



“We learnt lots in a short time”: Cultural exchange across three universities through songs from different lands

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Abstract

Establishing strong connections between universities within initial teacher education (ITE) programs not only takes time, but it also presents opportunities and challenges. Tertiary music educators are called to prepare ITE students/pre-service teachers to be culturally responsive. This article forms part of our wider study “See, Listen and Share: Exploring Intercultural Music Education in a Transnational Experience Across Three Universities (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, Australia; Deakin University, Australia; and Universitat Jaume I of Castelló, Spain). For this article, we draw on student web survey data, anecdotal feedback, and our reflections. We employ Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a tool to thematically group our surveys into three broad overarching themes to inform our findings and discussions. We argue that music education is an effective vehicle for exploring culture and diversity through song. Our findings show that our ITE students built positive attitudes about using songs in their generalist primary and early childhood classrooms. They also recognized the importance of collaborative sharing using face-to-face and Skype. This project proved a worthy experience for all concerned, it formed a rich part of our professional learning. We encourage others to consider the approach as one way to promote multicultural music and cultural diversity within ITE programs and across other educational settings.

Keywords

Collaboration, cultural diversity, initial teacher education, multicultural music, music education, Skype

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Introduction

Tertiary educators are called upon to prepare initial teacher education (ITE) students/pre-service teachers to be culturally responsive (Gay, 2015; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Shieh, 2018). With a continuous increase of people moving around the globe for various reasons (immigration, work, refugees, etc.), we (the authors) wanted to explore how we could work in a collaborative way to improve our professional learning and practice. We also wanted to engage our ITE students in a cultural exchange experience that would better prepare them to include multicultural music in their future teaching (Abril, 2006; Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Bates, Swensen, & Jones, 2011; Joseph & Southcott, 2009; Trust, Krutka, & Carpenter, 2016; Watson, 2014). We use the term collaboration in this article to articulate the ways in which we communicated and planned our study “See, Listen and Share: Exploring Intercultural Music Education in a Transnational Experience” across three universities (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology [RMIT] University, Australia; Deakin University, Australia; and Universitat Jaume I of Castelló, Spain).

The first author (Dawn) and second author (Rohan) live in Australia, but work at different universities, the third author (Alberto) lives and works in Spain. Collectively, we have over four decades of tertiary experience between us. We recognize the need to teach our ITE students about diverse cultures and musics that are “within and beyond their own culture and experiential contents” (Gay, 2015, p. 124). In our experience, we found that students are afraid to explore or integrate music from diverse cultures as they feel they lack knowledge, skills, and understandings to do so. Therefore, we offered our ITE students songs from different countries as teaching and learning episodes that they may use in their future classrooms (Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Lind & McKoy, 2016). As tertiary music educators, we have the opportunity to raise an awareness of diverse musics and cultures among our students, promoting learning to live together through appreciating and understanding diversity (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017). We agree with the National Association for Music Education in America who advocate for the inclusion and exploration of “a variety of musical styles and music-making traditions from around the world . . . building a diverse music educator workforce to support music making by all” (Fulton, 2016).

In 2015, we set up a study to explore cross-institutional teaching where we had conversations (in person, through email, and Skype communication) regarding ethical protocols of our wider project. Our research is not entirely novel or unique; rather it is complementary to current ways of thinking and teaching about multicultural music education, using authentic practices (Boshkoff & Gault, 2010; Green, 2005; Ojala & Väkevä, 2015; Rowley & Dunbar-Hall, 2013). Music education forms part of the school curriculum in many countries, and Australia and Spain are no different. Within the National Curriculum in Australia, students are expected to participate in music that “fosters understanding of other times, places, cultures and contexts” (Australian Curriculum, 2018). Within the Spanish curriculum, the Arts (including music) are expected to contribute to the understanding and respect of the different peoples and cultures by assuring that students “know, value and respect the basic aspects of their own and others’ culture and history, and also the artistic and cultural heritage development” (Organic Law 2/2006, 2013, p. 17169). Music education is also included within ITE programs (courses) at higher education institutes in both countries. Building on our 2018 paper (Joseph, Nethsinghe, & Cabedo-Mas, 2018), this article explores whether collaborative teaching (face-to-face [f2f] and Skype) is an effective way to teach songs from different lands that can foster cultural diversity. Our study includes student voices at each of the sites. Due to time differences and timetable differences across the university sites, our students were not able to collaborate with each other. Rather, we provided them with a cultural exchange experience from three different countries—Spain, South Africa, and Sri Lanka—through our collaboration. We draw on questionnaire data, anecdotal feedback, and our observations as tertiary educators to inform our findings and discussion.

What does the literature say?

As music educators, we are passionate about sharing music and culture, and learning from each other about diverse cultures as a way to enhance “personal, social, cultural and civic development” for our students and ourselves (Gay, 2015, p. 124). We agree with Kenny (2017) that the music classroom can be the ideal place to start culturally responsive teaching where students learn about other cultures. By discussing and performing music that is culturally and socially relevant, students do learn about developing cross-cultural competence (Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Cabedo-Mas, Nethsinghe, & Forrest, 2017; Joseph & Trinick, 2018; Kenny, 2017; Lee, 2017). Through the teaching of songs, any cultural understandings that learners have may improve, as Ilari, Chen-Hafteck, and Crawford (2013) point out: “singing songs from different cultures may play important roles in the construction of our identities and in how we perceive and understand others, and ultimately ourselves” (p. 202). When teaching multicultural music and culture, it is essential to always check on protocols (Boshkoff & Gault, 2010; Campbell, 2004; Joseph & Southcott, 2009, 2013; Lum & Chua, 2016; Nethsinghe, 2013, 2015). It is equally important to know “what to teach, why to teach, how to teach and to whom to teach with respect to ethnic, racial, cultural and social diversity” (Gay, 2015, p. 125). Hence, music educators are called to

make every effort to acquire knowledge about the culture, teach music from the cultural perspectives; when teaching songs, sing in the vernacular of the culture with appropriate vocalization; teach the meaning of the music; and present the culture in a positive non-stereotypical way. (Moore, 2017, p. xxxiv)

Since classrooms have become increasingly multicultural and multilingual, research has shown the myriad connections language has with music and culture (Albaladejo, Coyle, & de Larios, 2018; Boshkoff & Gault, 2010; Campbell, 2016; Chen-Hafteck, 2016; Nieto, 2018; Peretz, Radeau, & Arguin, 2004).

In keeping with 21st-century technological advancement, teaching language through the use of information communication technologies (ICT) is a growing area (Alemi, 2016; Chhabra, 2012). Furthermore, the use of Skype aligns with building 21st-century skills in that it allows for communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. In particular, it allows for “teachers and students to communicate across cultures” (Budhai & Taddie, 2015, p. 26). In addition, using Skype allows for an interaction “with others in a different location or from a different culture” (Budhai & Taddie, 2015, p. 25). Experiencing language learning in real time through Skype, for example, is one effective way for learners to actively engage with learning to speak a language (Shirai, 2007). It is beyond the scope of the article to discuss language learning, and we acknowledge that using technologies at higher education institutions is not a new phenomenon. Combining f2f interactions using older or emerging technologies is fast becoming a trend at higher education institutes (Bliuc, Goodyear, & Ellis, 2007). Access to and the use of a variety of ICT is used across all learning areas in higher education institutions (Courts & Tucker, 2012; Joseph et al., 2018). Staff and students alike, through the use of ICT, share knowledge, skills, and understandings despite technical issues and real-time interaction (Fong, Wong, Lo, & Wong, 2016; Koutsoupidou, 2014; Reese, 2015).

As music educators our interest was that our ICT-enhanced collaboration could open up opportunities to expose our students to non-Western music and culture (Kelly-McHale, 2016). This was in line with the research questions that drove our study:

1. What are successful ways in which tertiary music educators can promote multicultural music in their practice?
2. Can music education serve as an effective vehicle to explore cultural diversity and songs from different lands in ITE programs?

Table 1. Research sites, programs, and core units.

Research sites	Program	Core unit	Year of Study	Duration and day
Site 1: Deakin University	Bachelor of Primary Education	<i>Primary Arts Education: Focused Study</i>	Fourth	3 hr Thursday
Site 2: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University	Bachelor of Education (Primary and Early Childhood Education)	<i>Introduction to Arts Education</i>	First	3 hr Monday
Site 3: University Jaume I of Castellon	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	<i>Foundations and Didactics of the Musical Expression</i>	Third	2 hr Wednesday

Table 2. Research sites, presenters, and songs.

Presenter	Deakin University (Site 1)	RMIT University (Site 2)	University Jaume I of Castellon (Site 3)
Dawn	<i>Ra Siela Miele</i> (April 2017 and April 2018)	<i>Ra Siela Miele</i> (August 2018)	<i>Ra Siela Miele</i> (October 2017)
Rohan	<i>Dhoi Amma</i> (April 2018)	<i>Dhoi Amma</i> (July 2016, July 2017, and August 2018)	<i>Dhoi Amma</i> (November 2016)
Alberto	<i>Piñón, Piñón</i> (April 2017)	<i>Baila la jota</i> (September 2016)	<i>Baila la jota</i> (November 2017)

RMIT: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Research sites

We each presented workshops at our three research sites. Table 1 outlines the sites, programs, core units, year of study, and duration and day of workshop. From the table, it can be seen that it was not possible to synchronize our teaching as we each taught on different days and at different times of the day. Hence, it was not possible to coordinate the students from the three different sites to simultaneously engage in the activity. In addition, the 10hr time difference between Spain and Melbourne meant that only the presenters were able to commit to the teaching across the sites. We recognize the limitation that students were not able to engage with each other. This is something we will explore at a future phase of the project.

About the workshops

We each taught a song from our native lands to our students and also across the research sites f2f and through Skype (see Table 2). This was a new initiative for our students. They had not been taught two different songs by two music educators simultaneously in their program of study. In this way, we provided a range of teaching ideas, pedagogies, and teaching styles to our students in real time (Jenkins & Crawford, 2016). Dawn is originally from South Africa, Rohan is formerly from Sri Lanka, and Alberto is from Spain. We used Skype as a common platform for convenience as it was supported by our universities' information, technology, and communication support staff. We

each had approximately 1 hr to teach our respective songs. Across the three sites, the workshops started with a PowerPoint presentation which provided background information of the country (location, population, language, culture, people, etc.). Given time constraints, we spent approximately 15 min introducing students to some of the social, cultural, historical, and religious aspects of the country of origin of the song. We each discussed the need for and importance of including multicultural music in our classrooms (Abril, 2013; Schippers & Campbell, 2012; Lind & McCoy, 2016; Volk, 1998; Westerlund, 1999; Wong, Pan, & Shah, 2016). We each brought to the experience our personal style of teaching in relation to how we taught the song.

Living in one location made it easy for Dawn and Rohan to teach at each other's work sites (f2f) whereas Alberto had to use Skype from Spain and vice versa for Dawn and Rohan when teaching students in Spain. Dawn and Rohan remain connected to their country of birth despite living and working in Australia as naturalized citizens. Subsequently, Dawn taught a work song *Ra Siela Miele* sung in the Pedi language from South Africa and Rohan taught *Dhoi Amma*, a traditional lullaby in the Sinhalese language from Sri Lanka. Alberto lives and works in Spain, hence he taught traditional songs: *Baila la jota*, a song adapted from a local dance to Rohan's students and *Piñón, piñón*, a traditional children's song to Dawn's students. In our teaching of the songs, we spoke about some of the music aspects such as phrasing, breathing, and accompanying and included some visual imagery and YouTube clips. Furthermore, we taught students about the value of learning songs from other lands by explaining the reasons behind each song and the meaning it had for local people. In this way, we hoped to expand our students' understanding and experience of learning music (songs) from other cultures. While Australia and Spain are supposedly "multicultural societies," in our tertiary educators' experience, we found that our ITE students have not been exposed to many multicultural classrooms during their placements. We also did not take it for granted that they engaged socially with others from different language, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. Rather, we wished to prepare our students for diverse cohorts of children that they may encounter in their future classrooms. Table 2 clearly outlines the presenters, name of song, institute, month, and year the workshops took place.

Songs

Dawn taught *Ra Sila Mielie* through rote and imitation. The words of the song were translated before the song was taught. As none of the students across the three sites spoke an African language, Dawn pronounced the words slowly and clearly to help students learn how to say them before they learnt the pitch and rhythm. This was done unaccompanied which resonates with an authentic way to teach and perform the song. Phrase by phrase, students echo-learnt the song. The song included a Section A (two lines) and a Section B (two lines). Once the melody was learnt, the students were taught how to incorporate some movement. They were encouraged to create their own movement to demonstrate grinding corn. At Sites 1 and 2, indigenous instruments (djembes, maracas, cow bells) were also incorporated into the teaching activity as a way to engage and include everyone as some students may have found the language difficult. For students at Site 3, body percussion and desktops were used as drums when the lesson was taught using Skype.

Rohan taught *Dhoi Amma*, a Sri Lankan traditional melody embedded in one of his own song compositions through rote and imitation. This song only has two lines. Rohan initially taught the words of the song a few times which the students repeated before he added the melody. Rohan sang the first line and students repeated the tune unaccompanied. The same process was used to teach the second line which then included a slight sway of the body as the movement. In addition, some instruments were added to provide an authentic feel to the song. In Sri Lanka, this song is generally accompanied by a bamboo flute and Geta Beraya (a two-sided drum). All students were

encouraged to sing as well as play the accompaniments. The accompaniments were taught through echo and students easily copied the patterns. Instruments at all three sites included shakers and ukuleles, guitars, and drums. Ukuleles were used because they were readily available for students at all three sites. Students learnt how to play three basic chords to accompany the *Dhoi Amma* song. Traditional rhythmic patterns were played on class drums that were available (djembes, congas, bongos) which Rohan taught using mnemonics such as *dom tarikita* (Ta Tika Tika/crotchet and four semiquavers). This showed students how they could use available resources such as the ukulele or drums to accompany a song from a different culture under the guidance of an expert culture bearer. It also gave them the experience to learn transferable musical skills.

Alberto taught two Spanish songs: *Piñón, Piñón* at Site 1 and *Baila la jota* at Site 2 and Site 3. He employed imitation to first teach the lyrics line by line. He, like Dawn and Rohan, slowly pronounced the words before he added in the melody. The melody was taught line by line as he played on the ukulele. This aligns with the way Spanish songs are sung and generally accompanied by the guitar. Both the *jota* and the traditional Spanish children's song have repeated rhythms making it easy for students to understand the rhythmic patterns plus ways to add percussion to them. Having heard and understood the melody and the form of the song, students created their rhythms (*Baila la jota* is a simple three-beat song and *Piñón, piñón* is a two-beat song), using some suggested patterns. Others improvised in relation to the rhythms that fitted in with the song and style. Alberto then contextualized the words with rhythm and melody. Students were taught to play on ukuleles as they were readily available at the sites. Guitars and other strum-like string instruments similar to ukuleles are commonly used to accompany the songs. The origin of the ukulele comes from *cavaquinho*, a Portuguese five-string instrument widely used in all the Iberian Peninsula with different names and shapes. *Guitarró* is the name used in the East part of the Peninsula and it is used to play traditional dances such as "jota" and other traditional songs. Spanish guitars and "guitarró" are part of Spanish traditions. When teaching the songs at Site 3, students used traditional castanets (used in *jota* dance) and learnt some basic dance steps.

Method

In 2016, once ethical protocols were granted across our institutions to undertake the wider project; we began our qualitative research exploring differences and similarities between our collective case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Through email, we invited our generalist Bachelor of Education (primary) and Bachelor of Early Childhood students undertaking core music education units/subjects (see Table 1) to participate in our project at our teaching sites (Site 1=Deakin University, Site 2=RMIT University, Site 3=University Jaume I of Castello). The invitation letter included the Plain Language Statement which outlined the research project and a URL link to complete the anonymous online survey, described in the section below.

Research tool and data collection

We used purposive sampling as an easy and quick way to collect information from our students who served as a representation of generalist ITE students at our sites (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012; Wisker, 2008). The students were asked to complete an online survey which took about 10 to 15 min to complete. Closed questions included name of university, name of degree, year level, age, and nationality. Open-ended questions included, Did you find the multicultural learning experience informative? Did you find it challenging to perform music from other cultures? Give reasons. What aspect of the lesson did you find the most difficult? Would you consider teaching the songs learnt in today's workshop to children in your future classroom as a non-music specialist? Give reasons.

Table 3. Research sites, presenters, and student numbers.

Presenter	Workshop delivered to students and year	Number of students at workshop	Number of respondents
Rohan and Alberto	Jaume I of Castellon (2016)	58	22
Alberto and Rohan	RMIT (2016)	39	15
Alberto and Dawn	Deakin (2017)	62	31
Dawn and Alberto	Jaume I of Castellon (2017)	65	55
Rohan and Dawn	Deakin (2018)	24	0
Dawn and Rohan	RMIT (2018)	69	16

RMIT: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Do you think collaborative work has advantages in teaching music? Give reasons. Do you think that learning music from other cultures may enhance intercultural understanding? Give reasons.

In addition, our participant observations form part of our narrative as we each co-taught in the workshop f2f and through Skype (Gay et al., 2012). After each teaching episode across the three sites, we discussed our reflections through email, Skype, and by telephone (Creswell, 2014). Our teacher insights inform our findings and discussion.

Participants

Across the three sites between 2016 and 2018, 139 students (44%) completed the online survey from 317 (see Table 3). Participation was voluntary in the survey, which may account for the low rate of response. No one responded to the invitation at Site 1 in 2018 despite several email reminders.

Data analysis

The data were collated using web survey software Google Forms/Questionnaires which was then exported to Excel (Rowley, 2014). We used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an organizing framework and tool to analyze our qualitative data. We acknowledge that while IPA is generally used to analyze and code interview data, Smith and Osborne (2003) argue that the structured interview is like a questionnaire in that

the two overlap to the extent that often the interview is simply the investigator going through a questionnaire in the presence of a respondent the interviewer filling in the answers on the questionnaire sheet based on what the respondent says. (p. 58)

We acknowledge that questionnaires do not lend themselves to interactions between the interviewer and interviewee. Nevertheless, IPA has been used in analyzing questionnaire data in other areas, for example, health sciences (Turner & Coyle, 2000), public affairs (Harris & Fleisher, 2005), and teacher education (Joseph & Rouse, 2017) to name a few. Turner and Coyle in their 2000 study found that questionnaires provided them with an elaborated account of the phenomena. Similarly, in our study, we used IPA as a useful way to explore the perceptions and attitudes of our students regarding the workshops (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2015; Smith, 2017; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2013).

Our analysis was phenomenologically shaped in that we were concerned with how our students made sense of their lived experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The open-ended questions gave our students the opportunity to express their understandings and perceptions of the teaching and learning experience as they may have done in an interview situation. We employed IPA as a

useful tool to analyze and code our student questionnaire data as it allowed for us to provide a rich description to develop pathic understanding associated with phenomenology (Van Manen, 2016). Having read and re-read the survey data individually, we each worked through all the open-ended questions looking for key words that recurred across sites to answer a specific question (Rowley, 2014). We looked for meanings that appeared hidden in order to better understand our students' experience as we attempted to interpret in order to understand what the data meant (Smith, 2017). As with IPA coding, we initially commented on our observations, regarding the teaching and learning experience. Using Skype, telephone, and email, we conversed about the initial descriptions before we individually bracketed key words and checked for commonalities in the questionnaire data. We did not use a pre-set list of themes; rather we coded, categorized, and organized the data individually. Furthermore, through Skype and telephone communication, we considered thematic differences and through discussion we developed our analysis into common overarching themes. For this article, we collectively agreed to discuss three themes (Collaborative sharing, Music teaching and learning as a cultural practice, and Challenges). We use direct quotations from students at the three sites (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Kirn, Godwin, Cass, Ross, & Huff, 2017; Tzanidaki & Reynolds, 2011).

Findings

Responses to the questionnaire were in English except for Site 3 where many students chose to respond in Spanish. Trustworthy translations from Spanish into English were produced by Alberto—the third author (Behr, 2015). From the questionnaire data, 87% of the participants were female and 13% male. Student ages across the institutions ranged between 18 and 25 with less than 5% between 25 and 35. At Deakin University, 98% of participants identified as Australian; at RMIT, 93% identified as Australian; and at Universitat Jaume I of Castellon, 97% identified as Spanish Nationals. Across three sites, none of the students had visited Sri Lanka, less than 2% had visited some countries in Africa but not South Africa, and about 4% of Australian students said they had visited Spain. From anecdotal feedback, students said songs from other lands such as Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Spain were not taught when they were in primary school. From our data, students said that they had limited exposure to music from other countries. Some said,

- This is a first contact with other cultures, this teaches us to respect and value other cultures different from ours. (Site 3)
- I have had little experience with multicultural education both during my own school experiences and on placements. (Site 1)
- In primary school we had a day where you dressed up in clothes that represent your cultural background which was fun for students and encourages diversity. (Site 2)
- The truth is that this experience is my first one, but I'd like to have more. (Site 3)

Below, we offer succinct comments that sum up all-embracing remarks from students at the three sites in relation to the themes (Collaborative sharing, Music teaching and learning as a cultural practice, and Challenges).

Collaborative sharing

While collaborative sharing forms a rich part of our professional learning and growth as tertiary educators, our students felt the collaborative efforts in setting up the workshops proved beneficial for them. It enhanced their learning, and they identified,

- This experience shows us a different way of teaching a musical culture, a way to come into contact with someone native to teach us without being physically in the same room. (Site 3)
- The experience helped to confirm how as a teacher we can use music to teach multiculturalism. (Site 2)
- Collaborative work enables many individuals to collate ideas and figure out which teaching method is most effective. (Site 1)
- Because, in this way, we can learn from other cultures, in a pleasant and participative way. (Site 3)
- It was helpful in showing us teaching styles and ways in which different cultures produce and play music. (Site 2)
- It is a way to enrich learning, learning from teachers of another country with different views is motivating, we have learned different ways to teach children to sing. (Site 3)
- Music covers such a wide range of styles, genres and cultures; therefore it would be necessary to collaborate with others to teach a well-rounded course of music. (Site 2)
- Collaboration sparks engagement and communication between students and with the teacher(s). Through collaborative practices, the student is able to feel a connection, like he or she is a part of something. The communication created through collaboration in the classroom gets ideas moving around the room. Students share interesting information and contribute a little bit of their cultural identity with others. (Site 1)

From the cultural exchange of songs, students said they had an opportunity to think about different pedagogies and expressed that “collaboration is necessary for education” (Site 3).

As future teachers, our students saw the benefits of collaborating with others (teachers, professional organizations, or local community members and culture bearers). One student identified, “you get inspired from other people’s ideas.” Another felt having input from others “can often create better outcomes” (Site 2). Students saw the immense benefits of undertaking collaborative work saying it is worth it because “it shows us different methodologies to teach music, as well as it expands our music repertoire” (Site 3). Another student said, “you gain more ideas from working as a team” (Site 1). One student from Site 2 summed it up by saying, “it is a breath of fresh air, I think it was amazing to have an authentic person to teach Spanish music connecting [online] from Spain.” Through team teaching, we modeled what could be done in a primary classroom. Students saw the benefits of exposing children to other musics and culture as an important aspect of their overall learning in the primary school. This was encapsulated up by one student saying, “I would teach the songs in a primary class because it celebrates a diverse background that most students [children] wouldn’t have experienced before” (Site 1).

Music teaching and learning as a cultural practice

Teaching three songs across the three universities allowed our students to learn about new places, the meanings of the songs in relation to their cultural context, and ways in which to teach the songs. Dawn and Rohan taught songs from their native lands, students across the three sites had never been to Sri Lanka or South Africa and therefore the cross-institutional experience with music education teaching staff gave the opportunity to look, listen, and learn with different presenters from three different lands. Students remarked the experience gave them ideas on how to teach. They commented,

- It was helpful in showing us teaching styles and ways in which different cultures produce and play music. (Site 2)
- I would spend a lot more time on pronunciation and melody first to make it easier for the children. (Site 3)

- When children learn by ear, they are practicing their oral skills. Having a good ear is a great skill to have for their future musical experiences and in learning the songs we need to take it apart, move in sections . . . Dawn did not give us the lyrics as she did not want us to focus on the words, instead on the actual song, meaning and movements were emphasized. I like this technique. (Site 1)
- This can help a teacher in the future as the progression of the song production was gradual, while offering different pedagogical approaches towards teaching music, performance and dance. (Site 2)
- I would teach it in the same way that has taught it me, verse by verse and in each of them adding a gesture of rhythm and they would repeat it. If there is also a child of African culture, it would be nice to help me to sing the song for his peers. (Site 3)
- Dawn gave some insightful teaching methods to do this in an authentic and valuable way that I will remember when I have my own classroom. E.g. giving the full background to a song so to educate students properly about the context and using a “culture bearer” who can pass their knowledge directly which will enhance the multicultural experience. (Site 2)

The teaching and learning experience gave them a practical hands-on involvement of what to do when trying to teach non-Western songs. It gave them an understanding of why it is important to include multicultural songs in the curriculum. Students remarked how enriching teaching songs from different lands can be. They strongly felt the need to include non-Western music and songs from different lands because

- In a multicultural country it helps children to accept others. (Site 2)
- We are surrounded by diversity, whether linguistic, cultural, physical, so it is important to teach children to value and respect others from an early age. (Site 3)
- Australia is a multi-cultural country and everybody is different and comes from a different background. We need to help children recognize, appreciate and understand the different cultures and beliefs around the world and within our multi-cultural classrooms. (Site 1)
- It helps to understand the life and culture of other countries. In addition, this type of activity encouraged respect among peers and their different cultures. (Site 3)
- Coming from a school where most of the students were white-Caucasian students, I find it important to celebrate a range of different cultures which will enable students to have a deeper understanding of the range of people and societies within our world. (Site 2)
- There are lots of different cultures in a classroom and it is important to learn and respect other cultures apart from your own. (Site 3)
- There are many different cultures in the classroom and getting everyone to experience and understand that each other’s culture would develop a more supportive and safe learning environment with the students. (Site 1)
- If something as common as music is seen as diverse, how much more will students be able to picture even greater diversity around the world and within their own classroom. (Site 2)
- We need to include diversity so that students work without prejudice and see that everyone is equal regardless of culture. (Site 3)

Challenges

While the students saw benefits of including songs from different lands they also recognized the challenges of singing in a different language. On the whole, they found,

- Pronunciation of the lyrics was difficult. (Site 3)
- Learning how to pronounce the words quickly was challenging and I still didn't get it. (Site 1)
- Getting the Spanish words right was hard, but it was made easier and more enjoyable that we were in a fun and comfortable environment with patient teachers. (Site 2)
- Trying to understand her [Dawn] was hard, since you heard it distorted over the Skype and did not understand some things in English. (Site 3)
- Remembering the lyrics from different languages was challenging, we needed more time to practice them before singing the song as a whole. (Site 1)

Converse to the language challenges, students identified following the rhythm and singing together as easiest. Playing percussion instruments, learning harmonies with ukuleles, and singing melodies were enjoyable, yet met with challenges for students as well as for presenters.

In planning and presenting the learning episodes, each presenter had limited time to teach about the cultural and musical aspects (singing the song, playing instruments, and adding movement). We were challenged to either speed up or slow down the learning, dependent on the cohort and site. At Site 3, for example, Alberto had to translate several times to his students into Spanish as English was not their first language. This was a major challenge when presenting to Site 3 students. As presenters, we were challenged to present a lot of information in a short space of time. Nevertheless a student from Site 3 summed it up by saying, "it was motivating to see how, in so short a time, the whole class had learnt and performed one song." Overall the experience to connect with the presenter and their peers gave students the confidence to realize how it can be done in their future classrooms.

For us as presenters using Skype was a convenient tool at all three sites, as this platform was accessible and supported by our institutions. Nevertheless it proved trying for all concerned. The issues of poor connectivity and time lags across the sites can be aptly summed up as follows by students:

- It was frustrating and time wasting. (Site 3)
- It interrupted the flow of the lesson. (Site 1)
- Due to the time lapse we were not able to sing along with the culture bearer in exactly the same time. (Site 2)

These sentiments were equally shared by the three presenters who had to think quickly on their feet to restructure aspects of the lesson they had originally planned in order to accommodate the Skype poor connectivity or the students struggling to sing, move, and play on the instruments at the same time. Not hearing back what students sang at the same time was frustrating for all. Having the other presenter in the room when using Skype greatly assisted as he or she co-taught the music aspects of the song when Skype "played up" (poor sound or distorted image). Overall it did not detract too much in relation to what we wanted to achieve. Our PowerPoints were sent ahead of time to the site presenter which made it accessible and clearly visible for students to see and follow when we encountered Skype issues. Despite the challenge of using a platform like Skype, the overall experience is aptly summed up by a student saying,

- . . . allowed us to access culturally diverse aspects of music, giving us a greater context for when we use music like this in our classroom. It gave us firsthand experience from someone from within the culture, something we wouldn't have been able to achieve without this opportunity. (Site 3)

Discussion

Our discussion focuses on the three interrelated themes. As with any collaboration, communication in the planning stages was critical. While working enthusiastically and professionally across the three sites proved a worthy initiative for all concerned, it did take time to set up (Colley, Eidsaa, Kenny, & Leung, 2012; Holdhus & Espeland, 2013; Kezar, 2005). As authors, the study supported our professional learning (Bates et al., 2011; Trust et al., 2016; Watson, 2014). It also helped us prepare our ITE students to be culturally responsive (Abril, 2006; Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Joseph & Southcott, 2009). We introduced our students to the wide world of diverse songs and cultures as a way for them to develop cross-cultural competence and understanding (Cabedo-Mas et al., 2017; Ilari et al., 2013; Kenny, 2017).

The collaborative experiment also served as an authentic way for our students to engage with the teaching and learning material (Abril, 2006; Boshkoff & Gault, 2010; Campbell, 2004; Nethsinghe, 2015). We used a blended delivery of f2f and Skype (Budhai & Taddei, 2015; Jenkins & Crawford, 2016). In addition, we provided an authentic experience as the songs taught were from the countries of our birthplace—Spain, Sri Lanka, and South Africa (Boshkoff & Gault, 2010; Green, 2005). Students reported that they developed new knowledge and understanding when working with us as authentic culture bearers (Joseph, 2014; Nethsinghe, 2012; Ojala & Väkevä, 2015).

In the main, the students benefited from the experience as they recognized the importance of social learning and saw the need to belong to a community of practice (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, & Wenger-Trayner, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991). From our collaboration, we envisage that our students will try to teach with an awareness of cultural understandings as generalist teachers in early years and in primary education settings. As an approach to culturally responsive teaching, the experience also demonstrates an understanding of who students are and who we are as tertiary music educators (Walter, 2017).

The teaching and learning experience was unusual for our students and for us in that it was the first-time students had two academics teaching simultaneously from different institutions. The aspect of cultural practice as a teaching opportunity allowed all concerned to learn about different countries, songs, and culture (Abril, 2013; Ilari et al., 2013; Joseph, 2016; Ojala & Väkevä, 2015). The experiment introduced our students to issues concerning multiculturalism and multicultural music (Lind & McKoy, 2016; Moore, 2017; Schippers & Campbell, 2012; Volk, 1998; Westerlund, 1999). Across the three sites, teaching about cultural context was core to our teaching strategy.

In our findings and through our observation, we found the experiment offered our students the chance to sing, play, and listen to the music of other cultures; it gave us and our students the chance to understand and transcend personal experience by having a more global perspective. The teaching and learning across the sites was designed to enable our students to prepare, perform, and discuss about music that is culturally and socially relevant as we live in increasingly multicultural societies (Kelly-McHale, 2016).

We each modeled what to teach and how to teach which helped our students make links to the music education curriculum and to being inclusive of other cultures in our teaching practice, a move away from only focusing on Western music (Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Australian Curriculum, 2018; Gay, 2015; Organic Law 2/2006). The notion of learning by doing was central to our teaching (Klopper, 2010; Nethsinghe, 2013). Since our students were non-music specialists, we chose songs that we thought were easy to follow and repetitive. This nevertheless proved difficult for many in that they had to quickly memorize the song (words and tune) and also perform the accompaniments simultaneously (body percussion, movement, playing on instruments).

As presenters across the research sites, it was not possible to set up the experiment as a synchronous activity as we each taught on different days and at different times of the year. Albeit

challenging for three of us to teach at the same time, there were always two of us teaching at one site. As we each had about an hour to teach, we felt challenged to make an impact with the students in order to gain their attention as we had no prior relationship with them. This tested our ability to keep the students interested and focused. When teaching f2f or when using Skype, we were challenged to keep to time, and had to reduce some of our PowerPoint presentation information. We also had to pace our teaching as students found singing in a different language difficult (Joseph & Trinick, 2018; Shirai, 2007). We found our students enjoyed learning about the cultural aspects of the song; it seemed less daunting than performing the song.

While we used Skype as a convenient platform, some of our students mentioned they felt a lack of student–teacher connection (intimacy) which is easier to forge when teaching f2f (Ghazal, Samsudin, & Aldowah, 2015). In addition, we encountered a slight delay with streaming when using Skype. At Site 3, the Spanish students found it difficult to listen in English and found it challenging understanding some of the cultural explanations. The low audio/video quality and poor speed connections were frustrating for both student and presenter at times (Fong et al., 2016; Koutsoupidou, 2014; Reese, 2015). Despite these minor issues, we continued to use Skype as a user-friendly platform at the time and learnt “about the challenges of teaching cultural awareness” using Skype (Brueck, 2017, p. 45).

Conclusion

In this article, we explored what are successful ways in which tertiary music educators can promote multicultural music in their practice and if music education can serve as an effective vehicle to explore cultural diversity and songs from different lands in ITE programs. We found that teaching songs from different lands in a collaborative teaching and learning environment can enhance students’ knowledge and understanding about singing songs from different countries. We found that at each of the three sites our students learnt more than just three different songs: they learnt about intercultural understanding—learning which they could replicate. Our study proved a positive initiative in promoting multicultural music while meeting with some technical glitches. While establishing strong connections between universities may be met with challenges, the social learning experience for us and our students outweighed the time and effort and ethical considerations. We recommend the experiment as worthy to be replicated by other music educators in ITE programs. Since it is not possible and practical for teaching staff and students to travel to different cultural sites, we recommend exploring new technologies to collaborate with other music educators and community musicians as one way forward to promote multicultural music and cultural diversity within ITE programs. In this way, traditional songs and diverse cultures can be promoted as a way to help our students’ value and appreciate the rich and diverse sonic and cultural world in which we live.

As tertiary music educators preparing our ITE students for 21st-century multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic classrooms, we recommend a collaborative sharing of repertoire and pedagogies as a way to enhance our music skills, knowledge, and understandings and that of our students. Further research over a longer period of time using other platforms is necessary in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of our students’ perceptions, one that explores more fully cross-cultural and intercultural competence. In addition, further research will need to be undertaken that allows for students to trial the songs learnt when on placement. The title, “we learnt lots in a short time” is a comment from a student succinctly describing both our experience and those of our students. Like us, we hope that our students will undertake future collaborative initiatives and professional learning that may enhance and enrich our teaching and learning practices.

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