THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
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CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-TRADITIONAL MUSIC STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN A TECHNOLOGY-BASED MUSIC COURSE: A MIXED-METHODS CASE STUDY

MASTER'S PROJECT
for the degree of
MASTER OF MUSIC
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover the characteristics and features of an exemplary case of a technology-based music curriculum. Characteristics of students and the teacher, as well as of the environment, were investigated. Qualitative methods of observation and interviews were utilized to discover characteristics of the classroom teacher and environment. A quantitative survey was implemented to discover the attitudes and characteristics of students within the case study environment.

Qualitative data was analyzed through the development of themes accompanied by the segmentation and coding of observation and interview transcripts. Quantitative data was analyzed by dividing the population sample into the categories of non-traditional music student and traditional music student, as well as the various subcategories that apply. Tabulation of demographics was used to find characteristics of the sample in various categories. A five-point Likert-type scale was used in attitudinal responses, and was analyzed through the mean as a measure of central tendency and the accompanying standard deviations.

Conclusions indicated that the case studied was an excellent example of a technology-based music course, and that it appeals broadly to almost all students within its high school setting; it displays the same ratio of traditional to non-traditional students as does the general population. Several of the characteristics of non-traditional music students, as proposed by David Williams (2011b) are present in the sample population. Almost all of the characteristics of traditional music students as proposed by Carolee Stewart (1991), are present in the population studied. These same characteristics are also somewhat present to an opposite degree within the non-traditional music student population sampled. Students within the case study environment found the information and knowledge gained to be personally valuable and socially

relevant. Many of these students transfer their learning to situations outside of the music classroom. The technology-based music curriculum studied does not negatively impact the performance-based classes that operate alongside it, and the classroom teacher within the case study environment is a model of dedication to professional development.

Limitations to the study are undefined terminology used in the survey, accuracy of student responses to the survey questions, and the possible negative effect of frequent write-in answers not included in the list of responses shown to all respondents. Suggestions for further research include gender studies as they apply to participation in music technology and music performance classes, utilizing a larger population for survey completion, and discovering the impacts of personality and identity on music class participation.