

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Issues facing current teacher preparation programs such as certification requirements, course loads, and the need for field experiences may not result from current trends as some may think. Many of these issues have existed throughout the history of music teacher preparation. Through a content analysis of archived conference proceedings of the Music Supervisors National Conference (MSNC) found at the University of Maryland College Park, this study examines discussions and research findings regarding the nature of early teacher training programs and the development of a common plan of study present in many current music teacher preparation programs. Conference proceedings from 1910 (the adoption of the MSNC constitution) to 1941 (United States enters into World War II) are examined to trace the development, content, adaptation, and implementation of the Education Council's proposal to create a normal standard for teacher preparation.

Historical researchers in music education have primarily focused on the development of music in the public schools and not the preparation of teachers. In the late 1800's, music instruction was the responsibility of the general elementary teacher. In turn, the elementary teacher was supervised by the music supervisor whose responsibilities included: a) monitoring student progress, b) creating curricula, and c) working with the general teacher to improve music instruction of the students.

General education teachers received their certification in music instruction in a variety of ways. For example, one method of certification involved elementary teachers attending certificate programs presented by method book publishers that lasted only a few weeks. An additional method involved the passing of a teacher exam, which focused on assessing music knowledge while yet another method for certification required the completion of a teacher training program (Colwell, 2003).

The confounding effects of music becoming widely accepted into public school curricula, the inconsistencies in the methods to obtain music teacher certification, and the increased movement in general education for child-centered education, brought an awareness of the deficiencies in the training of music teachers. To address the growing concerns of MSNC members regarding the lacking of reliability in programs for preparing music teachers, in 1918 the MSNC charged a committee of the Education Council, under the guidance of Hollis Dann and Karl Gerhrens, to develop a standard course of study for music supervisor preparation programs. Three years later, Dann and Gerhrens presented the committee's findings. The Education Council proposed a four year plan of study in music supervisor preparation to be adopted nationwide. The MSNC membership passed the proposal unanimously (MSNC, 1921).

The present study isolates and identifies similarities and differences between past and current programs. The intent of the current study is to provide information that may lead to an increased historical understanding of teacher preparation. Those currently responsible for preparing future teachers may use this information to assess and improve teacher preparation programs to better meet the needs of future music educators and the students they will teach.

References

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- Gerhens, K. W., & Dann, H. (1921). Report of the committee on training courses for music supervisors. *Proceedings of the Music Supervisors National Conference, St. Josephs Missouri, 217-220.*