cultures” (survey participant, 2011). In this learning process “music can open doors to understanding and respecting the differences which make our society so vibrant”, another teacher recommended (survey participant, 2011). Confirming this, a different teacher articulated that “It’s a wonderful way to allow children to relate to likeness and differences between nationalities and to discover that music can draw us together but teachers need proper training” (survey participant, 2011).

Finally the participants were asked whether multicultural music should be included in tertiary music/music education courses for training teachers. Only 75% answered this question and among them 10.7% ( $n=8$ ) ticked No. 67 teachers (89.3%) indicated that it is necessary to include such education in teacher training. For example a respondent mentioned “Every student should have to study, in depth (including both theoretical and practical components), at least one form of non-western music” (survey participant, 2011). Highlighting the importance of having training in multicultural music the only teacher who had such education commented

*My experience has meant I have the confidence to learn and teach music from other cultures and do it in a ‘hands on’ approach. My students and I enjoy learning songs, dances and music and completing the final performances and reviewing them. The compositions students create are generally a fusion of many cultures. Without my experience from uni [university], my students would miss out on this wonderful learning experience.*

Elaborating broader issues one teacher questioned

*If tertiary institutions do not introduce teachers to multi-cultural music, who will? However, pre-service teachers already suffer from a lack of time and depth in their courses. Often they show poor skills in key (job related) areas such as aural musicianship, conducting, classroom management, questioning, rehearsal management, approaches to education such as*

*Kodaly, Orff and Dalcroze. Better skilled teachers will be able to access resources and use them meaningfully. (survey participant, 2011)*

Another teacher also claimed "I believe the importance of Multicultural Music is broadening student's perspectives, global awareness and musical experiences, and I feel teachers should be trained in these areas so that they can teach these experiences effectively, knowledgeably and accurately in classrooms", but for teachers who did not have such education in their training "Multi-cultural resources can be acquired through PD provided by experts/artists" (survey participant, 2011). With the common lack of necessary expertise and resources, engagement of artists to provide multicultural music education for both school children and teachers has been highly recommended by many researchers. For example, Victorian researchers Southcott and Joseph (2010) found the "inclusion of artists-in-schools to be an intriguing, engaging and authentic way for school pupils and their teachers to engage with music of diverse cultures" (p. 13).

## The discussion of findings

This study was conducted to explore the current situation in the provision of multicultural music in Victorian schools and to identify any issues involved in such practice. It is necessary to discuss the limitations of the study before moving to the discussion of findings. It is important to remind the reader that the survey was conducted in the state of Victoria which is not the only culturally diverse state in Australia. There may be different conditions and issues that exist in different states (as they are self-governed) and a national survey would provide a broader understanding about the situation regarding multicultural music education in Australia which can be generalised to the whole context.

The study found that Artists/experts may be used as a resource, to provide an authentic and effective learning experience for students and also for teachers to learn from. Artists in schools programs that align with the authenticity implications

"Proximal Simulation" can be very effective in multicultural music education (Nethsinghe, 2010, p. 10). It was also found that extended programs of multicultural music education in schools are more likely to engender long term change than short (often single) learning and teaching episodes.

## Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the advice and support of Associate Professor Jane Southcott (my main PhD supervisor) in the Faculty of Education, Monash University and special thanks to all those who participated in this study

## References

- ABC News (2011). Melbourne named world's most liveable city Retrieved 7/10/2011 from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-08-30/melbourne-wins-world27s-most-liveable-city/2862628>
- Abril, C. (2009). Responding to culture in the instrumental music programme: a teacher's journey. *Music Education Research*, 11(1), 77-91.
- Anderson, W., & Campbell, P. (2010). Teaching Music from a Multicultural Perspective *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (3 ed., Vol. 2). United Kingdom: Rowman and Littlefield Education.
- Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2011). *The Draft Shaps of the Australian Curriculum*. Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) Retrieved 12/10/2011 from [http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/Draft+Shape+Of+The+Australian+Curriculum+The+Arts-FINAL.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Draft+Shape+Of+The+Australian+Curriculum+The+Arts-FINAL.pdf)
- Australian Schools Directory (2011). Retrieved 28/09/2011 from <http://www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au/melbourne-schools.php>
- Belz, M. J. (2006). Opening the doors to diverse traditions of music making: Multicultural music education at the university level. *Music Educators Journal*, 92(5), 42-45.
- Blacking, J. (1973). *How Musical is Man*. Seattle, United States of America: University of Washington Press.
- Blacking, J. (1995). *Music Culture and Experiences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bowen, C. (2011). The People of Australia, Australia's Multicultural Policy. Retrieved 20/05/2011 from [http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf\\_doc/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf_doc/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet.pdf)
- Campbell, P. S. (2004). *Teaching music globally: Experiencing music, expressing culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clements, A. C. (2006). Across Cultural Boundaries: Sharing Cultural Knowledge through Music with the Use of Culture Bearers. Retrieved 22/02/2010 from <http://www.drama.org.nz/?p=255>

- Countryman, J. (2009). Stumbling towards Clarity: Practical issues in teaching Global Musics. In E. Gould, J. Countryman, C. Morton & L. Stewart Rose (Eds.), *Exploring Social Justice* (Vol. IV). Toronto: Canadian Music Educator's Association.
- Creative Research Systems. (2010). *Survey Design*. Retrieved 11/08/2010 from <http://www.surveysystem.com/sdesign.htm>
- Creswell, W. J. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Davis, K Pearson Education.
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (2009). *Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship*. Retrieved 9 August, 2009 from <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/policy/multicultural-ed-strategy.pdf>
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (2010). Multicultural Education. Retrieved 15/10/2011 from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/default.htm>
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (2010a). About Multicultural Education. Retrieved 15/10/2011 from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/about.htm>
- Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (2005). *National Review of School Music Education: Augmenting the Diminished*. ACT: Department of Education, Science and training, Australian government. Retrieved 9/06/2009 from [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/profiles/school\\_music\\_education.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/school_music_education.htm)
- Donelan, K., Clare, I., Wesley, I., Jeanneret, N., & O'Toole, J. (2009). *Partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector*. Retrieved 15/10/2011 from [http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Arts\\_partnerships\\_Paper\\_No\\_19.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Arts_partnerships_Paper_No_19.pdf)
- Eisner, E. W. (1974). Is the artists in the school program effective? *Art Education*, 27(2), 19-23.
- Erwin, J. H., Edwards, K., Kerchner, J., & Knight, J. (2003). *Prelude to music education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Fact Sheet 6 (2011). A brief history of Australia's multicultural policies Retrieved 07/02/2012 from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/06australias-multicultural-policy.htm>
- Forrest, D. & Watson, A. (2010). Harmony through Values Education in Australia. In W. L. Sims (Ed.) *Proceedings of the XIX World Conference of the International Society for Music Education*. Beijing.
- Gordon, B. (1993). African American cultural knowledge and liberatory education; Dilemmas, problems and potentials in a postmodern American society. *Urban Education*, 27(4), 448-470.
- Gould, E. (2009). Exploring Social Justice: How Music Education Might Matter. In E. Gould, J. Countryman, C. Morton & L. Stewart Rose (Eds.), *Exploring Social Justice* (Vol. IV). Toronto: Canadian Music Educator's Association.
- Green, L. (2002). From the Western classics to the world: Secondary music teachers' changing attitudes in England, 1982 and 1998. *British Journal of Music Education*, 19(1), 5-30.
- Griffiths, M., & Woolf, F. (2009). The Nottingham Apprenticeship Model: Schools in Partnership with Artists and Creative Practitioners. *British Educational Research Journal*, 35(4), 557-574.
- Hall, C., Thomson, P., & Russell, L. (2007). Teaching like an artist: The pedagogic identities and practices of artists in schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28(5), 605-619.
- Joseph, D. & Southcott, J. (2006). The blind men and the elephant: music education in a changing world, in *AARME 2006: Proceedings of the XXVIIIth Australian Association for Research in Music Education Annual Conference : 24-26 September 2006 : Music education, standards and practices*, AARME, Melbourne, Vic., pp. 66-70.
- Joseph, D. (2007). Music Education in Australia: Valuing Cultural Diversity. *Victorian Journal of Music Education*, 27-38.
- Joseph, D., & Southcott, J. (2009). 'Opening the doors to multiculturalism': Australian pre-service music teacher education students' understandings of cultural diversity. *Music Education Research*, 11(4), pp. 457-472
- Joseph, D., & Southcott, J. (2009a). Making it real: Pre-service music teacher education students ideas about Artists in-schools. *Australian Society of Music Education XVII National Conference* (pp. 1-9). Launceston, Tasmania: ASME.
- Joseph, D., Southcott, J.E. (2010). Different sounds, different musics, different teaching: An Australian case study in multicultural teaching and learning, *Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on Cultural Diversity in Music Education*, 11-13 January 2010, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Sydney, pp. 76-81.
- Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (1999). Ways of knowing: Researching literacy. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teachers' Association.
- Kushner, S. (1994). Against better judgement: how a Centrally Prescribed Music Curriculum Works Against Teacher Development. *International Journal of Music Education*, 23, 34-45.
- Määttänen, P., & Westerlund, H. (2001). Travel agency of musical meanings? Discussion on music and context in Keith Swanwick's Interculturalism. *British Journal of Music Education*, 18(3), 261-274.
- Mabh, R. (2009). The Art of Education. *The Times Educational Supplement*, 4832(040), 40-43.
- Menzies, J. V. (2005). Artist-in-Residence: A Catalyst to Deeper Learning in Middle Phase Schooling. School of Vocational Technology and Arts Education. Queensland, Australia, Griffith University Master Philosophy: 179.

- Nethsinghe, R. (2010). The Notion of Authenticity in Multicultural Music: Approaching Proximal Simulation. *The International Journal of Music Education (IJME)* (under review).
- Nethsinghe, R. (2010a). Teacher as an Artist Vs Artist as a teacher: Tensions between artists and teachers that affect multicultural music teaching. *Music Education Research and Innovation (MERI)*, 14(1), 15-22.
- Nethsinghe, R. (2011). Unraveling the Gordian knot: Multiple notions of contextualisation in music. *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education Journal* (under review).
- O'Neill, S. (2009). Revisioning Musical Understandings through a Cultural Diversity Theory of Difference. In E. Gould, J. Countryman, C. Morton & L. Stewart Rose (Eds.), *Exploring Social Justice* (Vol. IV). Toronto: Canadian Music Educator's Association (pp 70-89).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2010). Higher Education in Regional and City Development - State of Victoria, Australia. Retrieved 6/10/2011 from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/14/46643288.pdf>
- Palmer, J. A. (2002). Multicultural Music Education: Pathways and Byways, Purpose and Serendipity. In C. A. Jones (Ed.), *World Musics and Music Education: Facing the Issues* (pp. 31-56). Reston, VA 20191, USA: The National Association for Music Education.
- Petersen, A. (2009). A Question of You Taking the Bread and Giving Me the Crust? Post-1994 Music Education in the republic of South Africa as a Human Rights Issue. In E. Gould, J. Countryman, C. Morton & L. Stewart Rose (Eds.), *Exploring Social Justice: How Music Education Might Matter* (Vol. iv, pp. 152-165). Toronto: Canadian Music Educator's Association.
- Reimer, B. (2002). The Need to Face the Issues. In C. A. Jones (Ed.), *World Musics and Music Education: Facing the Issues* (pp. 3-14). Reston, VA: The National Association for Music Education.
- Rizvi, F. (1994). The Arts, Education and the Politics of Multiculturalism. In S. Gunew. & F. Rizvi (Eds.), *Culture, Difference and the Arts* (pp. 54-68). St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Roberts, B. (2007). Making music, making selves, making it right: A counterpoint to Rhonda Bernard. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 6(2). Retrieved 10/06/2010 from [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts6\\_2.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts6_2.pdf)
- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Reason, truth and history*. Cambridge, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schippers, H. (2006). Tradition, authenticity and context: the case for dynamic approach. *British Journal of Music Education*, 23(3), 333-349.
- Southcott, J. & Joseph, D. (2007). So much to do, so little time: Multicultural practices in Australian school music. *ASME Conference Proceedings*, pp.203-206.
- Southcott, J. E. & Joseph, D. (2010). Engaging, exploring and experiencing multicultural music in Australian music teacher education: The changing landscape of multicultural music education, *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 20(1), 1-19.
- Taylor, A., & Hallam, S. (2011). From leisure to work: amateur musicians taking up instrumental or vocal teaching as a second career. *Music Education Research*, 13(3), 307-325.
- Tucker, J. (1992). Circling the Globe: Multicultural Resources. *Music Educators Journal*, 78(9), 37-40.
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2008, September 03). *Multiculturalism in VELS*. Retrieved 24/04/ 2010 from <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/crosscurricular/multiculturalism.html>
- Victorian Multicultural Commission. (2009). *Population and migration*. Retrieved 22/03/2010 from <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/web24/vmc.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/population+and+migration>
- Virtual World Watch (2009). The Spring 2009 Snapshot of Virtual World Use in UK Higher and Further Education Retrieved 06/10/2011 from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12459921/The-Spring-2009-Snapshot-of-Virtual-World-Use-in-UK-Higher-and-Further-Education>
- Volk, M. T. (1998). *Music Education and Multiculturalism: Foundations and Principles*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Volk, M. T. (2002). Multiculturalism: Dynamic Creativity for Music Education. In C. A. Jones (Ed.), *World Musics and Music Education: Facing the Issues* (pp. 15-29). Reston, VA 20191, USA: The National Association for Music Education.
- Wiersma, W. (2000). *Research Method in Education An introduction*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. USA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. (2005). *Research Methods in Education An Introduction* (8 ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

**Rohan Nethsinghe** has completed music degrees in the Ukraine (Bachelor of Music in Fine Arts & Master of Music in Fine Arts), teacher education in Australia (Honours Degree of Bachelor of Education – First Class & Graduate Diploma in Education) and is now a Doctoral Candidate in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. His research concerns multiculturalism, cultural diversity and authenticity in music and music education. Rohan has published in international and national refereed journals and reviews for a number of well-respected journals. He has presented papers both nationally and internationally and has also won several prestigious scholarships and awards including the Monash University Jeff Northfield Award for Excellence in Teacher Research, in 2012.