MUSIC AS AGENCY

DIVERSITIES OF PERSPECTIVES ON ARTISTIC CITIZENSHIP

Edited by
Maria Westvall and Emily Achieng' Akuno

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on Artistic Citizenship

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Contents

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2 Social Engagement towards Artistic Citizenship in Music Teaching

Flávia Motoyama Narita

Introduction

As a Freirean music teacher-educator, hope is part of my being because I am aware of my incompletion and, thus, of the possibilities to improve, to change as I dialogue with others, seeking to become more fully human. In hopeful encounters with others and with the world, I enact my citizenship raising awareness of oppressive and unjust structures of power, mobilising us to take action as an attempt to overcome oppression. This finds resonance with the concept of dangerous citizenship: "a conceptual container for the developing a radical critique of education as social control and a collection of strategies that can be used [to] disrupt and resist the conforming, antidemocratic, anticollective, and oppressive potentialities of education and society" (Ross, 2018, p. 380).

Dangerous citizenship requires three attitudes: "political participation, critical awareness, and intentional action" (Vinson & Ross, 2013, p. 8). The first relates to taking part in voting, voicing opinions in assemblies, joining demonstrations, being aware of and obeying laws. The second "is grounded, in part, within Freire's conception of 'reading the world' and Marx's construction of 'class consciousness' (among other critical views)" (ibid.). The last can be related to Yuval-Davis's (2011) call for people's mobilisation in projects of belonging and to many musical and arts projects that emphasise social engagement or what Elliott (2012) and others call artistic citizenship.

When bringing our attention to the fact that "raising people's consciousness about bad laws, corruption, poverty, disease, oppression, and other societal injustices through intellectualizing, reading, dialogue and talk is not enough," Elliott (2012, p. 25) advocated for the need of taking actions. He defended the connection of music-making practices with social and political actions, which seems to be in tune with attitudes of dangerous citizenship. However, in his critique of Elliott's paper, Woodford (2014, p. 24) alerts us to the lack of "acknowledgement of the conceptual complexity and practical difficulties involved in fostering critical reflection and democratic engagement among children and university music education majors." One of the consequences of such lack of criticality is the danger of only looking at one side of the situation. In this case, "the bright side, addressing music's potential as a source of

inspiration and beauty and as a political tool for making the world a better place while turning a blind eye and deaf ear to its many abuses" (p. 31). Therefore, according to Woodford (2014) it seems that Elliott's (2012) notion of artistic citizenship lacks critical reflection of the actions taken in the name of certain social engagement.

On a more critical stance, in a later paper with other colleagues, Elliott (van der Schyff, Schiavio, & Elliott, 2016, p. 87) alerted that "little consideration is given to the development of critical perspectives that might encourage teachers and students to question the received cultural, philosophical, and scientific assumptions that guide our understandings of music, cognition, and education in the first place." The authors defended an education of the being in which we, teachers and students, should be aware of our place and relationship in and with the world, in a similar view advocated by Freire.

According to Freire, through praxis—the dialectical attitude of action and reflection to transform the world—implying a continuous relation with the world and with others, critical consciousness is achieved and developed. Before achieving the state of critical consciousness, however, we experience firstly a state of semi-intransitive consciousness and then a state of naïve transitive consciousness (Freire, 1970, pp. 461–463). In both states we fail to view reality in a critical way. Thus, bringing Freire's states of consciousness and his concepts to read the world critically, I revisit a model I designed to interpret music teachers' teaching practices (Figure 2.1) to discuss music teachers' possible types and levels of social engagement towards artistic citizenship practices. Since social engagement is not restricted to face-to-face interactions, I will also consider types of engagement on social media and on other online or remote technology.

Social Engagement in Modes of Semi-Intransitive Consciousness

Nested in only one domain of music teaching, the following three pedagogic modes seem to commonly display what Freire (1970, p. 461) called "semi-intransitive consciousness," characterised by the inability to understand reality in a critical way in order to transform it.

Mobilising only the domain of teachers' authority, a banking mode of (music) education is an example of a dehumanising practice since it reduces others as objects, with no creative power to transform one's reality. Considered "empty vessels" to be filled with the teacher's knowledge, students passively "adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (Freire, 2005/1970, p. 73). Teachers or anyone in a leading role adopting this mode of education would engage with the world in authoritarian ways. In social media, we can witness authoritarian engagements in "vitriolic call-outs," in cancelling people, or in "[s]haming and ridiculing one's interlocutor through *ad hominem* attacks ..., reduc[ing] them to objects and reject[ing] their subjectivity for personal growth and transformation" (Coppola, 2021, p. 30). This type of oppression also dehumanises

Freire's stages of consciousness:

Semi-intransitive consciousness

Naïve Transitive Consciousness

Critical Consciousness

Learners' musical worlds

3. Laissez-Faire

9. Tuning

6. Naïve Transitivity

4. Non-Musical Dialogue

7. Liberating Music Education

2. Alienating Musicianship

Teachers' practical musicianship

5. Illusory Freedom

1. Banking Music Education

8. Collage

Teachers' authority/Theoretical and propositional knowledge
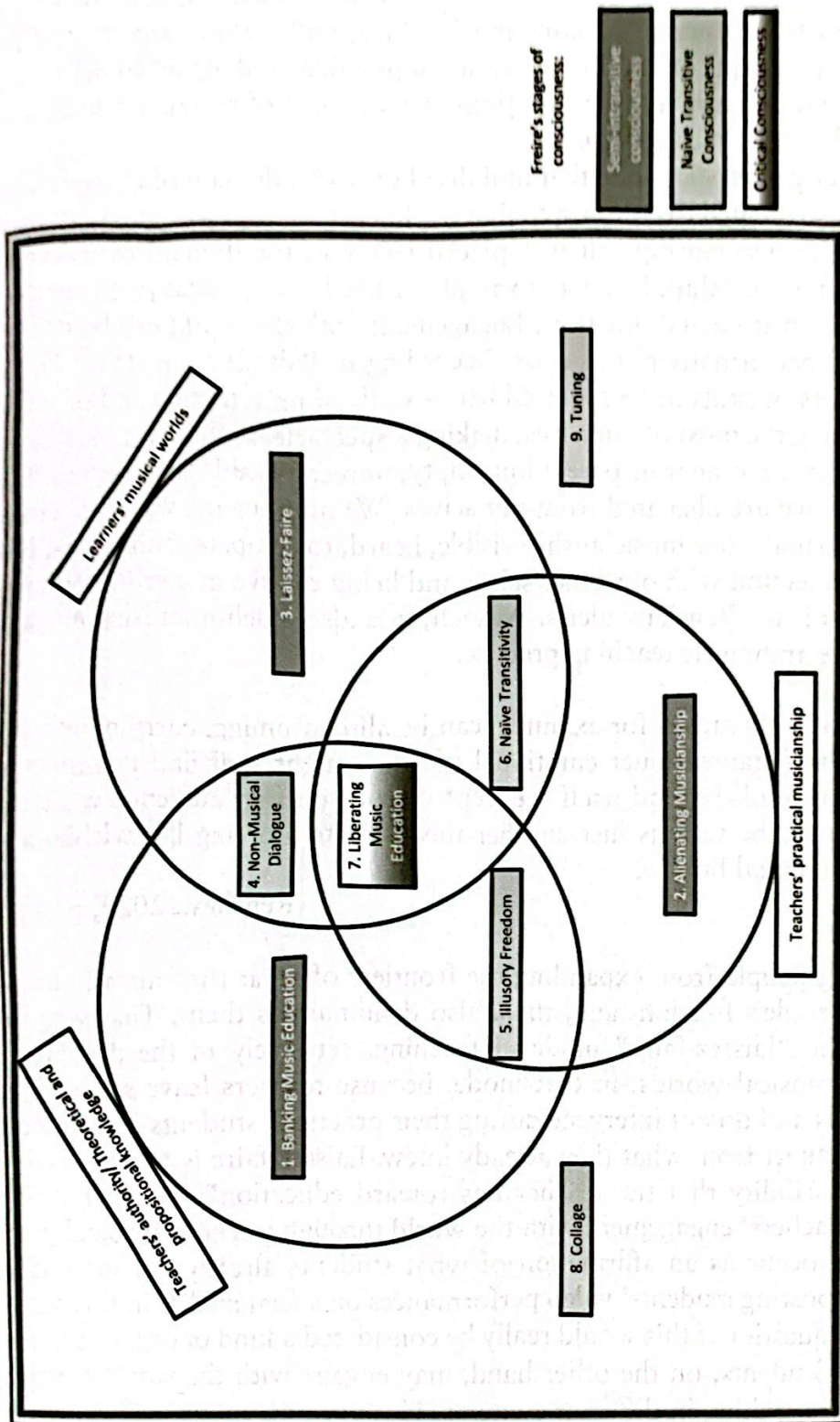
Figure 2.1 Dialogical model to interpret music teachers' teaching practices.
Note: Revised model presented in Narita (2014).

the oppressors, who act in a state of what Freire called semi-intransitive consciousness, typical of closed structures of anti-democratic regimes. Engagement with the world in such mode of consciousness is fragile. Based on individualistic attitudes, "banking music education" makes room for neoliberal principles that commodify educational practices and instil "competition, domination, and efficiency pervad[ing] every aspect of social, cultural, and political life" (Bates, 2018, p. 10).

Another pedagogic mode that mobilised only one domain of music teaching and also seemed to conform to that neoliberal mindset was what I termed "alienating musicianship." It was placed solely in the domain of teachers' practical musicianship, being an example of teachers' musical performances isolated from students' practices. Engagement with the world can be tied to neoliberal performativity demands. According to Ball (2012, p. 19), "There are new sets of skills to be acquired here—skills of presentation and of inflation, making the most of ourselves, making a spectacle of ourselves. As a consequence we become transparent but empty, unrecognisable to ourselves." In this sense, we are alienated from our selves. We may engage with the world in order to make our musicianship visible, heard, to compete with others, but losing connection with our inner selves and being captive in a self-referential bubble, as Peter Renshaw alerts. As such, it is also a dehumanising musical experience and music teaching practice.

> A passion for music, for example, can be all-consuming, carrying with it a self-contained inner emotional life that might well find it unnecessary to look beyond itself – except of course to an audience which could then be seen as just another means of reinforcing life within a self-referential bubble.
>
> (Renshaw, 2020, p. 6)

Preventing people from expanding the frontiers of what they already know hinders people's freedom and, thus, also dehumanises them. That was the case of the "laissez-faire" mode of teaching, set solely in the domain of learners' musical worlds. In that mode, because teachers leave students by themselves and do not intervene during their practices, students do not learn anything apart from what they already knew. Laissez-faire is "the refusal of the responsibility that the teacher has toward education" (Gadotti, 1994, p. 57). Teachers' engagement with the world through learners' musical practices may occur as an affirmation of what students already do, such as in merely reposting students' video performances on social media. In this sense, we could question if this would really be considered a kind of engagement by teachers. Students, on the other hand, may engage with the world through their music-making in different contexts. However, acceptance of any musical culture and its practices, as found in laissez-faire attitudes, may contribute to lack of critical thinking or of real understanding of different cultures, as Woodford (2005, p. 80) stressed.

These three pedagogic modes—banking music education, alienating musicianship and laissez-faire—are non-dialogical teaching approaches. As such, they tend to instil conformity and uncritical thinking leading to what Freire believed to be a dehumanising type of education. Engagement with the world is shallow, fragmented, and individualistic.

Social Engagement in Modes of Naïve Transitive Consciousness

The following three pedagogic modes—naïve transitivity, illusory freedom, and non-musical dialogue—fall in the intersection of two of the domains of music teaching and are attempts to build a dialogical teaching approach. This indicates that individuals leave their state of semi-intransitive consciousness for a state of transitivity, announcing attempts to change and of being in charge of these changes. However, before consciously and critically enacting such changes, initially, individuals manifest a naïve type of transitive consciousness. This "is limited by an oversimplification of problems and a vulnerability to sectarian irrationality and fanaticism characteristic of a 'mass society.' The 'illogicality' of primitivism has been supplanted by the mythical qualities of distorted reason" (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 97). Different degrees of distortions characterize these three pedagogic modes.

I have been employing the term "naïve transitivity" for teaching practices in which teachers enact their practical musicianship in attempts to dialogue with learner's musical worlds. However, one distortion of the role is not providing students with theoretical knowledge that could enable them to go beyond their own musical worlds. Engagement with the world, because of the blurred state of consciousness, can be manipulative, "a kind of political opiate which maintains not only the naiveté of the emerging consciousness, but also the people's habit of being directed" (Freire, 1970, p. 465). Such manipulative leadership can be found on social media in virtue signalling. Disguised as spokespeople of the marginalised or of the oppressed, these virtue signallers usually behave to fulfil their own interests and they may not "recognize their complicity in silencing the oppressed through their grandstanding behaviors" (Coppola, 2021, p. 32). It can also be related to what Vaugeois named "terminal naivety" to describe "a lack of awareness of power relations, larger global dynamics, and an individualistic focus on self-improvement often associated with classical musicians" (Hess, 2017, p. 19). Teachers in the "naïve transitivity" mode, thus, engage with the world perhaps not fully conscious of their actions, reproducing the very exclusions they claim to be fighting against. As Freire (1970, p. 463) has reminded us, "In many respects, the semi-intransitive consciousness remains present in the naïve transitive consciousness."

In the practices termed "illusory freedom," teachers mobilise their domain of theoretical knowledge and the domain of their practical musicianship. These practices are usually filled with music-making activities, seemingly fulfilling for both teachers and students. Teachers may not realise that they are in control all the time, and freedom of choice is an illusion for students.

In this case, students are treated "as mere activists to be denied the opportunity of reflection and allowed merely the illusion of acting, whereas in fact they would continue to be manipulated" (Freire, 2005/1970, p. 126).

Perhaps an illustration of "illusory freedom" musical practices can be found on Venezuela's El Sistema orchestras, which claim to be "an extraordinary cultural, educational, and social programme that pursues the goals of social engagement and youth empowerment through ensemble music education."[1] Baker (2014), however, has critically presented accounts of teaching and learning practices in El Sistema that makes us wonder under which conditions such engagement and empowerment may flourish. In addition, the propaganda emphasising poor children being allowed access to the rich world of orchestral music may indicate that there is no wish to dialogue with learner's musical worlds. As such, El Sistema could be "support[ing] oppressive ideologies and militat[ing] against the critical examination of pervasive assumptions—such as classical music performance as a route to salvation for the poor" (Baker, 2016, p. 12). This is an example of resilience education, training learners for compliance and docility, "not addressing the root conditions that affect youth" (Hess, 2019, p. 494). Engagement with the world bears attitudes of authoritarianism disguised through spectacular musical performances.

Another pedagogic mode that manifests a type of naïve consciousness is the one termed "non-musical dialogue." Nested in the intersection of the domains of teacher's authority and of teacher's relation with learners' musical worlds, this pedagogic mode can be paralleled to what Freire (2005/1970, p. 87) criticised as verbalism or "an alienated and alienating 'blah'." Defending praxis, a dialectical orchestration of action and reflection, as a way to transform reality, Freire states that "When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter" (ibid). In our case, the expected actions are musical practices. If we only talk about music or teach theory or facts about music without actually making music, even if our students engage with the topics, we are not offering the full potential music has as a creative, engaging, and humanising experience.

Imagining how Paulo Freire would act on social media and reflecting on Freirean concepts to analyse social media woke culture in music education, Coppola (2021, p. 40) has alerted us that we may be enacting mere verbalism if our engagement with the world is restricted to social media, without extending it to transformative actions in classrooms and communities. In *Young Artists Speak Out*, Renshaw (2020) shares the many voices of young people committed to music-making with us. The youngsters reported having expressed their anger using social media, but they were also aware of the illusion of the virtual worlds.

Besides these three pedagogic modes enacted when teachers simultaneously mobilised two of their domains of music teaching, there were two modes that mixed other pedagogic modes—"collage" and "tuning" in to learners' needs. The former mode is a response to external requirements, adjusting attitudes according to others' expectations or to seem woke in front

of their audience. The latter, on the other hand, is a response to learners' demands. As such, engagement with the world tends to seek adjustments in order to include learners' voices. These two pedagogic modes seem to represent actions of teachers in transition from an authoritarian practice to a more democratic and humanising lesson, sometimes showing contradictions and conflicts but representing a movement towards changing attitudes in relation to their pupils and engagement with the world.

Liberating Music Education: Enacting Critical Consciousness through Artistic Citizenship

After the state of semi-intransitive consciousness and the various degrees of naïve transitive consciousness, through a dialogical and problem-posing education and through praxis we achieve the state of critical transitive consciousness. In such a state, we "engage in authentic transformation of reality in order, by humanizing that reality, to humanize women and men" (Freire, 2005/1970, p. 183).

> Problem-posing education, as a humanist and liberating praxis, posits as fundamental that the people subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables people to overcome their false perception of reality. The world—no longer something to be described with deceptive words—becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women which results in their humanization.
>
> (Freire, 2005/1970, p. 83)

Considering humanisation our transformation as active subjects in our worlds to fulfil our needs, demands, and dreams, it was in what I termed "liberating music education" achieved through the mobilisation of the three domains of music teaching—the teacher's authority and theoretical knowledge, the teacher's practical musicianship, and the teacher's relation with learners' musical worlds—that I, as a music teacher-educator, could feel humanised. I also noticed that those whose teaching practices were classified as "liberating" felt empowered to live their potentials as music teachers enacting their knowledge and musicianship in dialogue with their learners. Moreover, they also showed a degree of reflexivity, demonstrating conscientisation of their roles in and with the worlds of teachers and learners. In such practices, learners were also humanised since they had their musical worlds valued and were instigated to go beyond the frontiers of these worlds, broadening repertoire and knowledge of theirs and other people's musics.

The musical practices analysed when the model was designed were based on Lucy Green's (2008) informal learning pedagogy. Green's pedagogy gives voice to learners' choices, expects them to be active agents of their learning

processes and invite teachers to teach differently, standing back initially and observing learners engaging with music-making, so that later, interventions could be more precise, based on what teachers had seen and heard. In addition, when teachers intervened they acted as musical models, playing with their learners. This informal pedagogy finds resonances with Freirean concepts of a dialogical education, enabling both teachers and learners to become active subjects engaged with their own humanisation in the transformation of their worlds.

Other musical practices such as those reported by Renshaw (2020) also seem to be liberating, dialogical, transformative, and thus, humanising. Similarly to Green's pedagogy, they are also collaborative practices, which open up room for a diversity of voices and abilities that need to be negotiated together. This diverse environment is prone to promote creativity and different ways to engage with the world. Musical leaders in the different contexts demonstrate mobilisation of these three domains of music teaching, establishing a dialogue with learners' musical worlds at the same time that they exercise their authority as leaders, creatively activating their theoretical and practical knowledge as musicians. Leaders' engagement with the world involves learners' engagement and willpower to speak out and imprint changes in their lives. One of the projects is "Drum Works," an Artistic Associate of the Barbican Centre, which develops drumming sessions in schools "as a tool to inspire creativity, build social cohesion and empower young people."[2] The impact of that project on participants' lives is illustrated below:

> Drum Works has made me see life differently. It has given me purpose in life that maybe I didn't feel I had in school. Sometimes in school I felt like teachers didn't listen to what I had to say, but in Drum Works everyone's voice gets heard. I've seen the quietest people be the loudest within one Drum Works lesson. This is because in Drum Works we never look at each other's backgrounds, but we see each other as family. Drum Works is not just about playing drums, it's about us developing as young adults and not giving up on our dreams.
>
> (Drum Works participant cited by Renshaw, 2020, p. 40)

This testimony shows participant's passion for the project, compassion for people and sense of purpose. According to Renshaw (2020, p. 3), "The synergy between passion, compassion and purpose lies at the heart of social engagement." This type of critical conscious engagement with the world found in the intersection of the three domains of music teaching is what I understand to be called artistic citizenship, which appears to be found in the enactive-ontological approach to music education suggested by van der Schyff et al. (2016). Anchored in Freirean praxis, engagement with the world through artistic citizenship requires not only action but also critical reflection, as Woodford (2014) has pointed out. Previously, he had claimed for a music education which "identif[ied] and critiq[ued] the ideologies and social

agendas of vested interests who would place their own needs above those of children, teachers and the public, or who would assume that they have a monopoly on truth" (Woodford, 2012, p. 97). Such criticality, political participation, awareness of our fights against inequalities and responsibility as social change agents are in tune with the "liberating music education" through which artistic citizenship can be critically enacted. The following section illustrates how I tried to achieve artistic citizenship working with undergraduate music students in a music teacher education project during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unfinished Beings in Endless Fights

As a music teacher-educator working in a government-funded university in Brazil, where we have recently undergone actions of a misgovernment that denied science and cut funds for educational programmes, I feel critical engagement with the world to be a matter of survival. Agreeing with Woodford (2014, p. 24) about the difficulties and complexities to foster critical thinking and social engagement amongst undergraduates, I ponder how disengagement could be fought against in my praxis as the coordinator of a music teacher education project.

This project was part of a national policy programme to promote initial teacher education through partnerships between higher-education institutions (HEI) and primary and secondary government-funded schools. Created in 2007, that programme paid scholarships to undergraduates, to school teachers, and to HEI coordinators who had their projects approved in an open call within each HEI. Since the beginning of that programme we witnessed cuts in the number of scholarships awarded and, later, an explicit favouring of the so-called hard sciences. One of the approved projects was a music teacher education project that I coordinated from October 2020 to March 2022.

One of the main reasons I had decided to submit a project to that programme was the fact that music undergraduates in the beginning of their music education course would have an opportunity to teach in a government-funded school, where musical practices are usually not stimulated or even found. Bringing out the importance of making musical practices more accessible to a group of people who might not have such an opportunity has been one of the ways I have been trying to socially engage a group of ten undergraduate music students. Besides planning and preparing musical practices remotely due to social restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we reflected on our roles as musical models, leaders in a classroom, and possible influencers. As such, I will now discuss to what extent we engaged with our and pupils' worlds through music teaching and, thus, enacting our artistic citizenship.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many adaptations had to take place so teaching could continue, but we still have to question how learning actually happened for those who could not afford to be online. Together with the school teacher, we planned different types of remote interactions: from asynchronous

posts and podcasts to synchronous chats, videoconferencing and playing a shared virtual musical instrument. Sometimes the platform we used offered only limited types of interactions, other times participants themselves chose not to use certain tools for interactions. This was the case when school pupils chose to communicate only via chat, not turning on their microphones or cameras during the lessons. In music lessons this limited participation was quite frustrating, signalling perhaps that our proposed activities were not engaging our audience. However, we did receive video and audio recordings of musical activities set as homework. This made us rethink students' interest and learning of music. Perhaps their lack of participation in synchronous online tasks was due to other reasons such as not having proper audio/video devices or even a proper 'study environment' to be shown or heard during the lessons.

Another teaching experience we had during this project was a two-day workshop offered as an outreach activity. Aiming at promoting music-making practices with our audience, we suggested two activities focussing on musical creations. The first was the creation of jingles to advertise a product or an idea. The second was the creation of musical themes for characters of a story. For both activities, music undergraduates thought about current issues such as a jingle to defend indigenous people's right to their lands and a story discussing the need to get vaccinated against a new virus.

In contrast to the group of school pupils, participants of the outreach activity were undergraduate students who wanted to take part in the actions and fully engage in the proposed tasks. Despite the fact that the school pupils may not have felt motivated to participate in the many lessons they have to attend, the chosen platform for the lessons may have contributed to their low participation as it emphasised a kind of interaction via video or audio calls, which is not the most preferred tool by school pupils. One of the platforms we used for the outreach activity was a virtual mural called padlet, which did not allow synchronous video or audio calls. However, since we were synchronously broadcasting our padlet screen on a YouTube live session, similarly to what happens in a remote lesson, participants could hear us and follow our directions. The virtual mural allowed posts of audios, videos, and texts. That was how participants communicated with us. Thus, perhaps we could have tried to implement the use of that mural in one of our lessons with school pupils since padlet offers more resources for the way pupils usually interact with us: via chat.

Another point to be made is related to the topic developed in music lessons and in the outreach action. Although we tried to choose songs we imagined our school pupils would like, often the topic was chosen by the teachers following curricular guidance. Therefore, relation with pupils' musical worlds is not emphasised. On the other hand, in the outreach musical creation activity, participants were invited to choose their themes and, thus, a dialogue with their musical worlds was promoted. However, establishing a dialogue with learners' worlds may not guarantee teachers (music undergraduates) are in a state of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) found in a liberating music education.

Recalling the model to analyse teaching practices, I have suggested that at the core of the three domains of music teaching, we find a "liberating music education," through which, in a critical engagement with the world, we could experience artistic citizenship. Critical engagement with the world entails Freirean praxis. Hence, artistic citizenship comprises both action and reflection.

The undergraduates were aware of the issues that drive their music teaching practices; however, the degree of each one's engagement and awareness of a collective cause in detriment to an individualistic attitude needs to be individually pondered. Some of them might have attempted to mobilise these three domains of music teaching, whilst others have been "tuning" their actions to pupils' needs, perhaps as an attempt to situate music teaching practices in specific contexts, contributing to their feelings of belonging, and understanding of their future profession as music teachers.

> The politics of belonging involve not only the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers (within and outside the community) but also their contestation, challenge and resistance by other political agents.
>
> (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 3)

During our weekly meetings, we also discussed education as a political act. Every decision taken would bear the question "in favor of whom, in favor of what, in favor of what dream [we are] teaching, [and we should also] … have to think against whom, against what, against what dream [we are] teaching" (Freire, 2016, p. 21). Sometimes, however, political engagement means not teaching. This is what this group of ten music undergraduates decided to do when their scholarships were not paid for two months, in October 2021. They participated in students' national and regional assemblies and set an agenda to protest against the lack of payment and for the valorisation of education. The school teacher and I both supported their decision and agreed they would not teach in the project until their scholarships had been paid. However, we also stressed that political mobilisation would entail taking actions other than teaching. They prepared short videos for social media showing some of our musical practices and explained they had to stop teaching due to lack of payment. The videos were attempts to raise public awareness of that situation. Eventually, a greater budget was allocated for this programme and the undergraduates' scholarships were paid. This movement made some of the group members feel they belonged to a group of people who were fighting for something they believed. One of the undergraduates mentioned that when he was not paid he felt undervalued and then he realised how much education has been undervalued in our country and how he should value, from that moment on, every opportunity of learning and teaching music or anything. He also pointed out about being conscious that those who were teaching him had probably not treaded easy paths.

This experience seems to have resonated on most of the undergraduates as a wake-up call for the importance of political participation as part of teaching and making music. Political participation is one of the three attitudes required when enacting what Vinson and Ross (2013) have been calling dangerous citizenship. The other two attitudes—critical awareness and intentional action—as discussed before, appear to be under development.

As a music teacher-educator working with the group of ten undergraduates, I noticed that some of them have been more critical about our roles as musicians and music teachers. Besides, the many fights we choose to face whilst teaching have the potential to sharpen our critical consciousness. As unfinished beings who can always seek for improvement and, in this case, to develop criticality and freedom of choice, through dialogues with others, we refine our engagement with the world in a more conscious way. Music teaching, then, can trigger dangerous citizenship (Ross, 2018) channelling its intentional actions as artistic citizenship practices, which would be lived when teachers mobilised their domains of theoretical knowledge, practical musicianship, and relation with learners' musical worlds. Engagement with the world through teaching and making music can liberate both teacher and students, raising awareness of our creative powers to humanise ourselves and the world as we engage with music.

Note: The last section of this chapter illustrates my attempts to promote social engagement amongst participants of a music teacher education project. The participants' identities are not revealed and they are aware of the content written about the project.

Notes

1 https://sistemaglobal.org/about/el-sistema-venezuela/ [accessed 9th November 2021]
2 https://drumworks.co.uk/ [accessed 9th November 2021]

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