

**AMEL CONFERENCE REPORT**

**ADELAIDE 1986**

**Jenny Bryce  
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# REPORT OF AMEL CONFERENCE OF 1986, ADELAIDE

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## 1. Foreword

This report is the outcome of the deliberations of a number of AMEL members who participated jointly in the AMEL and ASME Conferences in Adelaide, in May, 1986.

Participants met prior to the ASME Conference and identified issues of central concern to teacher educators. The focus was the place of pre-service education for teachers K/P-12, the content of these courses and their relationship to in-service programs.

Participants also attended the plenary sessions and some workshops of the ASME conference and then discussed the issues raised by the speakers and the implications for teacher educators.

Many issues were raised, including the need to broaden the approach to Music Education, develop appropriate skills and attitudes, and also a general concern that colleges and other training institutions need to change in order to prepare teachers adequately for the changing society in which we live and work.

The AMEL participants addressed these challenges. The paper which follows lists the most important of these issues for further discussion, and proposes short and long term strategies for responding to the changing demands of the Australian society.

The draft paper was circulated to participants in the discussion, for comment and addition. The amended paper below is a discussion document for those interested in the future of music education.

# ISSUES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

## Summary

A number of music teachers are either unskilled or inappropriately skilled. There is therefore a need to intervene. The most appropriate place for intervention seems to be through teacher education programs.

It is agreed that there is a need for short and long term strategies for this intervention.

The short term strategy is to develop a series of position papers issuing challenges to music educators themselves as well as to administrators in institutions and education systems.

A part of this process may be the lobbying of institutions and systems for greater involvement in their deliberations.

The long term strategies include the consideration of minimum requirements in teacher education courses taking into account realistic aims and teacher preference.

AMEL should prepare a range of options for courses taking into account the entry skills and the different roles of specialists and generalists, and should also recommend on options for in-service courses embracing award and non award studies.

### 1. CHALLENGE

A number of speakers at the ASME conference raised some crucial issues for the consideration of music educators, especially at the tertiary level. These included challenges to our fundamental position on the nature of music in schools. Connell argued that "music teachers are bearers of high culture but deal with audiences with different cultures". He also challenged us by saying that music teachers are bearers of a tradition based on performance'. This should be compared with other teachers who are not necessarily involved with the craft of their discipline.

Some speakers were critical of music teachers, claiming that the curriculum has failed children. This, Vuilliamy claimed, occurs through unnecessary emphasis on music of the past, an emphasis on passive listening, unnecessary stress on notation, and the neglect of composing. Lack of success in the delivery of music programs can be attributed to poor teaching or irrelevancy.

Colleges have been called the bastions of conservatism, where contemporary culture is ignored. The majority of teacher education courses are in the pre-electronic age where a museum mentality exists. There is a need to democratise the field.

An alternate view is that where there is a skilled music teacher working with a well developed program, the community is able to see what children can do. An informed community can demand a music program appropriate to its younger members.

There is no doubt that the Australian society has changed dramatically over the past half century. These changes have been reflected to a large extent in education in general, but perhaps not to the same extent in music education. If we accept that there have been significant changes, then we need to look carefully and fearlessly at our own field. Changes to education do not occur in a social vacuum and we need to ensure that we have the appropriate mechanisms in place so that we can respond to change. Change implies intervention of some kind and we must decide whether the best and most effective way of training teachers is during pre-service courses or whether we should be concentrating on rethinking essential skills for teachers and locating the majority of these in post initial or in-service training. The question of low entry skills and therefore low exit levels must be faced. The key challenge is to decide how teacher education institutions can lead the changes indicated by the community in the area of music education.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

There were some important principles which were considered as part of the on-going discussion. Implications for change in teacher education courses should be drawn from these principles.

They are grouped under the following headings:

1. The role of music education in the community.
2. The provision of teacher education.
3. The content of school music courses.
4. Means of generating change.
5. The music education learning environment.

### 2.1 Music Education in the Community

Music educators must be conscious of their place and the place of music in the wider community.

One goal of a music program is to develop independent people who view /use/practise music as an integral part of their lives.

Music is a form of intelligence.

Schools should be one manifestation of music in the community.

## 2.2 Provision of teacher education

Pre-service and subsequent in-service education for teachers must be seen as a continuing process, ensuring that skills, concepts and understandings about music and music education can be developed in an effective way.

Teacher education programs have tried to do too much too soon.

Secondary specialists have been narrowly trained in areas not always relevant or readily transferable to students' needs.

It is necessary to involve all primary generalists and primary and secondary specialists in programs which will produce successful musical outcomes and enjoyable musical experiences leading the students to an expectation that music can provide lifelong involvement.

Facilitating is a competence.

Teacher education must equip all teachers with appropriate skills so that they can begin immediately to develop relevant programs.

Teacher education courses must educate for openmindedness.

Music graduates must have participated in arts activities appropriate to the students they will be teaching.

Real choices must be offered in teacher education courses, in teaching styles and areas of special interest.

Tertiary/Teacher training courses should equip teachers to conduct programs within their capabilities.

Expectations of all music teachers must be clearly understood.

Minimum competencies should be identified (Botsman) and reflected in teacher education courses as a matter of urgency.

There is a need to raise teacher expectations of what children can do and what teachers can do with children.

Teacher education must be seen as a continuum, with realistic pre-service and focussed, more specialised in-service and post initial courses.

In-service programs include:

- Higher degrees
- Short award courses
- Non award courses
- Packages of studies (Purpose designed)
- Encouragement and support of informal networks

In-service courses should provide:- personal development, program development, administration of programs, evaluation.

Educational administrators must acknowledge that one cannot be skilled in all musics, therefore the skill of facilitating is essential.

### 2.3 Content of school music courses

Programs must be allowed to focus on what teachers can do well and therefore, choices for inclusion must be based on teacher competencies, leading to success and growth.

Music programs must admit the diversity of music in society.

Goals must be realistic, relevant and achievable.

Objectives in the music learning process come from all three domains. (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor)

Assessment in the arts must be consistent with the nature of the art form.

It is important that each child experiences success in a music program.

The first priority of a music program should be for the students to develop an active participatory role in music.

Music programs should begin with an understanding of the present and not concentrate only on the music of the past.

Music educators must exploit the new technology in the interests of musical learning.

The use of new technology must be consistent with the nature of the art form of music.

Success breeds success and leads to growth.

Programs must be creative as well as recreative.

### 2.4 Means of generating change

Intervention at the teacher education level, pre-service and post initial or in-service, is an appropriate means of effecting change.



## 2.5 The Music Education learning environment

Teachers should not try to control the learning which occurs.

There is no one right way of teaching music, as is indicated by the trends towards wider recognition of areas of music not traditionally included in programs of teacher education such as jazz, rock pop and non-western music.

Primary generalists have been expected to carry musical responsibilities beyond their skills in the art form.

Education systems must make clear:

- expectations that music will be taught;
- the people responsible for ensuring this; and
- must ensure that adequate support is provided in the form of staff, equipment and materials.

Systems are producing policy and other documents ranging from curriculum statements to support material.

Music programs should be learner oriented, with an emphasis on problem solving and applied understanding.

Education authorities must offer the tools: videos, taped material, teachers books, etc.

There must be a "system" approach to ensure that music is taught, i.e. music will be taught, and the generalist teacher is responsible for the musical education of the child.

## 3. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES

The following guidelines could be considered the minimum requirements of pre-service.

### 3.1 PRIMARY GENERALISTS

Minimum competencies must be set. These should include:

1. The ability to provide valuable musical experiences in the areas of
  - the teaching of songs
  - listening experiences
  - creative sound exploration
2. The ability to make use of at least one readily available kit.
3. Skills as a facilitator so that the teacher can arrange a wide range of musical experiences both within and outside the school setting, e.g. visiting

performers, dance experiences, outings to concerts, to the local high school district festivals, the opera, etc.

### 3.2 PRIMARY SPECIALIST

The primary specialist should be able to work with the generalists to develop realistic programs which reflect the nature of music.

Opportunities should be provided by teacher training institutions so that primary specialists can study a chosen area of music/music education and develop this to a high level.

Minimum skills and competencies include:

1. Performance skills on at least recorder and guitar
2. An understanding of the voice and singing
3. The ability to provide simple arrangements
4. The ability to plan sequential learning experiences where prior knowledge is the link between the new and the old
5. The ability to evaluate available materials
6. The ability to make use of a range of teaching strategies.
7. The ability to encourage interaction with other areas in the curriculum.

### 3.3 SECONDARY MUSIC TEACHING

It is acknowledged that the traditional "conservatorium" model of training music specialists does not necessarily train music teachers with sufficient flexibility to provide relevant music programs for young people. Secondary specialists must develop competence as follows:

1. A high level of competence in more than one area of performance
2. Basic understanding of contemporary music, especially of rock, pop and jazz
3. Skill with the voice
4. Appreciation skills and interest
5. Arrangement in a style appropriate to student performing groups

In short the training should be relevant to the future work as a music specialist teacher.

#### 4. A MODEL FOR PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION

The following points may become the basis of a paper on pre-service courses for primary teachers. (Note: Political strategies are necessary for changes to hours and course structures.)

1. All teachers must take say 70 hours of music in a pre-service course. In addition they must elect options in a given number of areas (say 4 units of 30 hours).
2. Each student should develop musical skills as identified by the institution.
3. In addition students must take units in areas which develop their own musical interests and others which ensure that they have skills in planning a program suitable for the children they will teach.
4. Optional units should include musical leadership, conducting and program evaluation for those students who are musically advanced and will probably find themselves in a leadership role.
5. Musical studies should be planned on a continuum which takes into account entrance levels. Again modules or flexible units may be a way of catering for different levels.

#### 5. SOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

1. How can institutions develop sufficient flexibility to accommodate the outcomes of reports etc.?
2. Is it possible/positive to offer teachers provisional certification with the opportunity to take extra studies in identified areas?
3. Is change in teacher education really necessary?
4. Can teacher education institutions be agents for change?
5. Is the generalist/specialist division wise?
6. Where does change occur?
  - Teaching staff?
  - Music departments?
  - Students?
  - Employers?
  - Institutional Boards/Councils?
  - Unions?
  - Parents?
  - Schools?

7. Where does flexibility for course modification come from?
8. What part does teacher registration play?
9. What place does course registration fill?
10. Can a modular approach to teacher education cater for the varying needs and interests of teachers?
11. Could a model for change begin with the ideal staffing levels and ideal skills/understandings?
12. How can attitudes be changed especially in young teachers?
13. How can we prevent the ethnic and popular arts from becoming isolated from "high" arts?
14. What is the place of a concept like artistic integrity? (Also excellence)
15. Is it true that the language of music is laid down before the age of 13? If so what are the implications for primary/secondary teaching?
16. How can teacher education move into the next decade?

#### THE ROLE OF AMEL

1. Preparation of a discussion paper(s) on what should be in a course of teacher training, both primary and secondary.
2. Recommendations on the skills and understandings necessary and the number of hours needed to achieve this.
3. Strategies for influencing the community and institutions based on simple concepts.
4. Encouragement of members to lobby for change to realistic goals.
5. Request reports/accounts of successful models for training.

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