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## Parallel Frames and Policy Narratives in Music Education and Physical Education

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**Abstract**

The relationship between music education and physical education can be portrayed as a competition for financial resources, student enrollment, instructional time, and community support. This article instead explores issues of commonality between the two disciplines, including their histories, curricular debates, shared concerns, mutual challenges, and potential futures. These issues are examined through examples of political narratives, or frames, that have been used to advance advocacy efforts and policy positions.

### **Parallel Frames and Policy Narratives in Music Education and Physical Education**

“It is perhaps surprising that there should be a need for a chapter in this book about the aims of a subject that has been a recognized part of education for almost a century” (Whitehead 2000, 7). This sentence is the first in a volume about the philosophy of a school subject that is required of all children during their elementary years, yet which becomes increasingly marginalized and fragmented during the secondary schooling years. The subject matter? We might be inclined to respond, “music education.” But, that would be incorrect. The correct answer: physical education.

Music education and physical education have long coexisted in schools. Music teachers frequently, but unfairly, characterize the relationship between these two subject areas as a competition for enrollment, student interest, and community support. This competitive situation can be readily seen when schools are forced to choose programs for elimination in circumstances like the current economic climate. The two subject areas are, however, more alike than not in their histories, pedagogical foundations, philosophies, and current challenges. For example, there are concurrent discussions about the purposes of musical and physical education, whether they exist for immediate achievement or for lifelong participation. There are debates about the role of instruction for all students (general music and physical education) and more specialized instruction for selected students (performing ensembles and athletic sports). This is further emphasized in discussions about the role of generalized instruction as a potential precursor to specialized instruction. Questions about the training of teachers in both subject areas interrogate whether teacher preparation programs should emphasize content expertise or pedagogical knowledge. Other current issues in both fields include gender equity, cultural diversity, the role

of local, national and international organizations in the life of the profession, and considerations of instrumental versus pragmatic benefits of an education in the discipline. A primary purpose of this article is to highlight parallel and divergent matters in music education and physical education in order that members of both professions might find opportunities to collectively support a fully liberal education for all students.

### **Frames, Narratives and Advocacy**

Music educators and physical educators have lengthy histories characterized by extensive and passionate advocacy endeavors. In music, philosophy and advocacy have served complementary functions in response to changing political, economic, technological, and societal circumstances (Goble 2010). Physical educators have similarly advocated for their needs and beliefs in a manner comparable to music but to a degree unlike educators in other subjects. Music education and physical education have mutually, since inception in the United States, occupied scholastic roles both celebrated and marginalized, often valued yet frequently undermined. Advocates for music education and physical education have continually sought to reduce marginality and increase the perceived value of their causes by framing their narrative story structures to influence policy outcomes.

Framing often incorporates the use of symbols and images to address a policy problem and a related set of values and preferred outcomes. Frames define core issues, who will benefit from potential policy decisions and who will suffer from others (Itkonen 2009). Research concerning the framing of policy issues suggests that chosen narratives frequently employ symbolic devices that portray stories of decline and/or hope (Stone 1997). In decline stories, the narrative tells of a situation that has worsened and is in need of policy correction. Hope stories,

in contrast, begin with a positive outlook and imply that a needed policy change can position its beneficiaries to achieve greater success and accomplishment. Through their chosen narrative frames, advocates create public images of issues, groups, and potential outcomes that can be persuasive to policymakers and other stakeholders. In so doing, advocates can position successful narratives to become the dominant and manifest stories, philosophies, and histories of their fields (Benedict 2009).

Narrative frames can be diagnostic or prescriptive in their attempt to define problems and pose solutions. They can also provide argumentative structures and/or create boundaries that separate issues one from another (Rein and Shon 1996). Each of these framing devices, narrative or structural, arises from a common goal of illuminating unseen issues, potentials, and implications. Narrative frames that enable such visioning are coherent, easily analogous to familiar themes, and position the policy goals within a broader story of progress and benefit. Advocacy efforts intended to influence policy decisions make use of framing devices intended to conceptualize issues and provide reasoning devices that facilitate the normative leap “from is to ought” (Rein and Shon 1996, 88).

Analyses of advocacy tactics indicate that hopeful or positive narrative frames generate far greater success rates than those that portray decline or begin from a negative stance (Itkonen 2009). Narratives that speak of building, enhancing, and growing are more successful than narratives that portray victimhood, inequity, or confrontation (McBeth et al 2007). Narrative frames can be rhetorical, as when framing centers on the presentation of ideas, theories, and concepts. Rhetorical frames may eventually influence policy, but the primary goal is the interrogation of ideas with political strategy a secondary objective. In contrast, action frames portray events and policies of the past, present, and/or future. These frames are constructed to

guide strategic actions that encircle the choice and implementation of new policy decisions (Rein and Shon 1996). A specific type of action frame is an “institutional action frame” that represents a hybrid of rhetorical and action frames, with emphasis on the political narrative that emerges from theoretical or philosophical decisions. These institutional action frames create zones of discretionary freedom for advocates as they are “more or less free to select particular combinations of elements” when constructing the frame (Rein and Shon 1996, 95). Problems arise during the development of framing strategies when multiple stakeholders present competing conceptions of the narrative, its claims, and its strategic usefulness. Such conflicts can result in controversies that mitigate chances for policy success. These conflicts become politically divisive and can render advocacy processes useless.

Advocacy issues in physical education and music education have been conceptualized in ways that have largely prevented schism within each field, though disagreements about philosophy, theory, and curriculum have existed among professionals in each discipline for well over a century. The next sections of this article present three ways in which narrative frames can be used to enable the sophisticated political storytelling necessary for coherent advocacy and policy development. These are not the only possible narrative frames, but the presentation of these three frames may result in increased legitimization in the reader’s mind by dint of their inclusion alone. That is the nature of narrative framing: the presented view is valued and excluded views are marginalized. This article continues with discussion of the history of and potential futures for physical education, their relevance to music education, and how the commonalities may lead the two disciplines to consider shared approaches to advocacy and policy.

### **An Action Frame: Early History of Physical Education in the United States**

One of the narrative frames employed to describe the histories of music education and physical education is built upon the influence of military matters on society and educational policy. In music, this is chronicled most commonly in descriptions of high school instrumental music, marching bands, community bands, and to a lesser extent, the a cappella choral movement (Leglar and Smith 2010, Leitzel 2006, Humphreys 1995 and 1989, McGee 2007, Sullivan 2008). From its early years through the middle part of the twentieth century, physical education was influenced by a series of legislative actions and policies paralleling the overall arc of music education's development. The following description is one narrative framing of physical education's history, and readers are invited to identify similarities within music education's early history.

The early years of American physical education were defined by ties between military drill and education. In 1790, President George Washington urged that the right to vote be coupled to a certificate of military and physical proficiency. This grew from perceptions of lack of stamina in the soldiers of the Revolutionary War (Drew 1944). Though this and related plans were not enacted at the time, they were later put forward in an 1817 Congressional resolution by the future president, William Henry Harrison. Harrison had been a brigadier general during the War of 1812 and became concerned about the physical performance of the American soldiers. Harrison recommended that Congress adopt a resolution requiring the Secretary of War to develop an overall plan to provide physical and military readiness instruction to all youth in the United States. Meanwhile, physical education in schools took important steps forward with the 1825 appointment of the first American teacher of physical education, Charles Beck, in



Northampton, MA, and the 1853 requirement of daily physical activity for schoolchildren in Boston, MA.

During the Civil War era, a need for physical conditioning of the Union troops led Congress to pass the Morrill Act of 1862 requiring land grant institutions to offer instruction in military exercises and physical conditioning (Drew 1944). The exact nature of this instruction was not specified, however, beginning the conversations that led toward modern physical education in America's public schools. The debate was between training that replicated military routines and several structured approaches to gymnastics with strong proponents of each.

In 1896, the United States Senate authorized the War Department to develop a bureau of military education. The bureau was tasked with implementing a comprehensive method for youth physical conditioning that focused on strength, flexibility, and vigor. This legislation was the first of nineteen bills and resolutions regarding military training and physical fitness to come before Congress between 1896 and 1917 (Morris 1997). By the year 1900, participation of students in organized physical education programs was common in urban schools though it was not the norm outside large cities.

By the start of the first World War, interscholastic sports and recreational activities had become fixtures in American high schools. Yet, more than thirty percent of the men called to duty by the Selective Service Act of 1917 were rejected for poor physical conditioning and the public demanded legislation to require physical education beyond competitive sports in schools. Between 1917 and 1919, twenty-four states enacted legislation relating to physical education in schools, though not all states made such programs mandatory. Implementation varied as some states permitted the substitution of interscholastic sports for a curricular program while others

varied between requirements for military drill/marching and calisthenics/gymnastics (Morris 1997).

Thirty-six states required physical education by the start of the 1930s, but most lacked specification of course objectives. In the midst of the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration provided for the construction and repair of athletic stadiums and recreational facilities in over 15,000 communities across the United States (Morris 1997). This provided the physical infrastructure for the development of physical education programs as we know them today.

The Schwert Physical Education Bill was introduced in Congress during the early 1940s. The proposed legislation appropriated \$200 million for the purpose of developing national preparedness through physical education. The Journal of Health and Physical Education served as the primary advocacy vehicle for the dissemination of information about this legislation to members of the American Association for Health and Physical Education. Though the bill was seen as the most promising avenue toward securing a permanent place for physical education in schools, the legislation was not passed because of the diversion caused by the onset of World War II. Many scholars trace the current state of wavering support for American physical education to this failed legislation of nearly seventy years ago. Physically fit soldiers became more important than physically fit students, and the government's attention turned away from physical education in public schools and toward physical education in the nation's military academies. Whereas physical education requirements in schools had previously resulted from legislation, physical education quickly became dependent upon its leaders and constituent teachers to ensure its future role.

### **An Institutional Action Frame: Dreaded Curricula and Hidden Pedagogies**

The narrative framing of physical education's relationship with military issues still resonates in the philosophical debates of the present day profession (Oca 2005). The decades since 1950 have been characterized by conversations about specific curricular and pedagogical issues, though these cloak underlying philosophical stances about the purposes and procedures of physical education. Whereas modern music education's most fruitful period of philosophical inquiry stretches from the early 1970s to quite possibly today, the parallel period in physical education's history occurred earlier, in the period of the World Wars to just after 1950. Since that point, much of physical education's philosophical effort has been dominated by issues associated with the role of competitive sport in scholastic and professional settings, due in part to the development of global media access to sporting events. The definition of physical education itself has long been a preoccupation within the discipline's philosophical community in the United States. Some definitions make distinctions between physical education, physical activity, sport, and kinesiology. These become evidenced within the curriculum and pedagogies presented in schools. These distinctions are, in essence, similar to distinctions between music education, general music, applied music, and performance. Depending on which axiological position is taken by framers, related questions arise about ethical, aesthetic, and socio-political implications.

This section presents issues of curriculum and pedagogy within an institutional action frame. In these frames, proponents of one position or another create narratives highlighting within-field elements supportive of their argument for institutional change. These arguments, once resolved, result in the policy positions framed by advocates for presentation to the public. In this case, the institutions are the disciplines of physical education and music education.

Curricular debates are among the main foci of conversations in both professional disciplines. Though they arise most commonly when responding to policy or financial pressures, these deliberations often represent expansive bodies of philosophical thought. Debates can become contentious, as in the 1990s-era positioning of aesthetic philosophy against emerging praxial philosophies in music education. When curricular decisions need to be made and issues are reduced for presentation as binaries, advocates for one view will position the other as untenable and/or undesirable. Narrative frames constructed around these decisions may, appropriating terms from research concerning motivation and identity, promote the “hoped” curriculum while disparaging the “dreaded” curriculum (Markus and Nurius 1986).

Catherine Ennis coined the phrase “dreaded curriculum” when referring to physical education curricula that “reflect the philosophical positions we hope are not incorporated into our educational systems” (Ennis 1997, 207). Ennis examined the philosophical decisions embedded within curriculum that become part of the advocacy/policy narrative when decisions need to be made about allocation of resources. Other examples can be seen in within-field controversies about skill-based instruction versus more wholistic curricula wherein skills are but a portion of the content (NASPE 2011, Perlman and Webster 2011, Whitehead 2000). For some physical educators, the dreaded curriculum is represented by the emphasis on sport-specific skills and techniques, while others dread curricular emphases on lifelong learning, social equity, and socio-emotional learning.

Before 1900, physical education was narrowly defined as gymnastics, physical training, or it was seen as promoting a physical culture. It was purposefully not considered a part of the total education program because of the philosophical concept of dualism, or separation of mind and body, that guided physical education. In this view, the mind was to be educated and the

body was to be trained (Kretchmar 1994). Dualism lessened its hold on physical education during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the influence of John Dewey and the American progressive education movement. Dewey dismissed notions of dualism and advocated the value of play, noting that when children become interested in an activity they naturally become more involved in that activity. Growing acceptance of Dewey's philosophy led to changes in American physical education (Morris 1997). From this so-called "new physical education" came approaches where the physical offered an "avenue for promoting education" (Weston 1962, 51), promoted focus on "mental, moral, or social benefits" (Felshin 1967, 115), and emphasized the "total education of the American child" (Freeman 1982, 68).

Curricular components addressing recreation and other lifetime sports became fundamental cornerstones of physical education. One of the most important philosophers of physical education in the mid-twentieth century was Jesse Feiring Williams, a colleague of Dewey at Teachers College, Columbia University. Williams was opposed to the idea that physical education was simply "an education of the physical" and instead championed the idea of "education *through* the physical" (Morris 1997, 66). His greater concern was for "emotional responses, personal relationships, group behaviors, mental learning, and other intellectual, social, emotional, and esthetic outcomes" (Freeman 2012, 4). These positions sparked ongoing debates about the nature and value of physical education (Freeman 2012, Whitehead 2000), leading eventually to a philosophical rift between athletic coaches and physical educators much as we might mark distinctions between musical conductors, performers, and teachers (Bruenger 2004).

After the failure of the Schwert Physical Education bill in the early 1940s, physical education turned to competitive sport as a vehicle for building support in communities and among taxpayers. Both physical education and music education developed teacher-led, large-

group activities (sports teams and musical ensembles) that performed at increasingly high levels of technical skill. This “sportification” of physical education (Kirk 2009, 6) was eventually countered by 1960s-era collegiate teacher preparation programs that emphasized issues grounded in research, learning theory, and socially relevant pedagogy. As in music education, this shift was influential toward positioning the discipline within the broader scope of education. An ironic result was that fledgling teachers gained fewer of the sporting skills that they would need to teach in classrooms. Pre-service physical educators became trained as generalists with little practical knowledge of the sport skills and coaching techniques that were central to school-based programs (Capel 2000). Some philosophers of physical education maintain that this been exacerbated by the infusion of curricular requirements and pedagogical techniques having little to do with either sport or physical activity. These “alien pedagogies” force teachers to either reflect required changes within curriculum and instruction or to willfully ignore them (Tinning 2000, 44).

Both music educators and physical educators have been presented with ways to bridge these divides through curricula that systematically increase amounts of skill-based instruction within contexts reflective of goals for lifelong participation and cultural relevance (Murdoch 1996, Regelski 1994). In many communities where competitive sport and/or musical performance are highly valued at the exclusion of other educational objectives, teachers often modify their pedagogical approaches while maintaining the official, state and/or school-mandated curriculum. Teachers in these situations, then, employ hidden pedagogies to enact the philosophical and curricular values they deem important. Whereas the more common term “hidden curriculum” refers to the unstated lessons transmitted by the very nature of the schooling process (Longstreet and Shane 1993, 46), the term “hidden pedagogy” is introduced here to

reference a teacher's instructional choices that allow her to maintain balance between personal philosophy and curricular mandates.

Many teachers find the dominant models of education to be outdated and/or restrictive. In physical education, for instance, the dominant model can be described as requiring “attendance without choice of activity or instructor; class assignment without [consideration of] student needs or achievement; short classes with time eroded by management rituals; short units with only brief introductory level instruction; evaluation based on rule-compliance, participation, and demeanor; and program content based on instructor interest and convenience” (Locke 1992, 361). Others have argued that physical education, and perhaps music education by extension, is so predicated on technical skill that the “whole” in the “whole-part-whole” instructional model is ignored, leaving emphasis on the “part” (Kirk 2009, 3). In these circumstances, curriculum loses its authenticity and connection with life outside the school environment. Individual teachers may, instead, develop hidden pedagogies intended to impart skills while conveying the joy of learning, participating, and communicating.

The continued existence of physical education and music education programs may itself be evidence that teachers invoke hidden pedagogies to either subvert or incorporate dreaded curricula. Prominent researchers have, for several decades, predicted the demise of physical education in the United States because of mismatches between dynamic societal values regarding physical activity and static curricula promoted by the field's large professional associations. Instead, teachers of physical education – and music education – may have found that the current national focus on assessments in math, science and English paradoxically affords some latitude to deliver instruction in ways that inventively bridge potential disparities between policy, philosophy and practice.

The ways teachers handle the practical matters of their instruction constitute their personal narrative frames whether these are conscious or not. When these frames become unhidden, verbalized and logically argued, they become points for discussion within the institution, or in this case, the discipline. The next section of this article examines a rhetorical frame concerning parallel issues within the disciplines of music education and physical education, followed by examination of how a resulting action frame might lead to advocacy and influence policy.

### **A Rhetorical Frame: Parallel Issues in Physical Education and Music Education**

Conversations within institutions such as academic disciplines result in the formation of philosophical ideals, the development of theory, and the positioning of constituents to consider various political implications. Conversations that eventually frame advocacy and policy are those that emerge with enough support that advocates can be considered spokespersons for consensus (though often not uniform) viewpoints. Individuals charged with leading institutions need to be cognizant of these within-field debates, noting discrepancies between the instrumental outcomes valued by politicians and policy makers, the focus of a field's professionals on intrinsic values, and the public's overriding concern with institutional values (Holden 2006).

There are many parallel areas of dialogue in the disciplines of music education and physical education that form the collective nuclei of within-field discussions about issues and trends. Some of these deal with highly contextualized and specific concerns, while others suggest underlying, systemic matters. Various worldwide physical education organizations periodically consider the views of their constituents when developing coherent narratives that may be conveyed as advocacy. We do this in arts education, too, and the results appear on the



advocacy website pages of MENC, NAEA, etc. For example, a 1999 worldwide summit enumerated the problems facing physical education despite it being declared a basic human right in UNESCO's 1978 International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (United States Sports Academy 1999). The subsequent 2<sup>nd</sup> World Summit on Physical Education specifically criticized the United States' focus on accountability measures relating to the *No Child Left Behind Elementary and Secondary Education (NCLB) Act* of 2002 and the consequent marginalization of physical education in many states through reductions in curricular requirements and time allotments. The ensuing report claimed that "nearly a third of all high schools in the United States exempt students from physical education classes if they are cheerleaders, members of the marching band, choir, or an athletic team," though the cited source could not be located (Hardman and Marshall 2005, 14).

A recent survey of United States physical education teachers in urban public school systems indicated a lack of administrative support, shortage of facilities and equipment, oversized classes, apathetic and unqualified physical education teachers, inadequate parental involvement, and difficulties motivating students to embrace daily physical activity (Robinson, Zeng and Leung 2008, 124). A systematic review conducted for this article confirms that much of the print and other media produced for practicing physical educators deals with these types of job-specific problems, ethical dilemmas, and sociological concerns. As in music education, this may be reflective of workplace realities, or it may reflect a lack of conscious and consistent philosophical underpinnings. Teachers who encounter only the professional literature directed toward immediate solutions may then attempt to manage the ethical and sociological issues of the day without reference to a coherent philosophical framework. This leads to, among other

things, teacher burnout and attrition – current issues in physical education and music education in both the United States and Canada.

Other issues and trends in physical education with parallels in music include, but are not limited to:

- ***Object of Study versus Study of the Object.*** The consensus in physical education is that the object of study is movement (or perhaps sport), raising concerns about balance when researchers and theorists focus entirely on the discipline's educational process (Ross 1978, 97 & 106). This is akin to debates in music education about the optimal timing and sequence of instruction and music-making experiences.
- ***Meritocracy.*** Opportunities to learn are afforded to high achieving students through tryouts for sports teams and other desired activities within physical education. This parallels the question of meritocracy in music education raised when auditioned performing ensembles dominate secondary school course offerings. Susan Bruengar (2004) has examined this issue, among others, in a study of challenges faced by high school music teachers and sports educators.
- ***Excellence and Ability.*** There is concern that physical education's emphasis on sport-specific skills and competitive teams has, over time, resulted in narrowly defined conceptions of ability and excellence (Evans and Penney, 2008). These definitions are conveyed to students in schools, resulting in negative affect and self-efficacy. This can be compared to what Patricia Shehan Campbell (2004) has termed the "Star System" where the celebration of high-ability music students results in the withdrawal of students of more modest ability levels. The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre described how people navigate misalignments of contextualized skill and personal ability as "accepting the

authority of those standards and the inadequacy of my own performance as judged by them” (1984, 187).

- ***Relevance to Lifelong Participation & Learning.*** There is broad consensus that physical education programs in North American higher education are not successfully functioning as extensions of pK-12 programs (Nigles 2005, Sweeny 2011). Students largely cease engagement in school-taught types of physical activity upon graduation from high school, and most never reengage as adults. This may be an outcome of emphasis on sport-specific skills and techniques that do not readily transfer to the daily lives of typical adults.
- ***Fragmentation.*** Music education is frequently compartmentalized into sub-disciplines including general music, band, orchestra, choir, theory, etc. Many of these sub-disciplines have their own professional associations, journals, and conferences. This is a concern within physical education, evidenced in the recent development of scholarly societies focused solely on kinesiology, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Some of the field’s most venerable leaders warn that such fragmentation, or “molecularisation,” (Kirk 2009, 139) will lead to disintegration of the professional structure and a subsequent lack of political impact (Zeigler 2010).
- ***Quest for Academic Acceptance.*** Since the 1950s, education has been steered by a number of forces, including a burgeoning research base, multiple reform movements, various systems of identifying standards and outcomes, and the increasing role of assessment and evaluation. Both physical education and music education have responded to these forces in ways commensurate with other academic disciplines. However, some philosophers in physical education contend that acquiescence to school culture

(scheduling of classes, sequencing of skills, assessment, and direct instruction) has moved the student experience of physical education far from the ways humans engage in physical activity. This can be similarly seen in music educators' discussions about "school music" versus the musics students engage with beyond school walls. David Kirk writes that "physical education's very success at becoming just like any other subject explains why its practitioners cling to its currently dominant form so tenaciously," and "to act against these powerful forces would be to undermine physical education's credibility as a school subject just like any other" (2009, 120 & 106).

### **Futures in Music Education and Physical Education**

Kirk (2009) has rhetorically framed three potential futures for physical education that may follow from the resolutions (or not) of the issues noted above. In first of physical education's potential futures, labeled "More of the Same," the field will continue to emphasize the teaching of skills for specific sports that are becoming less and less relevant to the daily physical activities of adults. In this scenario, and despite the stated intentions of the field at large, physical education will function merely as a break in the otherwise rigorous school day, providing opportunities for socialization yet creating hierarchies based on ability levels. Kirk sees this as the most likely scenario for the near term. As he relates, "There is no evidence to suggest that teachers would be willing to engage in a radical reform of their subject, and, indeed, there is considerable evidence to the contrary from the literature on curriculum innovation that they would be likely to resist change of a radical nature" (2009, 123). This process has been referred to elsewhere as engaging in "acts of curriculum maintenance" (Lawson 1988, 275). In the field of music education there are numerous conferences, symposia and journal publications

that convey alluring and convincing arguments for change. Still at question, though, is the practical effect of those efforts on policy, rates of musical participation and the longevity of music education as we know it today. What would it mean for those rhetorical frames to become realized as action frames?

The second of Kirk's potential futures involves "Radical Reform" as physical education transforms from emphasis on skill learning to multiple emphases reflective of the various ways humans engage in movement activity. These would involve separate strands of physical education as sport, as exercise, and as active leisure with each responsive to changes in society. Much of the discussion about curricular reforms in music education centers on the connection between scholastic activity and life outside schools. As sociologist Basil Bernstein (2003) noted, a field's multiple discourses regarding the object of study (physical education or music), study of the object (instruction), and the object in culture (beyond school) need to be aligned for there to be any hope of transformation or renewal. These three discourses serve as rhetorical frames requiring the action of transformation or renewal for their implementation. Advocates would need to ground their positions within the rhetorical frames while positioning proposed policy reforms within frameworks of action.

The third potential future for physical education is "Extinction," a long-term outgrowth of complacency and failure to reform that may render the field susceptible to economic trends and political realignments. Kirk cautions, "physical education has been so successful at becoming a school subject just like other subjects that the characteristics that make it unique, different and valuable have all but disappeared" (2009, 136). He states that the primary responsibility for reform rests with teacher education programs in higher education, with their graduates becoming the advocates and policy makers that will enact the needed reforms. Again,

the progression is from rhetoric to action, developing frames as mirrors that look backward toward rhetoric and forward toward action.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

When we look at the similarities between physical education and music education, we see two disciplines growing in knowledge and self-awareness, developing bodies of research literature, and entering conversations about the philosophical bases upon which we communally draw our ethical, aesthetic, and socio-political conclusions.

And yet, we see these two disciplines struggle time and again to retain their place in public schools. When their position is jeopardized by policy changes or economic crises, well-intentioned spokespersons highlight the instrumental or utilitarian benefits of the disciplines, but in so doing sabotage their positions by neglecting the uniquely intrinsic qualities of their discipline. When times get tough, as they certainly are today, fissures emerge along the fault line between the goals of physical and musical education for all versus the specialized sports teams and musical ensembles for a talented few. We see the value of physical education and music programs diminish in light of emphasis on the standardized testing required of schools. We see decisions being made about the elimination of this or that sport from the high school, team sports from the middle school, string music education from the elementary school, or music theory from the high school. The question becomes whether we will fight to save physical education in our school, or will we fight to save music education? Teacher is pitted against teacher, and program is pitted against program.

It would be cavalier to propose a simple solution, because there just isn't one. We might begin, though, by considering whether the similarities between the two fields of physical education and music education may provide previously unexplored strengths in our collective

quest to create cohesive narrative frames for advancement of our shared goals. For instance, within both disciplines there is a broad basis of philosophical inquiry regarding aesthetics. Aesthetics has a firm place in the discourse of music education and has served for several decades as a fulcrum for the leveraging of policy issues in schools. Aesthetic considerations have also been applied to physical education, mostly within the concept of sport and competition. A combined effort involving physical educators and music educators might further interrogate the philosophical considerations of aesthetics, meritocracy, and the selection process for membership in music ensembles and sports teams. Doing so might enliven discussion about the broad role of schooling and the more specialized roles of physical education and music education within contemporary schools.

In the realm of curriculum, and in recognition of the present economic conditions, a combined effort involving physical educators and music educators might develop parallel advocacy strategies for advancing each field's goals during periods of financial stress. Depending on the equipment used for the specific form of instruction, music education and physical education can be extremely expensive ventures (bands, orchestras, football) or among the lowest-cost components of schooling (choral music, classes based in basic physical activity). A consistent and coherent advocacy approach demonstrating shared goals and values might prove to be persuasive for school board members charged with making budgetary decisions. Meanwhile, a closer look at the relationship between educational philosophy and course offerings could provide a basis for meaningful curriculum reform in both music and physical education. Such curricular study might examine issues of cultural relevance, social justice, and lifelong learning as reflected in present-day society and how they might influence instruction in the musical and physical realms.

A more immediate and practical similarity exists in the students served by both music and physical education. These students are more than mere participants in our classes; they are developing, growing, and changing throughout the course of their schooling. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that students do not compartmentalize between subject areas. Rather, they see “school” as school and seek connections between subject areas and educative experiences. For instance, adolescent boys with changing voices may experience a sense of failure in singing due to their physical development at the same moment their physical changes are being applauded in the gymnasium. My interviews with boys suggest that they want to gain knowledge about the physical nature of their musical selves in much the same way as they learn about their physical selves in the gymnasium. If the goals of our students are not easily compartmentalized, perhaps the customary borders of our various educational fields are more porous than we might think.

In short, the histories, philosophies, curricula, and academic growth of music education and physical education render the two fields more similar than dissimilar. Where music educators often report that they work in isolation and advocate for their programs without support, it may be that beginning conversations with the physical educators in their own schools can lead to cooperation, camaraderie and change that extends beyond the teacher’s room into classrooms, beyond school walls into communities, and beyond communities into the collective sense of the nation. Political decisions and conversations about advocacy might then reflect the broad considerations of a truly liberal education that is open to all.



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