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Résumé de l'article

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Abstract

This study focuses on the innovative strategies that tertiary music teachers (specialist music teachers and experts) employ to help musically-challenged students. Those who have trouble with rhythm, tonal acuity, music theory, and musical aptitude are operationally referred to as musically-challenged. Ten participants were selected through purposive sampling and responded to the interview questions using an interview guide. Thematic analysis was conducted on their responses to generate codes and themes in this investigation. This is a single case study that draws from constructivist and behaviourist learning theories. To help students who have difficulty with music, music and its related components should be valued as an essential part of the curriculum. Devoted teachers should authentically demonstrate all of the subject's contents using innovative teaching strategies, allowing students to immediately grasp the values to be inspired and confident in the subject. As a result, strategies such as identifying the weaknesses of the learners, informal instruction, collaborative learning, repetition, positive reinforcement in learning, technology integration, and patience have proven to be effective solutions to the case being studied.

Introduction

Music education is pivotal in nurturing creativity, enhancing cognitive development, and fostering emotional expression in students (Odena, 2012). However, the world of music instruction is not homogenous, and students entering tertiary-level music programs often bring diverse backgrounds, abilities, and levels of musical proficiency. In the realm of music education, there is a group of students who present unique challenges to educators--the musically-challenged students. These learners encompass a broad spectrum, including those with limited prior musical experience, varying degrees of technical proficiency, learning disabilities, or simply a lack of exposure to musical concepts. The term, "musically-challenged," does not suggest a lack of potential or enthusiasm; instead, it underscores the need for creative and innovative teaching strategies to ensure that every student can unlock their inner musical potential and reap the benefits of music education. Tertiary music teachers, who guide students toward higher levels of musical proficiency, must navigate this diversity of musical abilities and needs (Carey et al., 2018). Traditional teaching methods, often designed for students with a solid foundation in music, may not effectively address the needs of musically-challenged students (Allsup, 2011). According to Gordon's Theory of Music Learning, students who are not musically inclined have difficulty with musical aptitude, rhythmic, and tonal rhythmic audition (Erős, 2024). In a similar vein, music educators confront a challenging task in assisting students in fostering their musical creativity. Teaching strategies, therefore, provide students with a shared basis to close the gap between subjects and learners. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Morris, 2020), teachers can gain knowledge and develop their teaching skills by working with a variety of student types. This will enhance their approaches to working with these learners, as evidenced by Bernard (2012), who found that music educators' musical identities are more likely to coincide with those of their students. Therefore, it is important to explore and document innovative teaching strategies that address the unique learning needs of these students.

A diverse range of students may be encountered by teachers in a heterogeneous classroom. Assuming that every student is good in the field of music is impractical. However, according to Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (Cavas & Cavas, 2020), intelligence is a natural ability that can be enhanced with time in all individuals. Music teachers see this as a fair approach to meeting their students' needs. This suggests to teachers that their tasks, no matter what the subject, should be centred around the student's area of interest. However, following the curriculum as prescribed by the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) in the Philippines is mandatory. As a result, the students in the classroom have a wide range of musical abilities. This demands that students who are musically-challenged—those who have difficulty with music aptitude, rhythmic and tonal audiation, and music theory—participate actively in their education and be taught practical music theories and applications.

This study looked into the innovative strategies used by tertiary music teachers in dealing with musically-challenged students in an undergraduate general music-education program of a university in Tacloban City, Philippines. The study sought to identify and describe the innovative strategies employed by tertiary music teachers in teaching musically-challenged students. The study endeavored to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges of tertiary music teachers in teaching musically-challenged students?
2. How do tertiary music teachers innovate and employ strategies to cater to musically-challenged students?

This study is anchored on behaviourist (Clark, 2018) and constructivist (Fosnot, 2013) learning theories. Behaviourism emphasizes observable behaviours and the external factors that influence them. Music education involves specific teaching techniques that aim to shape and reinforce desired musical behaviours in students. Behaviourist strategies often involve rewards for positive behaviour, and punishments or consequences for negative behaviour. In music education, this could mean providing positive reinforcement for correct musical performance, or addressing challenges through corrective feedback. Approaches often involve structured and systematic learning environments. Teachers may break down musical concepts into smaller, manageable steps in order to facilitate learning for musically-challenged students.

Constructivism posits that individuals actively construct their understanding of the world. In music education, this might involve encouraging musically-challenged students to explore and discover musical concepts through hands-on activities, experimentation, and personal expression. Additionally, it emphasizes how crucial social connection is to the learning process. Teachers may facilitate collaborative musical activities, encouraging students to learn from each other and share their unique perspectives and approaches to overcoming musical challenges. Constructivist approaches often involve placing learning in real-world contexts. This could mean exploring how musically-challenged students can apply their musical knowledge and skills in practical situations.

Benefits of music teaching

Research on how participation in music affects social and personal development has predominantly relied on self-reported data from interviews (Hallam, 2010). This area of study has been less explored, compared to the impact of music on intellectual development and achievement, even though the benefits in achievement might partly stem from increased social and cultural capital. For example, Broh (2002) found that students involved in musical activities communicated more with their parents and teachers, and their parents interacted more with other parents. She concluded that these social benefits likely boost children's self-esteem, which in turn enhances motivation and self-efficacy. They found strong correlations between positive self-perception, high cognitive competence, self-esteem, and engagement in school music. Whitwell (1977) had similar findings, asserting that creative participation in music improves self-image and self-awareness, fostering positive self-attitudes. Comparable results were observed among urban Black middle-school students and children from low economic backgrounds (Costa-Giomi, 1999). It seems that success in music can boost overall confidence and self-esteem, thereby enhancing general motivation for studying.

Challenges in teaching music to primary schools in other countries

According to Houlahan and Tacka (2015), music teachers encounter numerous obstacles in ensuring that every child receives high-quality developmental music instruction during their elementary-school years. The advantages of a robust music education program are widely recognized, supported both anecdotally and by research (Reimer, 2022; Russell-Bowie, 2009). Academically, students reporting consistent involvement in instrumental music exhibit notably better mathematics proficiency by the time they reach Year 12 (Fiske, 1999). Furthermore, overall, students heavily engaged in the arts surpass those with limited arts exposure across various metrics, with arts involvement proving especially beneficial for

students from disadvantaged backgrounds, compared to their affluent peers. Beyond academic realms, arts engagement plays a significant role in fostering students' cognitive, social, and emotional growth, supporting their overall learning experiences. Recent studies emphasize that participation in artistic activities enhances students' self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and socioemotional development. For example, arts programs have been shown to boost empathy, perspective-taking, and collaboration skills among students, contributing to their social awareness and relationship-building. Furthermore, engaging in the arts helps university students enhance their emotional well-being, resilience, and creative problem-solving skills, all of which are essential for navigating academic and life challenges (Guo, 2024). The musical benefits derived from participating in music education are familiar to educators and individuals who have sung in choirs, played instruments, attentively listened to music, or created compositions.

Teaching music in the tertiary level

Conway (2020) advocates for a shift towards a "learner-centered" approach in all courses. This means that instructors, particularly in fields like music, where students' needs evolve from freshman to senior year, must continuously assess their teaching methods to ensure that they are appropriate for the learners in each stage. Upper-level music students, in particular, are focused on aligning their coursework with their career aspirations, and need support in bridging the gap between academic studies and the professional music world. As students progress through their college years, they develop higher expectations for themselves and value self-assessment as a tool for improvement, especially if they were introduced to it earlier in their academic journey. Senior students tend to take more ownership of their learning, seeking additional activities and connections between course material and real-world applications in the music industry. They are also less tolerant of disorganized classes, ineffective lectures, and unfair assessment methods. Juniors and seniors often have additional stressors beyond academics, such as financial responsibilities and concerns about life after college, which can affect their engagement in class. Furthermore, "senioritis" can also impact their motivation, as they anticipate the next phase of their lives. It's crucial for instructors to recognize and address these evolving needs and concerns, particularly among upper-level students, to ensure a positive and productive learning environment.

Methodology

This research uses a single case study methodology. A case study, according to Yazan (2015), looks at the particulars and complexity of a single case to understand its actions under critical circumstances. The use of a single case study in research offers several advantages. First, it allows for an in-depth exploration of the strategies employed by music teachers when working with musically-challenged students. By focusing on a single case, researchers can thoroughly examine the specific methods, techniques, and adaptations utilized by the teacher to address the needs of these students (Barrett, 2014). In this context, it allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the complexities of teaching musically-challenged students, offering detailed insights, and potentially uncovering innovative strategies that could enhance music-education practices in tertiary settings.

Participants

This investigation utilized a non-probability sampling method, purposefully selecting ten (10) participants from the tertiary level who are actively involved in teaching music. Data saturation allowed for the maximum number of participants in this study. Each participant was carefully chosen, based on specific inclusion criteria set for the study. To safeguard the privacy of the participants, pseudonyms were allocated to each participant (e.g., P1). These pseudonyms were then used to reference the participants and their respective responses, with line numbers from the transcription serving as identifiers. Inclusion criteria mandated that participants have a minimum of five years of teaching experience in music, currently teach general music education courses at the university level, may or may not possess a bachelor's degree in music or related field, and exhibit willingness to engage in the study.

Research environment and data collection

The research was conducted at a university in Tacloban City, Philippines, that provides general music-education courses. The researcher chose this location for the following reasons: 1) The institution provides music-education sessions to students enrolled in teacher-education programs; and 2) The researcher has access to the needed data for the study. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, participants were provided with detailed informed consent forms and received comprehensive orientations. This process ensured that they fully understood their rights, including voluntary participation, potential risks and benefits, and strict confidentiality measures safeguarding their data. The tertiary music teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured format, employing open-ended questions to elicit relevant data. Follow-up focus group discussions were subsequently conducted, with the same participants, to corroborate and confirm the findings.

Data analysis

The researcher utilized an interview guide as the primary instrument for this investigation. To ensure its validity, the instrument underwent careful consultation with three (3) experts. The analysis followed six (6) steps outlined by Clarke and Braun (2013): 1) Familiarizing oneself with the data; 2) Assigning preliminary codes to describe the content; 3) Identifying patterns or themes across the different interviews; 4) Reviewing and refining themes; 5) Defining and naming the themes; and 6) Producing the report with the assistance of Atlas.ti, qualitative software for transcribing, coding, and generating themes. To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher employed triangulation procedures by involving the colleagues of the music teachers through an interview for additional data validation.

Results

This section presents the data gathered from the participants through semi-structured interviews and discusses each generated theme. Several innovative strategies were identified that music teachers are employing in their teaching. Strategies, such as identifying the weaknesses of the learners, informal instruction, collaborative learning, repetition, positive reinforcement in learning,

technology integration, and patience have proven to be effective solutions to the case being studied.

The challenges of tertiary music teachers teaching musically-challenged students

Difficulties in the teaching process, from the music teachers' perspective, were anticipated. Teaching music to musically-challenged students in tertiary education settings poses several unique difficulties for music teachers. Tertiary music classes often consist of students with varying levels of musical proficiency. Musically-challenged students may struggle to keep up with the more advanced students, making it problematic for teachers to cater to the diverse skill levels within the same class. The teachers were fully aware that hardships in teaching are part of an existing phenomenon in the academic discipline. Participant 2 shared an experience about tonality when she said:

> I had a 28-year-old student once, and she came to me with a pitch-matching problem. She liked to sing, but not in tune. "Sintunado" is the term that would probably best describe her case, if other people could hear her sing. When I first heard her sing, she never hit any notes right. (P2: 24)

She added that this encounter is normal since not everyone can project a pleasing singing voice, but the problem can be corrected and learned. According to her, adapting teaching methods to accommodate students with different learning styles and abilities is a significant obstacle. Tertiary music teachers need to find ways to tailor their instruction to meet the specific needs of musically-challenged students without compromising the overall class objectives. Participant 4 likewise shared his own experience regarding the differing levels of musical ability. He said:

> If it is acquired, perhaps somebody will have something to do with the peer training or co-practice, so that may[be] he may be able to get through with the process to do the procedure also. But for me, innate ability is still on the upper hand, though I don't know how to identify the phenomenon. (P4: 27)

He also emphasized that more time is spent on musically-challenged students, especially in catering to their needs, since he always bases the pace of his instruction on his learners. These students may experience lower levels of motivation and confidence. Encouraging them to persist in their musical studies can be challenging, and teachers must employ strategies to boost their students' self-esteem and maintain their interest in learning music. Participant 1, on the other hand, has his own way of classifying musically-challenged students and those who are not.

> In my part, I have many students, and I divide them to know what the weaknesses of every student are; if musically inclined or not. (P1: 17)

The participants view diversity within the four corners of the classroom as a major tenet for coping with these challenges. Participant 6 shared:

> I actually really understand, because not all students are capable of identifying a single pitch, more so become pitch perfect. As teachers, we really need to adjust with these kinds of students, since our instruction must be inclusive and promote diversity. (P6: 22)

Musically-challenged students may require more individualized attention to address their specific challenges. Tertiary music classes are often larger, making it difficult for teachers to provide the necessary one-on-one support to help these students overcome their difficulties. Participants 4, 5, and 6 also found it hard to accommodate all lessons, since there were more musically-challenged students present in the classroom.

Time constraints. The participants of this study saw lack of time as one of their problems. According to Participant 4:

> Actually, it's very difficult, in terms of time, since most especially that we are only given one semester for such [a] subject. Even myself, as a graduate of music education, it took me two years to acquire at least a grasp in music. How much more for our students who are just taking the subject in a semester? I think it's not enough. I cannot say that it will be enough to provide the needed skills in a semester, because there are so many topics in music, which I think, if I may suggest, make the course spiral in nature. (P4:40)

Participant 5 faces the same issue, since many activities are congested within a single subject, but the main concern is the number of meetings with his students. He feels that the number of classes would not provide enough time to learn a lesson. He shared:

> It's really okay, but I really need more time, and I don't have it because we have so many activities, so that's why I cannot insert really teaching music in, you know, a religious way. Since music should not appear so serious, activities and games consume all the time for all the supposed discussion. (P5: 38)

Participant 1, an experienced and talented teacher, sees this as a problem, because teaching a skill takes so much time, and as long as the student is interested in learning, it aligns with his creed. He said:

> In my experience, I can say [that] in two months, I can let you play. In one month, I can let you sing, [and] that is a challenge for me--that is my time frame, but it depends, but actually, it's very long process. Sometimes it takes a semester for them to learn. (P1:30)

Conduciveness of the learning environment. Like most educators, support for instruction through facilities and equipment is perceived by the participants as a problem that infringes upon the right of every learner to receive quality instruction. Participant 3 sympathetically shared that it is challenging to teach students, especially when resources do not match the number of learners in a classroom. She expressed:

> [It is] especially in the Philippine setting that we lack materials, so it was difficult for me to face the challenges [of] how much more [difficult it is] with an unjustifiable class size. (P3: 29)

The idea was supported by Participant 4, when he stated that one way of self-development is also through having adequate facilities. Facilities and equipment were not the only issues for the participants. Participant 4 was emphatic when he stated:

> Then, especially when we are talking about piano, but the problem is [that] we have no facilities here, so that's why they are getting bored answering notes and note values in the

> board without any instruments that they can hear as to what the tones of the sofa syllables are, so that's why the pace of learning the skill is comprised, because of that reason.

Participants 2 and 3 believe that the lack of learning facilities leads to many students being crowded together to complete all their tasks. They share the same concern regarding the number of students in the class, believing that it is no longer conducive to learning. According to them, having more than thirty students in the class would not contribute to meaningful learning, as not everyone can access the limited resources.

Negative regard towards teaching. It cannot be denied that not all professional teachers can handle such phenomena or related challenges with ease. Some may encounter problems that complicate the experience. One of the realities that make it difficult for Participant 7 to deal with this phenomenon is his field of discipline. He admits that he considers himself an out-of-field music teacher, and for him, his experience is not sufficient to help musically-challenged students master or even learn the skill. He expressed:

> I do not have the full knowledge in teaching music, because my line is mathematics teaching.

Participant 4 is well-versed in dealing with this phenomenon. He is consciously aware that merely being familiar with the problem will not suffice for the contribution to the learners' development. He explained:

> You are a teacher, so it's a very challenging aspect, specifically, if you will have that kind of student's problem with regards to musicality.

Participant 3 was emphatic, by indicating that it is not suitable for her to teach these kinds of learners, because of her personality and patience. Perhaps she is not comfortable with the idea, because, during that time, she was idealistic, and was quickly disappointed if her students could not keep up with her lessons. She stated:

> Especially now, perhaps it is because of my age that I become easily impatient, which is not the case back then.

Participant 2, as she sees herself as a dedicated teacher, is sometimes anxious about whether she is doing it right. In her words,

> I do worry sometimes and wonder if I am doing my best to cater to musically-challenged learners.

Addressing these concerns requires a combination of empathy, creativity, and a commitment to providing an inclusive and supportive music-education experience for all students, regardless of their musical abilities.

The innovative strategies employed

Tertiary music teachers employ various innovative strategies to effectively teach musically-challenged students, fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Identifying the weaknesses. The participants have their ways of dealing with the case. Participant 1 first tried to diagnose the learners in order to identify their underlying problems, whether tonal, rhythmic audition, or simple musical aptitude. According to him, the evaluation is critical to know where to focus. Singing together has been an effective way to easily identify those who are struggling, without humiliating the student. He said:

> There are three aspects to me, because I can train vocally, I can train many instruments, and I can train also to write, so it depends upon the evaluation of what kind of students that you will encounter, but I usually do chorus classes first, where everybody will sing at once, so by then, I can identify. (P1: 73)

As a teacher, it is a way of making them feel welcomed. Responsibility comes to the teacher to curtail the existing learning problems. Individual solfege exercises were also a way to identify the students who struggle in the activity. A participant accentuated:

> The task of finding out the problem and how to help her practice better was now up to me, as her teacher. My strategy: I do solfege exercises – the do, re, mi exercises to know if all my students can do it or if not, rely on watching videos for appreciation. (P8: 37)

Informal instruction through musical games. Participant 5, in the sharing, said that music teachers can tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs of musically-challenged students. This may involve creating alternative assignments, providing additional resources, or adjusting the pace of the curriculum to ensure individualized learning experiences, or even informal instruction, just to lighten the mood and atmosphere in the classroom. Informal instruction is applied, so that the students feel enjoyment while learning. She expressed:

> Lately, I've tried to ask for more feedback from students, and I've made classes more informal and collaborative, instead of just me talking/lecturing most of the time. It's still good to follow a student-centered approach through games and make it fun for everyone! (P5:56)

Musical games, as experiential learning, is also a way of making music accessible to remember, and other participants follow the Kodaly Method as the pedagogy in teaching music. According to her:

> For sight-singing, I always rely on the Kodaly Method, and I am really fond of jamming to familiar or easy-to-remember music, since these are one of the things that help students the most. Depending on the topic, I generally like to have musical games in between lectures, some forms of singing or chanting, and playing instruments (percussive or melodic). (P2: 60)

Often, according to her, she integrates colours and shapes with the students for greater retention. She shared:

> Recently, I've used a lot of colours and shapes for music notation, and it seemed to work better for Musically-challenged learners. It even worked for a colour-blind student (instead of colours, he would read shapes combined with the lines & spaces on the grand staff). (P2: 76)

Collaborative learning through group activities. Participant 7 wants to give her students a feeling and sense of belongingness--making them engage in group activities. They shared that implementing peer collaboration and mentoring programs allows musically-challenged students to work with their more proficient peers. This fosters a supportive community where students can learn from each other, and musically-challenged students can receive additional guidance and encouragement. She further explained:

> Participation in group activities is a top priority, when it comes to musically-challenged students, so that they don't feel alone or scared. Performance in groups is also quite effective! I usually try to balance musical students with less-musical ones, so everyone helps one another. (P7: 68)

Participant 10 uses varied strategies, but her last resort is the Kodaly method. She said:

> I vary my strategies, like the Kodaly Method, which is a very helpful methodology for me. (P10: 51)

Partnering the musically-challenged students with those good at music was the solution seen by Participant 3 to provide an opportunity for the students to learn effectively.

> I want those who are musically-challenged be partnered with those who are good in music, so that they will also be guided. I do not want them to feel bad[ly] during the presentation. All I can do is to teach them and be involved. If there are performances, everyone should be involved, because I know that through such exposures, the students learn. Another thing is that I can see that there are opportunities for them to grow." (P3: 21)

The art of repetition. Teaching musically-challenged students requires patience and flexibility. Tertiary music teachers must be adaptable, willing to try different approaches, and understand that progress may take time. Celebrating small victories and acknowledging effort is crucial in maintaining a positive learning environment. Music lessons outside of the regular meetups are also crucial, since they help the musically-challenged students alleviate the occurrence of the phenomenon. Upon enrolling in music lessons, the learners get to know a song to sing, adding to their repertoire of songs. Gentle, repetitive, and consistent exercises are the standard practices of Participant 4. He shared:

> By way of giving them some constant and repetitive exercises, like basic notes reading/singing, until such time that they have memorized the tones, then, later on, they'll become more familiar on the singing of the sofa syllables in exact tones and frequency of the scale. (P4: 57)

Participant 6 is always effective when she integrates gentle and repetitive exercises. In her words:

> I had this experience that with gentle, repetitive, and consistent pitch-matching exercises, they'll finally able to sing in tune after 12 sessions. (P6: 43)

For Participant 3, nothing can be comparable to talent matched with practice, when used in instruction. He can easily demonstrate the right, precise, and appropriate songs and music in his class. He emphasized:

> I think it's talent, since I am using my voice, and I show them how it's done. By constant practice and repetition, they can do it. You know [the] Suzuki Method (P3: 67)

Instilling interest among the learners. For one of the participants, the very first goal for the teachers is to make the students feel interested in the subject, which makes it the reason why he applies appreciation lessons in music, with him as the demonstrator, in his lecture with performance. Likewise, Participant 6 also believes in the Kodaly Method as a practical methodology for musically-challenged students with the help of Curwen/Glover hand signs; if still not effective, she uses an instrument to guide the learners to sing the right notes. According to her:

> I started using the Kodaly symbols, like the do re mi, using the hand signals so that they will know and be able to memorize the scaling of do re mi fa so la ti do, and so on and so forth. (P6: 51)

Participant 3 stated Zoltan Kodaly's exact words: "everybody is capable of learning music." Inclusiveness must be practiced in school to instill interest. He emphasized:

> At first, I could laugh with them, but with that, I just did it to let them feel that it is okay to sound bad. Students are afraid to fail, and are ready to do the set requirements to pass the course. That is why I encourage them to participate. How will you be motivated and feel welcomed to be interested to learn, if you will not extend your patience?

Participant 1 resonated with the statement of Participant 3:

> I cannot say, you, student number one, will stay at the corner, because you do not know how to sing. Of course, I can't do that to anyone. I always attack the interest of the students. (P1: 19)

Positive reinforcement in learning. Participants have their ways of reinforcing the phenomenon. Recognizing and celebrating individual progress is essential. The tertiary music teachers implemented systems for tracking and acknowledging small achievements, providing positive reinforcement and motivation for musically-challenged students to continue their musical journey. Participant 1 calls this an animalistic strategy. He said:

> It's to feed the students, [like] animal training, because when an animal is trained, it's always to feed the stomach. They will learn, and they will go back studying, [because they are] motivated, the same with the animals. (P1: 35)

He names it an animalistic strategy for himself. Participant 7 has his way of appreciating students in all forms. He believes that this would boost the morale of the learners. He shared:

> I guess, the attitude of being a constant critique is a good practice. It is also important for me, to commend their work, and appreciate a little improvement that they have done, because they need to boast their confidence. What I do, is to give them comments and suggestions for improvement. (P7: 49)

Participant 4 has so much hope by believing in and boosting the confidence of musically-challenged students to enjoy and learn music easily. He is a firm believer in the quotation, "nothing is impossible." With hard work, and intervention from the teacher, everything is possible. According to him:

> They just have to develop it by themselves, through involving some music[al] activities without hesitation, and with much confidence. However, through proper encouragement coming from us, the teachers, they were able to learn. I guess it is only on self-control, listening to oneself, and thorough practice that will enhance their hidden skill. (P4: 60)

Technology integration in instruction. With the advent of new technologies, the participants did not miss the opportunity to utilize such aid. They emphasized that incorporating multiple senses into the learning process can benefit musically-challenged students. Teachers may use visual aids, hands-on activities, and interactive technology to reinforce musical concepts and engage students, through various sensory modalities. Participant 1 shared that he uses software to correct and improve the learning problems in music. He said:

> There is a software which can develop the learner's sense of hearing, but totally based on the study [that] if a learner has a poor sense of hearing, there is a problem on the vocal projection. So, personally, I, myself, use this software to ease my burden in addressing the needs of the learners. (P1: 50)

Participant 4 has the same experience. The idea of integrating technology tools can be a game-changer. Tertiary music teachers can leverage software and apps designed to support musical-skill development, such as programs for ear training, rhythm practice, and interactive-learning platforms that offer personalized feedback; according to him:

> Now, I can already finish that for how many hours, and only within the day. So, that means, more materials will be produced for my students for their consumption. Especially now that I don't have the luxury of time anymore, since I'm supervising the singing groups at the university. On my part, it really saves time. Everyone could be efficient with technology. (P4: 16)

Patience as a factor in dealing with musically-challenged students. Some participants see patience as one of their secrets to an effective approach to dealing with musically-challenged students. Participant 1 has been very emphatic about this; he said:

> Patience [is what a] teacher should be [sic] as much as possible, especially [when] we are dealing with students who need to learn or master a skill. I even had a professor who said that he has much appreciation to the teachers or trainers who accommodate students with no background, because it just shows how devoted they are with their line of work. (P1: 40)

Participant 3 also agrees that patience is needed when thinking of success. However, in her case, it is different due to her age; at some point, she became impatient with her students because her physical stamina and energy levels were affected by her condition. According to her, this made it more challenging to maintain patience in the classroom.

> Now that my age is already of consideration, I easily get impatient, which is the complete opposite [from] when I was young. (P3: 50)

Participant 5 reasonably believes in this idea; he said, "For me, I can teach music with justice, if there is really from heart support." (P5: 68)

In all the statements and responses coming from the participants, the researcher attempted to corroborate the answers, by conducting a triangulation procedure to the immediate students of the teachers and colleagues to secure the trustworthiness of their responses. Based on the researcher's inquiry, no opposing statements were generated. Hence, all the participants' statements posit that their responses to the study aligned with their practices, especially in their innovative strategies for dealing with musically-challenged students.

Discussion

Interest plays a vital role in learning, as highlighted by the participants in this study, since their students are enrolled in the general music-education program. It is recognized as a central factor shaping the learning experience, guiding attention, and fostering engagement across various contexts (Renninger & Hidi, 2011). Participants view interest as a powerful motivator that propels students toward learning, independent of their achievement outcomes (Van Yperen, 2003). In the realm of music education, interest is particularly significant for enhancing performance and understanding diverse musical abilities, preventing learners from disengaging with music. Research by Hindi and Ainley (2009) underscores that while interest originates within individuals, it can be influenced by both the content being learned and the learning environment. Thus, further exploration of the effectiveness of interest in learning supports the conclusions drawn in this study.

Many view exposure to music as a privilege, especially when teachers encounter students with prior musical backgrounds and demonstrate exceptional teaching skills. It is rare to find such students, and they stand out. The current situation in teaching music often reflects the diverse experiences that learners bring with them. While some students excel in music-related tasks with practice and time, others may struggle to achieve the same level of proficiency. This discrepancy was noted by the music teachers in this study. In Rohrmeier's (2012) research, music is likened to language, being historically advanced and complex, involving intricate cognitive processes in perception and creation.

A different level of musical ability implies distinctive musical aptitudes among learners. Teachers address the varying levels of competence and skill among students, reconciling conflicting patterns and ideas. Time constraints are problematic for teachers. With so many topics to cover in a semester, finding a solution has become a significant challenge. While devoting time to any endeavour yields benefits, reducing the complexity of the learning experience could diminish the quality of instruction, as seen with music teachers.

The lack of facilities and equipment can have an even greater impact on the learning outcomes of musically-challenged students. When class sizes exceed the available resources, teachers are faced with difficulties accommodating diverse learning needs, without sufficient support. Owoeye's (2011) observation that school facilities significantly impact interactive learning is particularly relevant in the case of the students. For musically-challenged students, interactive experiences, such as hands-on use of musical instruments, exposure to auditory aids, and access to technology-assisted learning tools, are crucial for engagement. Without adequate facilities, these students are deprived of the sensory-rich environments that support their growth.

Akande's (2014) emphasis on the role of the environment in learning further underscores the necessity of creating an inclusive space where musically-challenged students can thrive. Inadequate equipment and facilities limit students' immersion in music, which can stifle both their interest and potential. Oni's (2013) addition, regarding the influence of resources on educational efficiency, is also pertinent, as it highlights the need for not just availability, but also the adequacy and relevance of these resources. For musically-challenged students, having the right tools can mean the difference between frustration and progress, making facilities and equipment indispensable in creating an equitable and productive learning environment.

Innovative strategies are key to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Integrating established musical and educational methods, like the Kodály Method (Penny, 2012), provide a structured approach to learning music through singing, movement, and solfège, making musical concepts more accessible to students with varying levels of musical ability. This method is particularly effective for musically-challenged students, as it emphasizes auditory and kinesthetic learning, helping them to internalize music through physical and vocal experiences. Student-centered learning (Wright, 2011) places the needs and interests of musically-challenged students at the forefront, allowing teachers to adapt lessons to meet individual challenges. This approach fosters greater student engagement, as learners are given more autonomy and opportunities to explore music at their own pace, which is essential for building confidence and motivation. Cooperative learning (Millis, 2023) further supports musically-challenged students by encouraging collaboration. Group activities allow them to learn from their peers, and creates a non-judgmental space where students of varying skill levels can support each other. This method fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, making music education more approachable for students who may feel overwhelmed by individual tasks. Inclusive teaching strategies are essential for ensuring that musically-challenged students are not discriminated against, based on their competency level. Music teachers' personal strategies, such as informal instruction that incorporates humour and light discussions, help to break down barriers and make learning more enjoyable. The use of voice and instruments to enrich lessons allows students to explore music in diverse ways, while unique teaching techniques and repetitive exercises help to reinforce learning in a manner that suits individual needs. Musical games and playful approaches make learning less intimidating, allowing musically-challenged students to practice and internalize skills in a relaxed environment. This combination of formal and informal strategies ensures that all students, regardless of ability, are given the tools to succeed in music education. Implementing evidence-based practices bridges the gap between research and practical application, ensuring that teachers are using the most effective methods to meet the needs of musically-challenged students. These practices not only help to improve students' musical skills, but also foster a positive attitude towards learning, empowering students to embrace music as a source of personal growth and expression.

Rewards, such as appreciation and incentives, are effective in enhancing students' engagement and motivation. Teachers have successfully implemented positive reinforcement strategies to manage student behaviour and promote an encouraging learning environment. According to Diedrich (2010), a key educational factor is the teacher's ability to address and influence students' behaviour. Many teacher-training programs expose pre-service teachers to various techniques for managing student attitudes, as discipline and classroom management remain significant challenges in education. Despite some teachers believing that providing positive reinforcement is primarily the responsibility of the students' parents, research in behavioural-skills training indicates that communication, feedback, and positive reinforcement are crucial in improving students' behaviours, personalities, and expectations (Miltenberger, 2008). This

highlights the importance of teachers integrating these strategies into their practice to foster a positive and productive classroom environment.

The advent of technology has been a significant boon to the academic sector, particularly in enhancing instruction for musically-challenged learners. Technology allows teachers to augment their instructional methods to better meet these students' needs, enabling tasks to be completed more efficiently than traditional methods. Computer software, used as programmed instruction, assists learners in overcoming academic challenges. Recent research highlights the importance of the educator's role in successfully integrating technology into the learning process. Teachers facilitate the assimilation of technology and help to create an interactive learning environment that embeds technology as an indispensable educational tool (e.g., Arrowood et al., 2010; Ertmer et al., 2012; Vannatta & Banister, 2009). This integration is crucial for making technology a fundamental part of modern education.

Among all strategies for addressing challenges, patience remains an essential element. Regardless of the difficulties faced, it is important to respond with patience rather than frustration. Musically-challenged students need to invest time and effort to make progress. Patience, as defined by Hirsch (2014), involves calmly enduring trials without complaint, showing resilience when provoked or strained, avoiding haste, and maintaining steadfastness despite opposition, difficulties, or adversities. This quality is crucial for both teachers and students in overcoming obstacles and achieving success.

Teachers might find success by combining elements of behaviourism and constructivism. While providing a structured framework for learning (behaviourism), they can also allow room for student exploration and creativity (constructivism). Recognizing that students have unique learning styles and challenges, teachers can tailor their approaches to meet the individual needs of musically-challenged students.

Conclusions

This study highlights the importance of including all students in music education, especially those who find it challenging. Traditional assessments may not show these students' progress accurately. Therefore, teachers must adjust their teaching methods to support each student effectively, especially those facing musical challenges.

Teachers who offer emotional support and create a nurturing environment boost students' confidence and interest in the subject. Using technology, like music software and apps, can engage these students and make learning easier. Patience is crucial in handling this, and it depends on teachers' attitudes, personalities, and skills. Experience in teaching music equips teachers with strategies to address students' needs. Schools play a significant role, by supporting learners' needs and enhancing teaching quality with necessary facilities and equipment.

Effective teaching strategies not only enhance musical skills, but also foster the holistic development of students, particularly those with musical challenges. These benefits transcend the realm of music education, bolstering cognitive and social abilities. The innovative approaches employed by tertiary music educators underscore the significance of adaptability, diverse teaching methods, emotional support, collaboration, technology integration, and inclusivity in fostering favorable educational results. Music education serves as a potent catalyst for personal growth and development, catering to the needs of all students, including those encountering musical challenges.

Recommendations

The data analysis revealed the significant influence of teachers on the situation. Tertiary music teachers may need to create new and imaginative ways to assess students beyond typical performance measures. This could involve project-based assessments, journals, or creative tasks to allow musically-challenged students to show progress uniquely. Reviewing and updating curricula to be more inclusive of diverse musical styles can engage a wider range of students. Advocating for comprehensive music-education programs in early education can reduce challenges later on. Additionally, investing in technology resources can lighten teachers' workloads. Further research on the impact of innovative teaching strategies for musically-challenged students is encouraged to refine understanding in the field. These recommendations aim to enhance music education quality and accessibility for all students by fostering a supportive environment, improving teacher readiness, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders. By implementing these suggestions, institutions and communities can better support music teachers in providing inclusive education for all students, regardless of their musical abilities or challenges.

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