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THE AXIOLOGICAL APPROACH IN MUSIC EDUCATION: DEVELOPING STUDENTS' VALUES THROUGH MUSICAL LEARNING

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Abstract. This article examines the axiological approach as a theoretical and methodological foundation for contemporary music education. The approach places values-such as cultural identity, empathy, respect, creativity, cooperation, and responsibility-at the centre of musical learning. Rather than treating music lessons only as the acquisition of performance skills or theoretical knowledge, an axiological perspective views music as a means of personal development, cultural dialogue, and ethical reflection. The article discusses the concept of values in education, the educational potential of musical experience, and practical strategies for integrating value-oriented learning into school and teacher-training contexts. Particular attention is given to culturally responsive repertoire, reflective listening, collaborative performance, creative tasks, and assessment methods that recognise both musical progress and personal engagement. The article argues that value formation should not be reduced to moral instruction or imposed interpretations of musical works. Instead, learners should be supported in exploring diverse musical meanings, articulating their responses, and engaging respectfully with different traditions. The paper concludes with recommendations for curriculum design, teacher preparation, and further research.

Keywords: axiological approach; music education; values education; musical culture; aesthetic experience; intercultural dialogue; learner development.

Introduction. Music education contributes to more than the development of singing, instrumental performance, rhythm, and musical literacy. It also creates opportunities for learners to encounter different cultural traditions, interpret emotional expression, work collaboratively, and reflect on their relationships with themselves and others. These dimensions make music a particularly meaningful area for value-oriented education. In a rapidly changing social and digital environment, music teachers are increasingly expected to help learners develop cultural awareness, empathy, independent judgement, and respect for diversity alongside subject-specific competence. The axiological approach derives from the concept of axiology, the philosophical study of values. In education, it directs attention to what learners consider meaningful, how values are experienced and discussed, and how educational practices influence personal and social development. Applied to music education, this approach considers musical works, performance practices, listening, movement, composition, and discussion as experiences through which learners can explore aesthetic, cultural, social, and ethical values.

The purpose of this article is to explain the theoretical significance of the axiological approach in music education and to identify practical ways of implementing it. The article is conceptual in nature: it synthesises established ideas in music education, aesthetic education, and values-oriented pedagogy rather than reporting the results of a new empirical study.

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Values are beliefs, ideals, or principles that people use to interpret experiences, make choices, and evaluate actions. In educational settings, values may include truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, respect, solidarity, freedom, creativity, and appreciation of cultural heritage. They are not developed solely through verbal explanation. Values are also shaped through relationships, classroom routines, meaningful participation, examples set by teachers, and opportunities to make decisions and reflect on their consequences. An axiological approach places the learner's relationship with values at the centre of the educational process. It asks not only what knowledge a student has acquired, but also why that knowledge matters, how it relates to human experience, and how it may be applied responsibly. This perspective does not mean that every lesson must become a moral lecture. Rather, values are integrated into the content, methods, interactions, and reflection that form part of ordinary teaching and learning. In music education, values can be considered across several connected dimensions. Aesthetic values concern sensitivity to musical form, expression, beauty, and originality. Cultural values concern the preservation, interpretation, and respectful exchange of musical traditions. Social values develop through ensemble work, listening to others, shared responsibility, and collective achievement. Personal values include perseverance, self-expression, confidence, and openness to new experiences. Ethical values become visible when learners discuss respectful representation, ownership, inclusion, and the context in which music is performed or shared. These dimensions overlap. Learning a traditional song, for example, can involve musical technique, historical understanding, cultural identity, respect for the community associated with the song, and reflection on how the song's meaning may change across generations. A value-oriented lesson therefore connects musical knowledge with the human contexts in which music is created and experienced.

Music communicates through sound, structure, rhythm, timbre, silence, and performance. It can express joy, grief, hope, protest, belonging, and many other dimensions of human experience. Because musical meaning is often experienced emotionally as well as intellectually, music can invite learners to consider perspectives different from their own. Listening to a work from an unfamiliar tradition may encourage curiosity, while comparing interpretations can help students recognise that people may respond differently to the same artistic experience. Music also provides a practical setting for learning cooperation. Ensemble performance depends on attention, timing, preparation, mutual adjustment, and responsibility for a shared outcome. Students learn that individual contribution matters, but that it must be coordinated with the contributions of others. Such experiences can support patience, reliability, and respect. These outcomes are not automatic, however: teachers need to establish inclusive group norms and ensure that all learners have meaningful opportunities to participate. The cultural dimension is especially important. Songs, instruments, dances, and musical practices often carry memories of place, language, family, community, and historical experience. Introducing learners to local and national musical heritage can strengthen cultural knowledge and continuity. At the same time, a broad repertoire that includes music from different societies can challenge stereotypes and promote intercultural dialogue. The goal is not to rank traditions or present cultures as fixed and uniform, but to help learners understand music within its context and appreciate both difference and shared human concerns. Music can also support personal agency. Improvisation, composition, arranging, and interpretive performance allow learners to make choices and communicate ideas. When teachers invite students to explain those choices, learners practise articulating preferences, responding to feedback, and revising their work. This process can develop

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confidence without equating musical ability with personal worth. A supportive environment recognises progress, effort, curiosity, and thoughtful participation as well as technical achievement.

First, the principle of meaningful musical experience requires students to engage actively with music. Listening, singing, playing, moving, composing, and discussing should be connected rather than taught as isolated activities. A value becomes educationally meaningful when learners can encounter it in an experience and reflect on what that experience suggests. Second, the principle of cultural responsiveness requires teachers to select repertoire thoughtfully. Musical examples should reflect learners' cultural environments while also broadening their horizons. Teachers should provide accurate context, avoid superficial or stereotypical representations, and acknowledge the people and communities connected with the music. Where appropriate, local musicians, family members, or cultural practitioners may be invited to share knowledge, with due respect for consent and community protocols. Third, the principle of dialogue encourages open-ended questions. Instead of telling students what a musical work must mean, teachers can ask: What did you notice? Which musical features shaped your response? What might this music mean to different listeners? What contextual information changes your interpretation? Such questions allow personal responses while requiring learners to support interpretations with attentive listening and relevant evidence. Fourth, the principle of inclusion recognises differences in prior experience, confidence, language, disability, and access to instruments or technology. Teachers can offer varied roles-performer, listener, rhythm keeper, researcher, composer, or presenter-so that students can contribute in different ways. Accessible arrangements, visual supports, flexible grouping, and adapted instruments can reduce barriers to participation. Fifth, the principle of reflection connects experience to conscious understanding. Short listening journals, exit tickets, peer feedback, group discussions, and creative responses can help learners identify what they have learned musically and what they have learned about collaboration, culture, or themselves. Reflection should be age-appropriate and should not require students to disclose private emotions or beliefs.

Reflective listening can be used to explore aesthetic sensitivity and empathy. Before listening, the teacher introduces a guiding question without prescribing a single emotional response. During listening, students note changes in tempo, dynamics, texture, or instrumentation. Afterwards, they compare interpretations and explain which musical details informed their responses. This process develops careful attention and respect for differing viewpoints. Comparative repertoire projects can develop cultural awareness. Students may investigate two versions of a song, two musical traditions, or different instruments used in particular communities. They can compare rhythm, timbre, performance setting, language, and social function. The teacher should guide students to distinguish observable musical features from assumptions about the people who create the music. The final product may be a poster, short presentation, annotated playlist, or class exhibition. Collaborative performance can make responsibility and cooperation visible. A class ensemble can agree on rehearsal goals, allocate roles, establish turn-taking rules, and reflect on how the group responds when a section is difficult. Assessment can include preparation, listening to peers, constructive feedback, and contribution to the shared performance, alongside musical accuracy. Rotating leadership roles helps prevent a small number of confident students from controlling all decisions. Creative composition tasks allow learners to explore identity and expression. Students can create a short soundscape representing a place, a season, a story, or an imagined journey. They may choose instruments, body percussion, voice, or digital sound tools. After presenting their work, they can explain their choices

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and listen to classmates' interpretations. Teachers should provide alternatives for learners who prefer not to share personal experiences directly.

Interdisciplinary projects can connect music with literature, history, visual art, language, and social studies. For example, students can study the historical setting of a song, analyse its poetic language, create visual imagery inspired by its sound, and discuss how music can preserve collective memory. Such projects demonstrate that music is both an artistic discipline and a social practice. Digital tools can expand access to recordings, notation, composition software, and global musical resources. However, technology should serve clear educational purposes. Teachers should discuss responsible sharing, copyright, attribution, privacy, and respectful online communication. Students should be encouraged to evaluate the reliability and context of online material rather than assuming that all available content is accurate.

The music teacher is central to the implementation of an axiological approach. The teacher models respectful listening, fairness, curiosity, and openness to revision. Classroom conduct is particularly important: if students' musical preferences or cultural backgrounds are mocked, the stated values of inclusion and respect lose credibility. Teachers therefore need to establish clear expectations for feedback, disagreement, and participation. Assessment should remain transparent and educationally appropriate. Musical knowledge and skills-such as rhythmic accuracy, pitch, interpretation, listening, and understanding of musical elements-can be assessed with established criteria. Value-related learning is better explored through observation, self-assessment, peer feedback, reflective writing, and discussion than through grading students' private beliefs or emotional reactions. A teacher should not reward students for expressing a supposedly correct opinion about a piece of music. A balanced assessment framework may consider four areas: musical engagement and attentive listening; cooperation and responsibility during shared tasks; ability to explain interpretations using musical evidence; and respect for different traditions and perspectives. These areas should be described through observable behaviours. For example, a student may demonstrate respect by listening without interruption, asking a sincere question, or offering feedback that focuses on the work rather than attacking the performer. Teacher preparation should include opportunities to examine repertoire selection, cultural context, inclusive teaching, facilitation of sensitive discussions, and ethical use of digital resources. Professional learning communities can help teachers share lesson plans, review student work, and discuss challenges. The purpose is not to standardise every student's response, but to create conditions in which musical learning and value reflection can occur responsibly.

Several challenges require attention. One is the risk of moralising: if a teacher assigns a single approved meaning to a musical work, students may learn to repeat the expected interpretation instead of thinking independently. Another is cultural simplification, which can occur when a tradition is represented by one song or a few generalisations. Teachers should acknowledge complexity and, when possible, consult reliable sources and practitioners. A further challenge is assessment. Values are complex and cannot be measured completely through a short checklist or a single performance. Observable indicators can guide feedback, but they should not be treated as definitive measures of a learner's character. Similarly, teachers must avoid assuming that quiet students lack empathy or that confident performers necessarily demonstrate stronger cultural understanding. Time, resources, class size, and access to instruments may also limit implementation. Low-cost activities using voice, body percussion, found sounds, and shared listening can provide meaningful experiences where specialist

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resources are unavailable. The quality of the learning environment, the relevance of the repertoire, and the care taken in discussion are often as important as expensive equipment.

The axiological approach offers a useful framework for understanding music education as a process that integrates musical learning with aesthetic awareness, cultural understanding, social responsibility, and personal development. It broadens the aims of music lessons without reducing music to a tool for teaching morals. Musical works and practices remain worthy of study in their own right, while also opening opportunities for learners to reflect on values and human experience. Effective implementation requires meaningful musical activity, culturally responsive repertoire, inclusive participation, dialogue, and reflection. Teachers should model respect, provide space for multiple interpretations, and assess observable learning behaviours without judging students' private beliefs. Collaboration, creative composition, comparative listening, and interdisciplinary projects can make value-oriented learning practical and age-appropriate. Further research could examine how different classroom strategies influence learners' musical engagement, intercultural understanding, collaborative skills, and reflective capacity over time. Such research should use transparent methods, recognise contextual differences, and avoid claiming that a single lesson produces lasting changes in character. Ultimately, an axiological approach is most productive when it enables students to experience music deeply, understand it thoughtfully, and participate in musical life with curiosity, care, and respect.

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