

Generalist and specialist music teachers education essay



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Introduction

Primary education is playing a key role for the pupils' upgrade educational level and it is a vital ingredient for them, in order to acquire the appropriate supplies for their future development as integrated personalities. Hence, all subject areas of the national primary curriculum should be undertaken by the formal educators who have the absolute responsibility to teach in primary schools. Nevertheless, a question that often arises is whether an exclusive lesson, such as music, should be taught by the classroom teacher. The current essay will be concerned with the study of the primary music curriculum, focusing on the controversial issue of who should deliver and carry out most effectively the music curriculum: Music specialists or classroom teachers?

The overall discussion will be based on the study of relevant bibliography, articles and Ofsted reports. Moreover, I will refer to the personal experience I have conceived through my training at primary schools, during my undergraduate studies. This essay will attempt to present the different opinions that appear regarding the particular issue, analysing the advantages as well as the drawbacks of each. Main aim of this essay is to draw some general conclusions about the issue.

The debate about generalist and specialist music teachers

The primary educational model specifies that both, generalists and specialists should have the appropriate qualifications, in order to teach music in primary education. The generalist, non-musician teacher, is a graduated person with a bachelor degree in primary education and the

opportunity to be specialised in music or not. The generalist is the most common teacher model and according to this, it is expected that the teacher will teach all curriculum subjects, including music. This teaching model refers to educators that might have or not, formal music training. However, the specialist has a degree in music and additionally a PGCE diploma. The particular teacher is a musician whose only responsibility and concentration is the preparation of the overall planning of the music lesson.

The debate about the specialist or generalist music educators is long-standing. For many years now, there has been a controversy wherever a generalist teacher is competent to teach music in primary education and wherever a specialist have been supplied sufficiently to response to his educational role. A lot of articles and books have been written for this issue and the argument will be analysed below.

The Generalist Model

takes the view that Therefore, the question of who teaches music has a direct bearing on primary school's culture. If, for example, the lessons of a primary classroom taught by not only one teacher, in order to prepare the children for secondary education, music cannot constitute an exception. While, if the primary class educators teach all curriculum subjects, not special arrangements should be made for music, because this might reduce children's confidence to get involved with Nowadays, primary teachers are responsible to teach all the curriculum subjects. Particularly, the National Curriculum Music Working Group specified in 1991 that Under these circumstances, an important argument in favour of the generalist educators is that by taking agreeably the responsibility to teach music, they influence <https://assignbuster.com/generalist-and-specialist-music-teachers-education-essay/>

positively children's attitudes to music lesson. A teaching model which concerns music as a special subject and needs to be taught by a special educator with extremely musical knowledge and skills, leads the child to the assumption that music is not accessible for all. However, if every primary school teacher takes part in music lessons, the pupils realise that music is for everyone (

An additional convincing reason for involving classroom teachers in the school music programme according to' Glover & Ward say that the whole philosophy of the primary curriculum is that the classroom teacher is responsible for the completed education of the children. They also stressed the significance of the classroom teacher and his knowledge of the individual child's developing skills, making him capable to meet the abilities and needs of each pupil. Moreover, only the class teacher could organise more effectively the time, the space and the resources for the disciplines, considering the music, providing a holistic approach of a child's development. An effective classroom teacher can doubtless bring music into the school day when he believes that ' Another reason of why music lesson should be overseen by a class teacher who teaches every subject of the curriculum is that he will exploit the capacity of music to integrate different subject areas. Through one of the basic objectives of the music curriculum, students are expected to integrate music with other subjects. And it is fact that ' this statement into consideration, it can be reasonably supported that it is necessary for the teacher who considers delivering the music curriculum most effectively to have the supervision of the whole curriculum. As a result, he will have the opportunity to overview the progress of each child in

different subjects for a whole year. It takes its place as part of the whole primary curriculum and the children have the opportunity to make daily links between aspects in music and other curriculum areas. Without classroom teacher contribution, the music programme will be isolated from the rest of the school curriculum.

As it is mentioned above, classroom teachers are the generalists who, in contrast with the specialist teachers, are lacking undergraduate music training. Actually, the majority of them had no substantial musical background before their music education at undergraduate degree level. Therefore, someone should suppose that their musical efficiency is limited and might not be able to develop their abilities at a high level. Asking the students teachers who are studying at the University of Cyprus, some of them believe strongly that it is significant to have musical background from school years. Otherwise, according to them, it is not easy to gain enough subject knowledge and musical skills to be able to teach music effectively from a University's program. Regardless, of their inadequate training in music, the generalist teachers are required to teach it. This circumstance stimulates feelings of low confidence.

When classroom teachers with little formal training have the responsibility to teach music lesson, their problem is often low confidence. ' Many student teachers describe themselves as ' unmusical' and have a very poor self-esteem about their musical abilities. Their low confidence can be attributed to a failure to follow the teaching style of the music teachers or a negative experience they remember from their own early education (furthermore,

Another issue questioning the case where music lesson is taught by class teachers is the type of the music curriculum. The content of a similar curriculum may only give the opportunity to the children to develop only some particular musical skills and could be limited on what is possible

In my experience, the class teachers are disinclined to teach music, because they have inadequate knowledge of musical skills. The generalist teachers neglect music lessons because they do not have confidence in teaching music. If this assumption is true, then it seems that an average of about 25 pupils in a music classroom may not be delivered highly qualitative education in music, by the teacher who feels unconfident to teach the lesson.

The Music Specialists

A number of educators emphasize the significance of having qualified music teachers in the primary school. For example, according to Plummeridge, music teachers as ‘musicians’ value choirs, orchestras and ensembles; ‘Most music teachers will not find themselves against to several problems, those generalists teachers would have. This could consider basically the music teaching methods which are based on the “musicianship” and “skills” of an individual. In this case generalists require teaching the music lesson through supporting classroom materials and guidelines for the preparation of teaching the music lesson

They are also able to take decisions for certain difficulties of some actions and music activities providing correct information encourage and guide pupils musically (70). In addition to this, they are in a position that they can

decide the appropriate teaching techniques so that they would be able to assist the pupils. ‘

Furthermore, according to Hewitt (2002), the specialists appeared more able to depart from their original stimuli during the compositional process, than the generalists. Their musical ability on compositions suggests influenced by their previous experience. They have approached more extended musical development and consequence they have more confidence. With their significant musical experience, based on their academic training the specialist group seems to have more creativity in music making and be able to feel confidence in front of the wider classroom. Regarding the same journal article, In addition, while the specialist had experience of ensemble work, almost all generalist lack this musical ability and they find a significant difficulty in teaching music.

Additionally, the specialists have a musical background mainly in performance, composing or theory but not a pedagogical training. This lack of pedagogical background, teaching methods and strategies, children’s psychology, reduce the effectiveness among the music teaching and learning. Specialist teachers. Firstly, they have musical skills, which the rest lack. But the most significant advantage is that they already have musical self-esteem and they do not have to worry because of low confidence in music teaching They can make positive statements about their abilities and achievements as musicians.

It can be logically argued that music education is a multidimensional discipline and it is essentially for the music teacher to have a variety of both

skills, musical and pedagogical. Within this context, it could also expect that the teacher should be fully prepared to respond to the different aims and challenges of a music lesson either these are musical enjoyment, musical performance or composition. Although classroom

Therefore, finally it is vital to admit that

General conclusions

As a graduated teacher for primary education at the University of Cyprus, I am acquainted of the problems regarding the primary music education and specifically, the difficulties and worries of the students towards teaching music at the primary level. Throughout the academic programme of primary education, there is only one compulsory module of music, where the student audience comes from different musical backgrounds, often very limited.

It is more than obvious that most of the primary school teachers graduate from education programs without having the required musical skills, subject knowledge and thus the essential confidence to teach the lesson in their classrooms. As a result, it is necessary to develop an appropriate education programme addresses to the teachers.

Thinking through the arguments for the issue of music teaching, I strongly believe that generalist should obtain the effectiveness of music teaching, by giving them the opportunities to be enhanced with the needed supplies.

Firstly, it is important to admit that they feel the need to be able to choose whether to teach the lesson of music or not. Those who will teach it, they need to follow a suspiciously planned programme with an sufficient number

of music modules during their undergraduate studies. Moreover, they will
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need a viewpoint of children's developing in music through the curriculum and to be able to identify where their pupils' ages fits in this progression. It is vital to supply the non-music specialist teachers with effectual academic training and supporting, in order to enhance their music skills and knowledge and be competent to improve children's musical education. It is also significant to develop confidence in generalist students through practical experience in musical activities

To conclude, over the last decades, the issue of music teacher in primary schools, unambiguously increases controversies and draws different approaches and views. It is clear, that the most ideal combination for a music teacher is someone who is generalist classroom teacher and also has a music degree. However, this is not realistic assumption, thus there is no point to label the teachers as generalists or specialists, while regarding to this labelling is ' . Clover and Young stressed the importance of involving more than one teacher in music lesson at primary schools. They support that ' . Many schools have several teachers among their staffs, with particular abilities or musical skills that can cooperate in order to contribute to a high level primary music education. There is no doubt that music, as an artistic subject is essential in the education of the children, therefore, music teaching must be competent.