A comparative review of music education in mainland China and the United States: From nationalism to multiculturalism
A Comparative Review of Music Education in Mainland China and the United States: From Nationalism to Multiculturalism

Wai-Chung Ho

Abstract

This paper will attempt to compare interactions between social changes and the integration of nationalism and multiculturalism in the context of music education, by focusing on the ways in which the governmental politics of Mainland China and the United States have managed nationalism and diversity in school music. It explores the ways in which music education, in response to different socio-political contexts, relates to the teaching of both musical and non-musical meanings in the dual context of nationalism and multiculturalism, and discusses some of the challenges facing music education in music classrooms today in these two nations. It argues that the interplay of tensions in the current wave of nationalism and multiculturalism seen in both Mainland China and the United States show the enduring nature of state ideologies in a dynamic, contentious process of social construction.

Keywords
comparative education

Full Text:
PDF

The earliest systematic music education in the country was centered on the training of singers for Protestant church services, to lead the congregation in psalm-singing. In the 18th century, the first singing schools in the country were founded, and a number of legendary traveling singing masters traveled New England, teaching in barns, schoolhouses and other informal locations; these masters included Francis Hopkinson and William Billings. By the end of the century, more formal singing schools in cities like Savannah, Philadelphia and Boston became social singing societies. His Pestalozzian approach to music was brought to the United States, translated, and popularized by William Channing Woodbridge, Elam Ives, and Lowell Mason. A collection of teachers give us a glimpse into their multicultural classrooms. We also have started having outside of school hours time for families to come in to understand about how the education system works. We had a Roma day last year, as an example. It is a challenge but it can also be enriching for the other students. Some come with incredible talents, such as one particular Roma student who can play the piano and violin extremely beautifully just by listening to a piece of music and then copying it. Jess Hamer, science teacher at Lampton School in Hounslow. Lampton is a ‘complex urban’ academy in west London.