

Graduate Student Profile

Juliet Hess, University of Toronto



Juliet Hess

Juliet Hess is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, where she focuses on elementary music teachers who challenge dominant paradigms in music education with an emphasis on social justice education. She graduated from the University of Toronto with a Master of Music, a Bachelor of Music, and a Bachelor of Education, where her studies emphasized critical race theory, feminist theory, music education philosophy, composition, Ghanaian (Ewe) music, choral music, voice, and world music. She teaches a course at Ryerson University on vocal musics from around the world and teaches music to generalist teachers in the Initial Teacher Education program at the University of Toronto.

Statement of Research

Now firmly grounded in the 21st century, it seems in many ways music education has reached a crossroads where in order to move forward, we, as music educators, must re-envision all that music education is and has been. As Elliott and Veblen (2006) note, against the backdrop of violence, poverty, and disease, music

education as it currently stands “seem[s] quaint, if not largely irrelevant”. Many music education scholars are thus working to reconceptualize music education in such a way that it is relevant indeed. They actively seek ways to engage music education toward social justice to explore how music could, in fact, matter. Formerly excluded from the study of music education, the question of the social impact of music education now emerges at the forefront of research in the discipline.

However, within all of the theorizing on social justice and music education, there appears to be little research on how different teachers take up these ideas in classroom settings. What kinds of discourses do teachers mobilize in music classrooms that do this work? Do teachers align themselves with principles of any particular framework either in theory or in practice? How does their professional and personal background and education shape their work in the classroom and the choices they make? What are the tenets of their philosophies? In the prevalent discussion of the gap between theory and practice, what is the practical reflection of this current push to re-envision music education? My doctoral work attempts to address some of these questions through exploring the discourse, practice, and philosophy of four music educators – Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan – who aim to challenge the dominant paradigm of music education in their classrooms in order to put forward what I term a pedagogy for social change.

In order to examine the discourses, practices, and philosophies of four elementary music educators who strive to challenge the dominant paradigm of music education, I employed the methodology of a multiple case study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). I observed in each school for an eight-week period for two full days each week. I conducted semi-structured interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of each observation process. I followed an observation protocol at each school, in addition to completing three interviews, and keeping a journal. In this work, I mobilized a tri-faceted lens that combines the theoretical frameworks of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-racist feminism toward counterhegemonic goals.

The teachers’ diverse practices include critically engaging with issues of social justice, studying a broad range of musics, contextualizing musics, considering differential privilege, and subverting hegemonic practices. In many ways, these four individuals interrupt the traditional Eurocentric focus on Western classical music to explore different possibilities with

their students. However, within this work to subvert, there were moments in each classroom where the dominant paradigm was reinscribed. These subversions and reinscriptions are instructive to music education and carry broader implications for the discipline.

Recent Publications

“Performing Tolerance and Curriculum: The Politics of Self-Congratulation, Identity Formation, and Pedagogy in World Music Education.” *Philosophy of Music Education Review*. (forthcoming)

“Performing the ‘Exotic?’: Constructing an Ethical World Music Ensemble.” *Visions of Research in Music Education*. (forthcoming)

2012. “Docile Choristers and the ‘Choir Machine’: A Search for Agency in ‘Choir.’” *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas*, 28/1: 37-48.

2010. “Musically Creolizing Subjects: Re(Envisioning) World Music Education.” *Encounters on Education*, 11: 155-166.

2010. “The Sankofa Drum and Dance Ensemble: Motivations for Student Participation in a School World Music Ensemble.” *Research Studies in Music Education*, 32/1: 23-42.

2009. “The Oral Tradition in the Sankofa Drum & Dance Ensemble: Student Perceptions.” *Music Education Research*, 11/1: 57-75.

Recent Conference and Invited Papers

2013. “Radical Musicking: Bakhtin’s Novel versus the Epic in Music Education.” Presented at Research in Music Education (RIME), University of Exeter, Exeter, UK, April.

2012. “Performing ‘Tolerance’: Musical Voyeurism and the Politics of Self-Congratulation.” Invited guest lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, London, UK, July.

2012. “Performing ‘Tolerance’: Musical Voyeurism and the Politics of Self-Congratulation.” Second Global Conference, Images of Whiteness, Oxford University, UK, July.

2012. “Can Music Matter?: The Social Effects of Elementary Music Education. The Aims of Music

Education.” The 24th MayDay Group Colloquium, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, June.

2012. “Workshop: Global Chorus.” Invited workshop at the Canadian Society for Traditional Music Conference, Ryerson University, May.

2011. “Performing the ‘Exotic?’: Constructing an Ethical World Music Ensemble.” New Directions in Music Education: Revitalizing Middle and High School Music, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, October.

2011. “Musical Exclusions: Indigenous Musical Knowledge in the Academy.” The 7th International Symposium on the Sociology of Music Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, June.

2011. “Tokenism in the Classroom: Decolonizing Music Education.” Research in Music Education (RIME), University of Exeter, Exeter, UK, April.

2011. “Performing Tolerance: The Politics of Self-Congratulation and the Study of ‘World Music.’” Invited guest lecture at Ryerson University, January.

2010. “Performing Tolerance: The Politics of Self-Congratulation and the Study of ‘World Music.’” *Race, Erasure, and Equity in Music Education*, CRÈME International Conference and Consortium for Institutional Cooperation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October.

2010. “Musically Creolizing Subjects: (Re)Envisioning World Music Education.” Arts for Social and Environmental Justice Symposium, Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, May.

Bibliography

Elliott, D.J., & Veblen, K.K. 2006. “Canadian Music Schools: Toward a Somewhat Radical Miss-ion.” *Ecclectica Music* 5/2.

Merriam, S.B. 1998. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Yin, R.K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed. Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.