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## EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

1 Effective educational strategies to promote life-long musical investment: Perceptions of  
2 educators  
3

4  
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### Abstract

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While research has broadly considered the wide-ranging intellectual, social, personal and physical benefits of active musical participation across the lifespan, there is little research that explores how music educators work to promote participant investment inside school and beyond. The present research, therefore, aimed to investigate the practices employed by leading music educators within a range of cultural and pedagogical contexts that facilitate investment towards life-long engagement in music. Interviews with North American, European and Australian music educators with both practitioner and research expertise from within school as well as higher education institutions were undertaken to gather reflections on participants' own practices and beliefs. Content analysis of the interview transcripts revealed deep knowledge and skills relating to teaching music, education philosophy and pedagogy and strong recognition of the support of peers, supervisors, institution/school and local community. It was clear that interviewees were deeply influenced by local, national, and cultural trends. Further, the advice they offered for new/beginning music educators was to think beyond the structure of their own music education and to explore culturally diverse educational experiences for students. Educational approaches that fostered co-production were favored, thus guiding students in their pursuits in learner-directed environments. While the beliefs and practices described are not 'new'—echoing well-established educational philosophies— all interviewees argue for a shift from the prevailing pedagogical practice based on expertise training to the promotion cultural connectedness and sharing in and through musical experience. These findings are discussed in terms of Self-Determination Theory, to provide a framework for how music educators can facilitate long-term musical investment through the development of autonomous engagement to generate personal meaning and value in music, which can translate to deeper, longer musical investment. Exploring these pedagogical practices and beliefs in terms of Self-Determination Theory is a significant addition to the literature, enabling the consideration of the type of motivation required to stimulate and develop long-term interest in music.

Keywords: music education, musical investment, life-long, music participation, self-determination theory

# Effective educational strategies to promote life-long musical investment: Perceptions of educators

## Introduction

As McCrary (2001, p.29) remarked, “music educators and researchers should be tireless in their efforts when seeking answers to vitally important questions [including] are we providing outstanding music experiences that foster life-long participation in music”? Research evidence supports the benefits of musical participation across the lifespan. This includes intellectual transfer effects in earlier life (Henriksson-Macaulay & Welch, 2015; Williams, Barrett, Welch, Abad, & Broughton, 2015) as well as broader benefits to socio-emotional and physical health and well-being into old age (Krause, Davidson, & North, 2018). Accordingly, the present research asks: What are the music educators’ practices for promoting on-going musical engagement? Are there practices appropriate to different forms of music education that serve different cultural contexts and life stages?

Some published work has offered advice and/or strategies regarding teaching strategies to promote student competency and success in general (e.g., Cooper, 2015) as well as strategies pertaining to specific components to music education, such as improvisation (e.g., Azzara, 1999), and practice (e.g., Barry & McArthur, 1994). Cooper’s (2015, p. 3) suggestions, for instance, include providing students with foundational knowledge, opportunities for performance, collaboration, and reflection, and encouraging both creativity and critical thinking. This work is very limited, however, as it does not address promoting students’ on-going musical engagement. Another line of enquiry has considered music teachers’ beliefs about and experiences of professional development (e.g., Bauer, 2007; Conway & Holcomb, 2008), preservice/first-year music teachers’ concerns and needs (e.g., Berg & Miksza, 2010; Fredrickson & Hackworth, 2005; Hourigan & Scheib, 2009; Miksza & Berg, 2013), and identity development as a teacher (e.g., Dolloff, 1999; Haston & Russell, 2012). This work, including the investigations regarding the types of skills and characteristics of successful and effective teaching particularly (e.g., Davis, 2006; Miksza, Roeder, & Biggs, 2010; Mills & Smith, 2003; Rohwer & Henry, 2004; Taebel, 1980; Teachout, 1997), have implications for promoting students’ on-going musical engagement, even with their emphasis on teacher advancement, training, and retention rather than student engagement. Enthusiasm and energy and good classroom management appear to be critical to successful teaching for instance - as they were the two highest ranked characteristics and skills in Miksza et al.’s (2010) study. Interestingly, the findings from multiple studies (Davis, 2006; Miksza et al., 2010; Mills & Smith, 2003; Teachout, 1997) indicate that personal and teaching skills and characteristics are perceived as more important than music skills. However, identifying particular strategies and skills that will specifically promote students’ continued investment remains absent in this previous work.

One area of significant research concerns teacher success by focusing on musical achievements of younger school-aged students (Klinedinst, 1991). This work is limited since it is achievement outcome focused, e.g.: a score on an aptitude test, a certain score at a competition, or a particular performance. Furthermore, much of the research on continued involvement in music is specifically focused on recruitment into classroom music education (e.g., Abeles, 2004; Albert, 2006), student retention - and drop out - in school music programs (e.g., Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003; Baker, 2009; Brown, 2012; Corenblum & Marshall,

1 1998), and retention at school transition points (e.g., Ayling & Johnston, 2005; Bruenger,  
2 2009). Some research has considered the difference between students who persist or drop out  
3 of instrumental lessons (e.g., Costa-Giomi, Flowers, & Sasaki, 2005; Pitts, Davidson, &  
4 McPherson, 2000), but again its focus has been on school aged participation.

5 Research considering the role of educators has also considered the students' musical  
6 development, with no attention being given to the teachers' perspective. The measured  
7 outcome - musical development - is framed with regard to success as defined by instrumental  
8 mastery, or musical ability (e.g., Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, & Howe, 1998; Davidson,  
9 Sloboda, & Howe, 1996; McPherson, 2009; McPherson & Davidson, 2002; Sichivitsa, 2007).  
10 While this research does highlight the influence of educators and key family members in a  
11 student's development, it does not examine the teacher's motivations or approaches.

12 The idea of continuing musical involvement seems of particular relevance to education  
13 when it is known that musical engagement can result in benefits to other curriculum  
14 performance (Costa-Giomi, 2014) and can also lead to an investment in music to offer routes  
15 to socio-emotional engagement and well-being across the lifespan. Indeed, a goal of music  
16 education has been to inspire students to continue participating in music into the future  
17 (Bowles, Dobbs, & Jensen, 2014; Cavitt, 2005; Mantie & Tucker, 2008; Sichivitsa, 2002;  
18 Silveira, 2013). However, as Green and Hale (2011, p.46) stated, "continued participation  
19 [across the lifespan] is realized less often than music educators might wish" and they urged  
20 researchers to consider what might influence continued participation. Framed in terms of  
21 Achievement Goal Theory, they offered suggestions to promote a learning orientation  
22 amongst students (in order to foster motivation) that include: using varied, meaningful, and  
23 challenging tasks; emphasizing effort, improvement, and enjoyment rather than competition  
24 during evaluation tasks; and providing opportunities for student input and choice (Green &  
25 Hale, 2011, p. 47). The work considers the learning environment and music-making 'culture',  
26 which as Paparo (2013) discussed, influence whether and to what degree students are  
27 involved in music-making - both in and out of school. Paparo (2013, p. 35) argued that  
28 educators should incorporate practices that "enable students to be autonomous at each level of  
29 their development" to assist in promoting life-long musical involvement. It seems that  
30 educators should encourage their students to make music beyond the classroom - and to focus  
31 on aspects of the classroom program that will promote continued participation as well as  
32 promote links to the learning outside of school (Silveira, 2013).

33 A disconnect exists, then, between an acknowledgement that music education should  
34 be focused on promoting life-long engagement in music and the existing research that has  
35 concentrated on early success, school music achievement, and then continued involvement in  
36 music as a separate field of enquiry. The present study is designed to explore **how** music  
37 educators in a range of contexts can support investment **both inside school and beyond**,  
38 across the lifespan. The research specifically asked, what practices facilitate investment  
39 towards life-long engagement in music from amateur to a full professional performance  
40 career? This question was investigated within a range of cultural and pedagogical contexts  
41 that shape the music educator's work, thus 'music educator' was definitely broadly to include  
42 those working in school settings, community contexts and in therapeutically-focused work.

## 43 44 Method

### 1 **Sample**

2 The study was based on interviews with leading North American, European and  
3 Australian music education experts, selected through purposive sampling, all with at least 20  
4 years of experience. This was set as a benchmark to ensure long practice and engagement  
5 with theory. In order consider the range of music and pedagogical context that shape music  
6 educator's work, we included higher education theorists and practitioners from school, music  
7 therapy, community musicians and performance backgrounds. In particular, the sample  
8 includes 12 participants, including a higher education level music educator with 35 years of  
9 experience, a former higher education music educator, back in the classroom, running a very  
10 large music department in a school from K-Year 12, with 25 years of experience, two music  
11 teachers working in secondary education , a higher education level community music  
12 educator, two community music facilitators, a higher education music therapist, two  
13 practicing music therapists, a higher education performance educator, and two performers.

### 14 **Procedure**

15 Informal open-ended interviews (Bhattacharya, 2017) were conducted with the  
16 participants. This type of interview is conducted in a conversational style, and is based on  
17 exploring key ideas without a set of structured questions (Bhattacharya, 2017) - adapting the  
18 conversation to the experiences of each interviewee. Each interview began by asking the main  
19 research question, but then was tailored to each participant's experience to allow for deeper  
20 exploration. The primary interview questions focused on the interviewee's experiences,  
21 motivations, examples of practice and grounding for these. As such, the data collected was  
22 based on the participants' reflections of their own practice and beliefs.

### 23 **Data analysis**

24 Working within a grounded theory framework, interview transcriptions were analyzed  
25 for emergent areas of interest (in line with Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Saldaña, 2015). In line  
26 with grounded theory, the exploration began with an analysis of the interview data, and then,  
27 working from these data, appropriate theoretical models were explored.

28

29

### **Results**

30 Interviewees were all highly informed of research that defined music's potential and all had  
31 strong beliefs regarding its usefulness to life. Perhaps the most clarifying statement came  
32 from the music education professor:

33

34 The arguments have always been... like in nineteenth-century England, that you did  
35 music for moral cohesion, that your... young people could actually learn to sing  
36 hymns, and appreciate that kind of religious aspect of life that was seen as somehow  
37 cementing the workforce, if nothing else... But I think more and more, the evidence  
38 is... that this musicality is by human design and so means that we have a moral  
39 responsibility to invest in music, because it's part of what it means to be human. And  
40 therefore, if it's part of what it means to be human, then people will do it anyway,  
41 which is fine. But from an education system point of view, should you nurture it? And  
42 so, the argument is yes you should because it's part of human design... and therefore, if  
43 it is going to be part of the design, are there any other reasons for doing it? And the

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1 current debate surrounds, you know... 'music for music's sake' as opposed to  
2 something else's sake...

3  
4 This discussion stresses how modern Western society has regarded music and how its  
5 educators approach music participation - its benefits being in and of itself, and also for other  
6 positive outcomes such as improving well-being and social cohesion. While philosophical  
7 debate surrounding the benefit of and/or reason for a music education has a history that  
8 stretches back to the nineteenth century and earlier, it is also clear from the interviewee, that  
9 music educators are still grappling with why and how music should be engaged with in school  
10 and broader contexts.

### 11 **Best practice skills**

12 Our analysis revealed five major thematic area relating to how music education can best  
13 facilitate long term music investment (see Table 1). These were expressed in terms of the  
14 skills music educators possessed and used in order to promote investment and engagement in  
15 music. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

16  
17  
18 -Table 1 about here-

### 19 **1. Understanding and using a range of musics**<sup>1</sup>

20 One of the professors training music teachers commented:

21 Research data tells us that 90% of the people that are graduate musicians will earn a  
22 living outside of Western classical music. So, they'll be doing lots of other things, either  
23 in the music industry or not. If they're performing, it's often other kinds of music. So in  
24 one sense, the Western classical model provides them with a grounding, a set of skills,  
25 but in another sense, looking across musical genres, you discover that you come out of  
26 the Western classical tradition also with lacks... **a lack of knowledge of how to just**  
27 **make music... make music for fun... be creative, to be able to improvise, to be able**  
28 **to write music, to make music in the moment with other people.** You can't do it. You  
29 find it incredibly difficult. It colors the whole system.

30  
31  
32 This view suggests that educators and facilitators need to have experienced music as  
33 performers, creators, *and* listeners. Also, there is a need to understand how music works  
34 beyond the Western classical tradition. Educators need to be equipped with a set of skills that  
35 the Western classical training does not offer. Training needs to involve broadening their  
36 musical scope and thinking.

37  
38 A senior music therapist working in higher education noted:

39 Musical thinking is strategic... in terms of the architecture of 'where I need to go next'...  
40 to address the needs of this client... it needs strategic music therapist thinking, which is  
41 asymmetrical... The music therapist is taking the professional responsibility for strategic  
42 direction of where the music is going... That is, part of quite long-term training, in terms

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in all cases the emphasis in these quotes is ours to highlight a point/concept.



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1 of what those strategies might be and what they'd be for, why you are doing it, when are  
2 you doing it, when's your timing..., and what's the quality of your listening, such that  
3 you're just looking for an opportunity to do something...

4  
5 So, these skills have to be learned. This includes drawing on appropriate tools for the area of  
6 concern (e.g., therapy versus classroom music).

7  
8 Repertoire was raised as one vital area for motivating participants, as a community musician  
9 commented:

10 I would offer them a selection [of repertoire] that they could choose from. I don't simply  
11 say 'What do you want to sing?' because I thought that would be too hard to then prepare it.  
12 But if they want to sing a whole lot of stuff... I wanted them to have some benefits, and  
13 it has to be engaging for me too... so if they just wanted to sing stuff that I had no  
14 connection with, game over. I couldn't stand it. So, I choose a selection and say 'What  
15 do you want to sing within this?' So... it wasn't collegiate, in that I asked them to choose  
16 with me... it was consultative, a little bit.

17  
18 Thus, the interviews provide evidence that teachers, facilitators/trainers believe that people in  
19 receipt of musical education or therapeutic experience need to be challenged a little, whether  
20 child or an older person, always in a culturally/context specific manner.

### 21 22 **2. Other peoples' music/finding authentic voices**

23 One of the facilitators explained that she had to research repertoire appropriate to her Jewish  
24 clients, offering a mix of old familiar material, but also offer new works to challenge them  
25 (and stimulate her). The interview data revealed that across the entire sample, the music  
26 educators consistently aimed to encourage awareness and sensitivity to other styles and find a  
27 connective voice to express this knowledge.

28  
29 The Music Therapy lecturer commented:

30 **I need to keep to my musical voice while being mindful of other traditions...**

31 It requires a... level of communicative musicality...

32 ...you have to be **authentically in your own music...**

33 ...what are the possibilities that our personal worlds can have **an authentic meeting...**

34  
35 But this was far more subtle knowledge that having some stock Eastern European Folk  
36 melodies or some African drumming patterns in a 'bag of tricks', as a community music  
37 lecturer stated:

38 The musicians must be **authentic**: true to themselves and able to **open their ears and**  
39 **their hearts and be as clear as possible in their musical, emotional, verbal and non-**  
40 **verbal exchanges.** Some people find a way to opening their musical voice **through**  
41 **exercises**, using a wide range of musics from around the world, improvising and so on.  
42 The externalization of self often need skills training to: the **performativity of being a**  
43 **community musician.** Being open to accept people and allowing them full access to

1 your facilitator potential. **It is about tolerance, compassion, but also not being**  
2 **downtrodden or exploited.** It is a leadership role, so you also need to be confident.

3  
4 It is clear that if we are looking for best practice, superficially dabbling in range of musics is  
5 not helpful. Rather, care needs be taken to contextualize and support the incorporation of  
6 various musics in an appropriate and knowledge-grounded manner.

7  
8 **3. Strong, sensitive and attuned to provisional knowledge**

9 The Head of Music in a secondary school and former university educator commented on the  
10 delivery of music education training:

11 [We] try to find schools to put students in schools that have teachers that will  
12 demonstrate that kind of **sensitivity, that empathy, differentiation... to take whatever**  
13 **knowledge they've got, and take it forward,** and at the same time, we will use things  
14 like video, research, published papers, to get them [the students] to think about two  
15 things which are very closely related, but which aren't identical: **research-based**  
16 **teaching, research based evidence, but also the craft of it, to make sure that these**  
17 **two things are constantly being challenged.** The things that are apparent certainties...  
18 when you talk to the experts, they aren't. They're fuzzy. And therefore, **we want the**  
19 **rounded education which enables people to engage with knowledge, and advanced**  
20 **knowledge, in a way that recognizes that knowledge is provisional,** you know, in the  
21 way that the expert does.

22  
23 This opinion seems based on developing a craft of teaching. It is clear that this type of  
24 endeavor is demanding. As the trainer of music therapists noted:

25 [We need to train music therapists to] the fine tuning of the musical work... the key to  
26 that lack of fine-tuning... is related more to their listening than their playing... We often  
27 need to get them to stop doing what they're used to do in terms of providing music for  
28 people with a lot of structure... and learn to listen in very great detail to the potential of  
29 what that person could do if there's more space... that waiting... listening... is very hard  
30 to learn.

31  
32 Thus, practice requires delicate monitoring and development. For music therapists this entails:

33  
34 **...reflexivity.** That's based on, right from the beginning, taping sessions-let's say audio  
35 taped- and listening back to what you did do in the session in real time and having a  
36 kind of protocol for listening and reflecting.

37  
38 Traditionally, this is quite difference to the skills of performing the instrument well, it is about  
39 coordinating, meeting and moving the people. But, as a music teacher noted:

40  
41 One of the best ways to improve communication and indeed technique, is for the student  
42 to see and hear themselves in practice and concerts. That kind of reflection helps a lot.

43

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1 Training music educators and community musicians is certainly similar, for they too need to  
2 attune:

3

4 It's all about find a way to make a musical contact with a person and then developing  
5 that musical contact into some kind of shared structure, and shared musical  
6 understanding... It requires time, and the development of musical confidence.

7

8 This might be conforming to a prescribed set of principles or a curriculum, or it could be  
9 much freer, as the next theme highlights.

10

### 11 **4. Letting the learning happen: activating opportunity**

12 Music educators can either be straight-jacketed by the curriculum, or be subversive as these  
13 three expert and highly-acclaimed teachers reveal:

14

15 *Group of three teachers discussing:*

16 A: ...you can **chuck things at them in different ways**... [women  
17 composers...saxophone baroque examples]

18 B: ...that's how we learned about transposition actually... that's a skill they need to  
19 know but this way **they actually had to figure it out so that they could get their**  
20 **ensemble to function**, not because it was on the curriculum to do...

21 A: I think giving them **good musical problems to solve** is it... [example]

22 C: ...if they are doing instrumental lessons, to bring that into the classroom... bring  
23 your trumpet into the classroom, let's make it part of it...

24 A: and that's a very new thing... suddenly the kids are rocking up to their classroom  
25 with their instruments expecting that they might be using it...

26

27 As the Mid-career secondary teacher [B] continues:

28 [As educators we need to learn that] **the best thing we can do is actually to get out of**  
29 **their way... point them in a direction they're wanting**... but don't put an obstacle for  
30 them or try to stop them... or 'why don't you come and join'...

31

32 Here, the educators highlight how their students need space to problem-solve, experiment, and  
33 grow as musicians and learners. There is recognition of student-centered pedagogy, allowing  
34 the students through the provision of an activity to take charge and make progress.

35 Community music facilitation can also have an emphasis on permitting freedom to explore,  
36 alongside offering support to develop specific skills. This kind of support may take less of an  
37 educational focus, in order to focus on providing strong socio-emotional support and benefits:

38

39 Community musicians:

40 I always believe in **fun**, but I **challenge them a bit too. Not too much though**, as I  
41 want them to feel safe. You begin with simple things like breathing, then a bit more  
42 technique and them eventually, you can vary the repertoire from very straight forward  
43 unison songs, to parts and rounds. It takes a long time to **build their confidence** and  
44 **develop the dynamic** in a way that they will rise to the new challenges that I set. You

1 learn to follow a routine to give people a structure and a formula. Sometimes I get  
2 complaints if I don't do things the same as usual.

3  
4 Oddly enough, I think the overriding skill is **laughter, and humor**. I'm not a wildly  
5 funny person, but I seem to have a quirky view on things, and people respond well to  
6 that. And I think that **allows us to relax** without me doing what I recall from my  
7 singing lessons, having a singing teacher standing over me going 'RELAX!', which is  
8 going to do anything but make me relax. Whereas, if you drop the people into a more  
9 relaxed zone, via a joke about yourself, or a flippant remark about something that  
10 you've seen, **they're in a different headspace, and a better place to take on board**  
11 **some of the other things**. Um... and **there's that laughter, and there's also attention**  
12 **to detail**... and normally I'm prepared before I go into a session, and I want them to  
13 work on something. I need to ask something of them. You can't just sing robotically. If I  
14 give them a task, and we go over that task repeatedly, and **I endeavor to get something**  
15 **from them**, I think people respond to that so much better than just singing the song  
16 through, then 'next one!'... But when you actually demand something of them, **it**  
17 **stimulates something in them that makes them feel a sense of achievement**, so...  
18 yeah. Those are two big things that I bring to my sessions.

## 19 20 **5. Engendering commitment**

21 The fifth theme that emerged pertained to engendering a commitment to the musical activity.  
22 The educator participants demonstrated an awareness of broader goals beyond curriculum or  
23 facilitator aims. Indeed, there was general recognition that best educational practices can  
24 promote continued musical involvement and investment across the lifespan.

25  
26 A Head of Music in a school with a university lecturing background noted:

27 ...if the ultimate goal is wanting these people to have enriching musical lives... it's so  
28 incumbent upon us to make sure... that they get the **opportunity to experience the**  
29 **richness of musical experience**, because for me, there's nothing, you know, in terms of  
30 what matters that in terms of our social and personal regulation, you know, what the  
31 heck else is there? And is there anything else more important when you look at young  
32 people's lives - the way we use music in that way... You might have some experiences  
33 that might enable them to find their niche, the things that really light their candle  
34 musically... **to know the options are huge**... you can't be skillful at all of those things,  
35 **but you can be passionate**

36 ...which is why that skillset is quite hard to define... because you may be a master of  
37 some of the things that they want to learn but you may actually not be a master at all of  
38 some of the things they want to learn...

39  
40 We're supposed to be teaching in terms of the curriculum - you know, the knowledge  
41 and the skills... We start with where the students are and their passions and their skills...  
42 So instead of starting from a knowledge and skills end, you know, starting from a  
43 **motivation and engagement** end... it's not exactly rocket science but seems to me  
44 fundamental to what we're trying to do... and results have been... hugely impressive.

1  
2 Here, there is recognition that teaching a curriculum may not promote engagement or  
3 motivation to continue with music after the class is over. The separation between the  
4 requirement to deliver knowledge through a curriculum and also to motivate students is stark:  
5 the two elements do not coincide. It may be that the other four skills described are interwoven  
6 within this theme. As the participant remarked, this is not ‘rocket science.’ The idea of  
7 engaging and developing both educator and student passions and motivations captures the  
8 essence of music education and its function.

### 10 **Discussion**

#### 11 **Summary of interview findings**

12 These findings provide initial evidence of how music educators can better facilitate student  
13 long-term musical investment by developing the promotion of autonomous engagement to  
14 enable the generation of personal meaning and value in music, which translates to deeper,  
15 longer musical investment. To do this, the students (whether they be in school, community or  
16 university settings) need to feel competent in the tasks undertaken and the knowledge they are  
17 able to share. Furthermore, they need to have a strong sense of affiliation and social  
18 connectedness in their activities. While these beliefs are not ‘new’, they argue for a practice  
19 that necessitates a significant shift away from the prevailing instrumental music pedagogy  
20 which is based on expertise training, to an appreciation of connectedness, autonomy and  
21 competency. As such, these elements together are theorized by Deci and Ryan (2000) in self-  
22 determination which is based around the satisfaction of specific psychological needs that if  
23 satisfied, lead to increased motivation, learning, and well-being.

#### 25 **Theoretical framework**

26 A foundational element of self-determination theory is that it is based on innate needs of  
27 competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Competence captures the  
28 capacity to be effective; relatedness concerns being connected socially and integrated in that  
29 social group; and autonomy is defined as feeling that pursuits are self-endorsed, self-  
30 governed, and of free will (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Through interactions occurring in a social  
31 environment, meeting these needs leads to personal growth, vitality, and well-being (Ryan &  
32 Deci, 2002).

33 Self-determination theory has been widely applied, stemming from educational psychology,  
34 and is supported by a growing body of research (Evans, 2015). Indeed, the theory has recently  
35 been applied in work concerning both music education (e.g., Evans, 2015; Evans &  
36 Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Valenzuela, Codina, & Pestana, 2018) and music therapy (e.g.,  
37 Lee, Davidson, & McFerran, 2016). Of particular relevance to the present investigation is that  
38 motivation is central element of self-determination theory. Given the present study is  
39 interested in how music educators can promote sustained interest and involvement in music,  
40 the three basic needs and construct of motivation from self-determination theory provide a  
41 useful theoretical framework for contextualizing the results.

#### 42 **Competency**

1 Competency values operate in any learning situation: individuals need to believe they are able  
2 attain proficiency (Deci & Moller, 2005). In the case of music, if it is valued and believed to  
3 be for all, it follows that each person will assume they have the capacity to achieve  
4 competence. The teachers we have encountered all have a belief in motivating students  
5 towards engagement and ownership and so hold a belief in competency. However, given the  
6 examples discussed above, a shift in goal orientation for participation may be necessary.  
7 Those who have not received encouragement to learn an instrument have been found to regard  
8 musical capacity as something that is fixed, with musical potential being regarded as  
9 something that cannot be improved incrementally (McPherson & Davidson, 2006). However,  
10 it would seem that a learning environment that supports incremental skills acquisition can  
11 motivate engagement and thus enhance a sense of competence.

### 12 13 **Relatedness**

14 As social beings, human behavior is dependent on strong forms of connection, social  
15 expression, and relatedness. The need for relatedness encourages larger social groups to offer  
16 mutual protection and sharing and forms a basis for knowledge transfer (see Evans,  
17 McPherson, & Davidson, 2013). According to psychological needs theory, people tend to  
18 choose activities that are conducive to success in their social world and reject activities that  
19 inhibit it (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Evidently, owing to the group nature of much music-making,  
20 relatedness is strongly experienced in musical practices, thus enhancing feelings of  
21 connection. Research has demonstrated that successful music learning occurs where there is  
22 engagement to feed relatedness with others and the sense of connection being strongly  
23 mediated by identification to the group (Davidson, Faulkner, & McPherson, 2009). The role  
24 of relatedness for those new to musical experiences has shown the high degree to which the  
25 activity brings group cohesion and relevance even where the activity is novel and with older  
26 people (Lee, Davidson, & Krause, 2016). The discussions with music educators suggest that  
27 best practice teaching must nurture relatedness.

### 28 29 **Autonomy**

30 Autonomy is important in learning situations because it influences the satisfaction of  
31 competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The more individuals are able to internalize  
32 regulation, the more they are intrinsically motivated, and therefore more likely to feel  
33 autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Such autonomy led to jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong  
34 learning with only repeated self-stimulated exposure to music and plenty of opportunity for  
35 individual practice (Bergreen, 197). As seen in the present study – especially with regard to  
36 activating opportunity – facilitators can promote autonomy in their students which in turn  
37 engenders engagement in musical activity.

38  
39 The data we have collected from music educators supports the need to satisfy psychological  
40 needs as expressed in self-determination theory. It could be argued that a goal of the music  
41 educator(s) is to develop educational opportunity to fulfil the three basic psychological needs,  
42 critical to self-determination.

### 43 44 **Conclusion**

## EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

1 In the present study, music educators from a wide range of music sub-disciplines reflected on  
2 their practice to consider how we can promote continued musical investment by students from  
3 a range of developmental opportunities and stages. Through grounded theory analysis of their  
4 interview data, five crucial skills were identified as being necessary to educating for  
5 investment in musical pursuits. These include: both understanding and being able to use a  
6 range of musics to attract people to engage; facilitating the learner to find a personalized  
7 understanding and relevance of music; being sensitive and attuned to provisional knowledge;  
8 letting the learning happen through provision of opportunity; and engendering commitment in  
9 the learner. It was clear that interviewees were passionate about music and the value of music  
10 education. Further, educators needed to think beyond their own musical experience and  
11 knowledge in order to incorporate additional musics to provide more culturally diverse  
12 experiences for their own students. This seemed to involve creating opportunities in which  
13 they could guide students in their pursuits via learner-centered and learner-directed  
14 environments. When considering these themes and the ideas inherent to their educational  
15 practices, it is clear that they reflect educator actions to advocate for the fulfilment of the three  
16 basic psychological needs (autonomy, competency, and relatedness), as outlined by self-  
17 determination theory.

18 While drawing on a small number of in-depth interviews, these findings speak to the  
19 need to understand how to develop a successful motivationally rich teaching practice. Future  
20 research is well-placed to continue investigation. For example, while we interviewed leading  
21 music educators, it would be valuable to conduct case study observations of these skills.  
22 Through observation study, we could begin to illuminate the ways teaching skills are executed  
23 with different aged learners and in different settings (e.g., school versus therapy versus  
24 community music setting). With this deeper understanding gained, future research might also  
25 examine the prevalence of these practices within a larger group of educators as well as  
26 consider their alignment with curriculum and national/cultural demands. We will offer a final  
27 recommendation for future research, and that is to consider these educator practices against  
28 students' beliefs and perceptions. Using the self-determination theory, and examining the  
29 basic needs, this type of future research could be beneficial in focusing teaching skills around  
30 motivating autonomous student learning and commitment.

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## EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

Table 1.

*Music Educator Skills*

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Understanding and using a range of musics

Other peoples' music/finding authentic voices

Strong, sensitive and attuned to provisional knowledge

Letting the learning happen: activating opportunity

Engendering commitment

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