

Popular Guitar Pedagogy

FOSTERING TRADITIONAL STANDARDS of MUSICIANSHIP in
the CULTURALLY RELEVANT CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Music education in North America remains loyal to the ideals, materials, and methodologies of a bygone era despite widespread calls for pedagogical change. Popular music has a limited role in schools although culturally relevant programming is increasingly important in modern contexts. Guitar class has the unrealized potential to reach those many students who are eager for music opportunities but unable to work within traditional formats. Guitar is motivational, inclusive, and relevant to students, and therefore has an appropriate place in the pluralistic classrooms of the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, a model is lacking to bridge the gap between guitar performance, and materials from popular guitar-based genres, with traditional values of formal music education. Guitar instruction is consistently portrayed in opposition to, or as an alternative to, success in the time-honored priorities of school music. The question remains, then, as to if popular guitar performance can be reconciled with an emphasis on theory, literacy, and fine musicianship. This narrative study details a public school teacher's attempt to synthesize an original electric guitar curriculum for his middle school classes, one responsive to both academic and cultural concerns. Suggestions for concrete steps towards an achievement-oriented popular guitar pedagogy are presented, amidst the argument that such developments are feasible, necessary, and overdue.

L'éducation musicale en Amérique du Nord reste fidèle aux idéaux, au matériel et aux méthodes d'une époque révolue, malgré de nombreux appels pour un changement pédagogique. La musique populaire a un rôle limité dans les écoles, bien que des programmes culturellement pertinents soient de plus en plus importants dans des contextes modernes. Les cours de guitare ont le potentiel inexploité d'atteindre ces nombreux étudiants qui sont désireux d'apprendre la musique, mais incapables de travailler dans un format traditionnel. La guitare est motivante, inclusive et pertinente pour les élèves, et a donc une place appropriée dans les groupes diversifiés du vingt et unième siècle. Malheureusement, il existe un fossé entre les objectifs traditionnels et la musique populaire à la guitare. L'enseignement de la guitare est habituellement perçu comme une opposition, ou comme une alternative à la réussite scolaire. La question demeure donc à savoir si la guitare populaire peut être conciliée à la théorie et à la musicalité. Cette étude décrit comment un professeur d'école publique tente de synthétiser un programme de guitare électrique original qui répond aux besoins académiques et culturels. Des suggestions portant sur des mesures concrètes ayant pour objectif d'atteindre une pédagogie tournée vers la réussite du cours sont présentées comme possibles, nécessaires et attendues.

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If you happen to be one, please write your name in here: _____

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Preface: Anecdotal Evidence

"I do like music – I love music! But this class sucks! I hate this stupid class!"

- An 8th grade student, justifying his misbehavior.

I grew up in the suburbs and attended a local high school that, like many others in the area, boasted a strong instrumental band program. I took up the upright bass and soon became completely hooked, practicing for hours each day. I would head down to Boston on weeknights, two hours away by car, in the hopes of edging into the jazz scene there. My organizing goals in life were to improve my playing and avoid a real job indefinitely. I found (and still find) the traditional music curriculum to be beautiful, fascinating, and worthy of intensive study. Excellence in traditional musicianship was very important to me; it was a fundamental part of my identity. At the age of seventeen I had dropped out of New York University to become a bass player around town. At twenty I was reading orchestral scores over coffee and cereal in the same way that my roommates read the morning newspaper.

When life as a starving artist ran its course, I went back to school for a teaching degree and eventually landed my first white-collar job as the head of a instrumental music program in a public, inner-city Montreal high school. I arrived brimming with enthusiasm, convinced that my love of the subject and my years in the barroom trenches would translate into effective teaching. Inheriting a failed concert band program, I immediately added a rhythm section and started writing out classic large-ensemble soul charts from the likes of Ray Charles and Tower of Power. Emphasis was placed on developing practical working musicianship, as epitomized by improvisation, in addition to acquisition of abstract theoretical knowledge. The number one goal was (and still is) fostering a love of performance in my students. My first concerts as a band director were decidedly out of tune and out of time, but they were also entertaining, energetic, and a lot of fun. I have long believed that fun and academic success are not diametrically opposed to each other, but rather potentially complementary. In this vein, I even lowered myself to attempting a band arrangement

of the 9th graders' favorite song ("Party Rock Anthem", by LMFAO). This turned out to be an epiphanal experience; for although the kids loved rehearsing this piece, they never put a sincere effort into learning their individual parts. In the end, they completely butchered the performance.

The lack of ownership the kids displayed in quasi-preparing this song (which they had literally begged me to transcribe) left me with a vague sense of foreboding. Over the coming months, this developed into a nagging fear that my dream of realizing a popular, achievement-oriented band program was simply not going to happen at that school, at least not anytime soon. Students in our school faced so many debilitating obstacles to learning band instruments, realities that I had never encountered along my own privileged educational path. Students had no access to practice facilities at the school, for example, and most were unable to practice wind instruments in their apartments. Virtually none had been exposed to band instruments in elementary school. Most could not afford private lessons or summer band camps, never mind their own saxophones. Most significant, however, was the fact that precious few had any connection to or appreciation for any of the traditional large-ensemble performance genres. Many of my students had never seen a sax, flute, or trumpet outside of my room. Their parents listened to rock, rap, reggae, and whatever was on the radio, and were unsupportive of my practicing expectations. The education I was providing the children was proving to be largely unmeaningful, as they were not applying the knowledge to their daily lives. And if student musicians were not going to practice to the point of developing enabling self-capacities, then what, exactly, was my program supposed to be accomplishing?

Although I loved my job, I found myself in an uncomfortable spot. Should I settle for a horrific-sounding band where everyone has a good time and gains performance experience? Of course I shouldn't. Should I flunk out everybody who didn't practice? One local band director, serving a similar demographic, has done just that. His bands sound amazing and yet there are less than 50 students enrolled from a large school. I have over 230 students enrolled in music and want to keep it that way, so a hardliner approach was similarly out of the question. For all my obsessing, no easy or obvious solution presented itself. Should I turn away from performance

entirely and lead generalist appreciation classes instead? Maybe we could mix beats? Bang away on three-chord guitar songs? Form a Glee Club? Keep Calm and Carry On?

Given this dilemma, the idea of soldiering on with our mediocre band program while I developed a decade of ameliorating experience was an uninspiring one, to say the least. As a teacher who believes very much in the ideal of “teaching with poverty in mind”, I considered it my duty to design a music program accessible to my specific clientele. My paradigm was broken. Something fundamental had to change.

So I asked the kids what they thought we should do, through a variety of feedback and suggestion survey instruments, and weighed their answers against my own priorities. Their input varied quite a bit, but they reached a rough consensus in asking for 1) “better” musical materials of study and 2) increased emphasis on guitars, drums, vocals, and computer music. I took many of the student proposals on little test flights, brief pedagogical excursions into the popular genres; these were invariably designed to achieve modest yet specific learning targets, as in the example below.

HIP - HOP

1. REVIEW YOUR "NOTES & RESTS" HANDOUT
2. FEEL THE BEAT
3. COUNT THE RESTS, AND CHANT THE BACKGROUND VOCALS.
4. IF YOU COUNT CORRECTLY, YOU WILL LINE UP WITH THE VOCALS ON THE ORIGINAL RECORDING.

MOS DEF & DIAMOND D
"BLACK ON BOTH SIDES" (1999)

(LOOP CONTINUES?)

1 2 3 4

8

ADD! MOS DEF! THERE IT IS!

15

EN - G - LISH! SWISH! CH - CH - POW!

21

STOCK OP TION! CHILL.....

5

My early tinkering owed a great deal to a brief article by Shuler (2011), which identified three descriptive criteria for inclusive music programming. Programs were evaluated in terms of achievement, participation, and impact (defined as applicability to student lives). These holistic standards reinforced my understanding of our needs and priorities, guided my initial excursions into alternative pedagogical territory, and encouraged the continued refinement of my curricular experiments. At the root of my nascent vision was the conviction that commitments to relevant and motivational material needed to be balanced with an overriding emphasis on academic excellence and achievement.

Although not every lesson was successful, I was greatly impressed with the overall levels of enthusiasm and participation. Every once in a while, an especially entertaining lesson would elicit more work out of the “bad kids” than an average band class would out of the “good ones.” Excursions turned into expeditions and became an increasingly central part of my curriculum. Over time, I became completely sold on the idea of an alternative music program, and for reasons discussed within settled on a program based on electric guitar instruction. I convinced my principal, prepared myself for the parental blowback, and allotted the summer vacation to figuring out what needed to be done.

Unfortunately, in my research of alternatives to band programs, I consistently found that applying a culturally-informed perspective in music seemed to include sacrificing academic standards. There are many articles explaining how to make music class more widely accessible, but the published curricula do not emphasize traditionally valued aspects of music education such as musical literacy, theoretical understanding, or fine musicianship. For example, guitar instruction has been shown to be incredibly successful in alternative schools whose students have no real hope of meeting the demands of traditional band programs. What this implementation of these extant curricula would mean for me, however, was that I would first have to abandon the idea of teaching the subject I loved.

I desperately sought out guitar curricula that featured high expectations, external validations, and as much overlap with the traditional curriculum as possible. The curriculum I found which retained the most emphasis on excellence in

musicianship came from the Registry of Guitar Tutors (RGT), a London-based professional guild of working electric guitarists. The RGT has developed and maintained a high standard of ear training, theoretical knowledge, and proficient guitar performance, culminating in a succession of externally certified level examinations similar to the Royal Conservatory piano certifications popular in North America. Despite the emphasis on high expectations, however, the curriculum takes explicit pride in ignoring the arduous (and implicitly unnecessary) chore of reading traditional music notation.

The problem, however, is that musical literacy has long been the foundation of classroom-based music education for very good reason. Studying music facilitates language literacy, mathematical reasoning, and general academic success. To abandon this goal in public education, to my way of thinking, would be as inappropriate as an English program abandoning the mechanics of writing on the grounds that proper grammar is difficult and culturally irrelevant. Further to my specific situation, my school emphasizes Advanced Placement (AP) courses. I have committed myself to developing a program that prioritizes the AP Music Theory curriculum and am thus explicitly committed to fostering traditional musicianship in addition to fostering a love of music.

As a result of these extenuating circumstances, my only way forward appeared to be to re-invent the wheel and create a unique course of study for my students. This paper documents my attempt to reconcile & synthesize two existing, established curricula – that of the AP Music Theory exam and that of the RGT Electric Guitar exam. Beginning in 7th grade, I have 4 years with my students to prepare them for the AP Theory course offered in grade 11 (which is the final year of secondary school in Quebec). I intend to do so through the use of electric guitar instruction and performance. My plan is to prioritize the structure and content of the AP Theory curriculum, but rely on popular guitar genres for the musical materials through which we will study said theoretical concepts. Condensed into a single research question, my purpose within this treatise is to ask: Can a program of study be designed that teaches the Advanced Placement Music Theory curriculum via the study of electric guitar performance and popular music genres?

Chapter I: Introduction

American music educators have been stating the need to diversify formal music education in response to a changing American society for over forty years. Pedagogical changes, however, have yet to materialize on a widespread scale. Music educators tend to ignore the important roles that musical preference and identity play in student learning (Peters 2004) and as a result, most high school music programs remain loyal to the methodology, ideology, and repertoire of a bygone era. Modern students, however, demand a curriculum constructed from a variety of cultural influences, and thus increasingly reject school music, based on performance of Western high art music genres, as irrelevant and inaccessible.

Band and choir directors are, however, becoming increasingly self-reflective. As evidence emerges that we alienate many individuals who are perfectly musical (Seddon 2004; Constantine 2011), momentum is building towards the development of culturally appropriate music curricula in schools. In spite of a lack of profession-wide consensus as to what music education in schools is supposed to be, teachers are increasingly willing to "break through the frames of custom and touch the consciousness of those we teach" (Hauser 2011, p. 293). Perhaps the most exciting direction of contemporary music education reform is the movement to bring popular music into formal education settings. Popular music has made inroads in performance repertoire (Rodriguez 2004; Woodson 2004) and more recently in approaches to teaching and learning (Powell 2011). This phenomenon has generated new inquiry in turn: "in terms of the student, the use of popular music has challenged the notion of who is musical by questioning the inherent qualities of what constitutes a musical person and opening up a much wider range of

possibilities” (Wemyss 2004, p. 151). Educators are beginning to put popular music genres to more profound uses than token inclusion in performance and appreciation (Oehler & Hanley 2009) and indeed, the interest in the intersection between formal education and popular music pedagogy has already lead to total paradigm shifts in a handful of foreign countries. A culturally aware approach, based on music relevant to student lives, deserves its newfound validity as music teachers strive to implement equitable and accessible music programs in the pluralistic classrooms of the 21st century.

In this essay, we will examine recent innovations in music education, and discuss hopeful signs that the musical, cultural, and pedagogical chasms between students and their teachers may soon diminish. We will also discuss the chasms that remain and summarize this author’s attempt to address said gap by aligning the traditional music curriculum with that of electric guitar performance. In doing so, we find a great deal of overlap between traditional aims of school music and those of popular musicians. The two curricula displayed sufficient commonalities to allow for the development and implementation of a hybridized course of study in my middle school guitar classes. Suggestions for concrete steps towards achievement-oriented popular music pedagogies are presented, amidst the argument that such pedagogical developments are long overdue.

Background and Context

Low enrollment in high school music is a persistent issue that has often stood in stark contrast to the widely accepted importance and value of formal music education (Constantine 2011). An estimate of student participation in American high school music courses is approximately twenty percent of the overall secondary population; these

numbers belie a nearly ten percent reduction in student ensemble membership over the past twenty years (Elpus & Abril 2011). Music course offerings and extracurricular opportunities are in decline along with student enrollment (Music For All Foundation 2004). This waning participation, at its worst, may pose a clear threat to the longevity of music in public schools (Welch et al. 2010). The decline may be attributable to several factors, the first of which is funding. Music programs are heavily dependent on public financing (Fermanich 2011) and in the last decade, a surge in accountability legislation has combined with increasing austerity measures to result in profound and detrimental effects on music programs across the United States (Sinsabaugh 2006; Beveridge 2010). Secondly, the achievement-oriented structure of music education in America, based on ever-progressing competency, often excludes those older students who lack the proper music education to participate at grade-level (Bartel 2004). This may be a significant detriment in the United States, where less than half of elementary school students are offered beginning band (Davis 2011).

This essay, however, is primarily concerned with the fact that the student population displays an overwhelming lack of interest in the traditional music course offerings (Constantine 2011). A nationwide survey revealed concert band (93%) and chorus (88%) to be the most frequently offered music courses in secondary schools. Other formats were offered only in a small minority of music programs; guitar (19%), piano (13%), and music technology (10%) stand out as the courses that principals most desire to add (Abril & Gault 2008). This disconnect between student taste and available opportunities is reflected in a demographic profile of high school musicians that is tellingly different from that of the general student body: because of that minority of

secondary pupils who choose to enroll in music, those students are disproportionately white, bright, wealthy, and female (Elpus & Abril 2011).

Surveys of Canadian music education programs broadly reflect American trends. Qualified music education specialists, as well as parental support, are seen as particular keys to success. Canadian educators value music education and perceive social and academic benefits for students, and invest time and money into prioritized music programs. Ensemble-based learning is the most common variety of music education. Significantly, it would seem that Canadian students are equally indifferent towards the dominant paradigm, as only a very small number of high school pupils are involved in school music (Coalition for Music Education in Canada 2010).

Formal music education in America has traditionally centered on large ensembles that perform classical genres, and the large performing ensemble remains the most common format of instruction in North American music education today (Bartel 2004; Hauser 2011; Zacharias 2011). Music education has changed little in recent years as the methods and materials of the 1890s remain the foundation of formal music education (Zenker 2004; Schippers 2010). Furthermore, the overwhelmingly heavy emphasis on the Western classical tradition has resulted in a lack of space for other perspectives and thus a lack of cultural representation for modern students: “connected with the unpopularity of certain instruments was the dislike expressed by many pupils concerning the styles of music with which those instruments were associated, and more generally, the music that pupils regarded as being part of the ‘normal’ curriculum” (Green 2008a, p. 100). The pervasiveness of the Western tradition may actually constitute an opportunity barrier to those of different cultural backgrounds, as well as to those who identify as musicians

performing in different contexts (Johnson 2004). As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, monocultural music programs have become increasingly divorced from contemporary high school populations (Campbell 1992).

Despite growing awareness of these issues, the overall structure of music education in America is not yet on a widespread path towards meaningful change. Tertiary music education has not yet responded to current developments in scholarship (Cutietta 2007). The standard music teacher preparation curriculum is constructed around the Western classical music tradition (Schippers 2010; Constantine 2011). There is little popular music training for pre-service teachers (Hebert & Campbell 2000; Davis & Blair 2011) and university education remains inadequate for the advancement and development of popular musicians themselves (Feischas 2010). Furthermore, as universities require a strong background in the classical paradigm, they severely restrict the demographic range of potential future music teachers (Bartel 2004; Seddon 2004; Bowers 2012). As a result, the future generation of music teachers in training can be expected to be, as their predecessors were, proponents of the traditional ensembles. Above and beyond a changing fiscal landscape, the growing emphasis on advocacy in the music education community may indicate awareness of the yawning crevasse, as music programs have not historically needed to justify or fight for their existence (Bowman 2004; Allsup 2012).

Need for Innovation

Despite the inertia of formal structures, both the format and the content of the traditional concert bands and choirs have come under the microscope in recent years (Allsup 2012). According to Emmons (2004), “we do reach most of America’s children,

especially in the elementary grades. However, our success at reaching children as they pass through middle and high school greatly diminishes. Music educators seem to think that if students do not perform in a band, choir, or orchestra, they must not be interested in or able to succeed in music” (p. 172). Low enrollment belies the fact that the large performance model is elitist and exclusionary by nature, particularly regarding the neglect of late-blooming, less-capable, or low socio-economic status students (Peters 2004; Shivley 2004; Bula 2011; Constantine 2011). Indeed, Western art music is inherently exclusionary, considered within the purview of a talented and exalted few (Seddon 2004). Students may be eager for opportunities but unable to work within those presented by the school (Pitts 2011). Furthermore, music education does not have a significant lasting impact on those students who do participate fully (Green 2004; Peters 2004).

Within the last ten years, the relative failure of contemporary high school music programs has become an open secret across disparate groups of stakeholders (Shivley 2004; Green 2006; Welch et al. 2010; Hauser 2011). As Smithram and Upitis (2004) put it, “in countless more classrooms, music has become another subject to sit through, learn and regurgitate without thought, without passion, and without question . . . When thousands of students who play in high school bands never play their instrument again once they’ve left high school, it says to us that we need to re-visit what music education is for” (p. 74-75). The work that follows enthusiastically joins the bandwagon of scholars and practitioners who are engaged in doing exactly that.

Rationale for the Study

A primary interest of reform should be towards an inclusionary ethos and increased accessibility. Our perspective of school music education is overly narrow and there are few clear pathways for students in senior grades back into music opportunities (Smithram & Uptis 2004; Bula 2011). Given the uneven distribution of musical talent in the population, public educators have a realistic impetus to explicitly plan for future classrooms containing varying ability levels (Zenker 2004). Furthermore, public teachers have a moral imperative to balance the desire for high-quality performance with inclusive ethics (Pitts 2011). The most common opportunity for late starters is generalist music classes, which are often criticized as irrelevant, non-motivational, and “completely divorced from making music” (Emmons 2004, p. 172). Music educators, especially in public schools, are simply obligated to find a better way to serve their clientele.

Bartel (2004) points to evidence that alternative approaches may be far more accessible to modern students, describing a vision for using the pedagogical flexibility of popular music to encourage active music making in students of all ages and ability levels. Such an approach implies the need to revise our criteria, as popular educators, of what it means to be musically educated (Seddon 2004). In this conception, “the goals of performance-based music education would be altered to reflect the needs of the individual learner” (Shivley 2004, p. 184). If such a hitherto underexplored mentality becomes widespread, it will affect changes in school music classes that must ultimately be encouraged by music education structures at large.

Purpose of the Study

In my personal practice as a music teacher in a public high school, I have run up against what appear to be concrete limitations of the traditional band approach. While student feedback has been advocating more popular culture, especially guitar, during class, my own priority is to teach traditional Western notational literacy and theory. Given the limited documented uses of popular guitar instruction in classrooms, this paper intends to address said knowledge gap by arguing for the development of a culturally relevant yet achievement-oriented “popular guitar pedagogy”. In writing this paper, I have joined the ranks of the increasing number of music theory teachers who, according to the College Board (1999), are “incorporating music other than European art music in the curriculum” (p. 15-16). Beyond a token or tangential inclusion of disparate subject matter, my intention is to focus on the pedagogical intersection between the published standards of popular guitar performance and those of the traditional music theory curriculum. My work intends to describe and define a hybridized, or “aligned” curriculum, one that balances both sets of priorities. The findings are disseminated in this thesis submitted to McGill University, in partial fulfillment of my Masters Degree.

My primary goals are sixfold: 1) To review the proven benefits of both the traditional music theory and the popular guitar curricula; 2) to identify central goals and tenets of both curricula based upon an analysis of select accredited examination requirements; 3) to discover areas of overlap and compatibility in the pedagogical intersection between popular and classical music genres; 4) to propose a model for the alignment of disparate curricula along the lines of vocabulary, objectives, course content, and learning/assessment practices; 5) to develop an aligned music curriculum teaching

the traditional music theory by way of the electric guitar; and 6) to advocate for the pursuit of traditional music education goals via culturally relevant genres, instruments, and materials. In doing so, I attempt to show that a move away from band does not have to sacrifice the time-honored academic standards of formal music education.

Research Questions

In attempting to identify specific means and techniques by which contemporary teachers may be able to impart the traditional curriculum, my primary research questions are as follows: can electric guitar instruction, using materials drawn primarily from contemporary popular genres, effectively teach traditional notation, theory, and musicianship? Can such a curriculum remain achievement-oriented? Conversely, can such a curriculum remain relevant and motivating?

This research has defined exemplar curricula for both traditional theory and electric guitar performance, attempting to analyze, contrast, and align the two along areas of commonality. In the process, we will consider the following sub-questions: What is the best method for the alignment of disparate music curricula? Are the goals of the AP curriculum congruent with those of the RGT? Can elements of the AP curriculum be effectively illustrated via materials from popular guitar music? If so, then which ones and how? What learning and assessment practices will reinforce the overall objectives of the aligned curriculum? How best to maintain priority for traditional academic standards in responding to emergent research in relevant music education?

Delimitations

It must be immediately stressed that all issues surrounding the practical implementation of said curriculum lie well beyond the scope of this paper. Much needs to be written regarding the negotiation of cultural space, mechanisms of popular material selection, and so on, but I have not attempted to do so here. This paper is not an expression of student voice and identity in the music classroom nor is it a study of the challenges involved in music program reform; it is certainly not an absolute claim that the approach will prove effective in actual practice. I plan to look at the sociological aspects of my reform several years hence, in a critical action research project forming the basis of a future doctoral dissertation. Instead, this treatise is entirely technical in nature, exploring only the hypothetical and theoretical possibilities of curricular alignment.

Operational Definitions

Different scholars occasionally employ parallel terms to describe equivalent concepts. The following explanations refer to uses of terminology within this essay.

Curriculum. Eisner (1979) envisions a curriculum as a course to be run and as a set of school experiences: “the curriculum of a school, or a course, or a classroom can be conceived of as a series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students” (p. 31). A reference to a given curriculum, therefore, will imply considerations of ideals, objectives, course content, materials and repertoire, vocabulary, learning/assessment practices, and so on. Curricula can be further described and distinguished by their characteristics. **Intended curriculum** is the course of study as prescribed, the **operational curriculum** is the unique history of events as they

transpire in the classroom. Schools teach **explicit curricula** (the official course content), **implicit curricula** (socialization and citizenship), and **null curricula** (the significant excluded content) (p. 34). This study is concerned with the development of the explicit, intended popular guitar curriculum only.

Curriculum development. A holistic term for design and implementation, distinct from the development of related pedagogical materials, curriculum development is “the process of transforming images and aspirations about education into programs that will effectively realize the visions that initiated the process” (Eisner 1979, p. 126). Such a conception encompasses aspects of vision, planning, trial, and revision.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. In response to the widespread disconnect between educational perspectives and the diversity of the American student population, as well as the ethnically-correlated achievement gap, scholars have repeatedly demonstrated that students perform better in school when teaching is directed towards their own cultural vantage-points and lived experiences (Gay 2010). A culturally relevant approach displays awareness of this dynamic by attempting to infuse teaching methods and materials with cultural content significant to a given student population. This paper describes culturally relevant music pedagogy as that which is predicated on the principal that consideration of student cultural references should be a primary input.

Musical Literacy. A literate musician, for the purposes of this study, is fluent in the traditional European staff-based music notation system.

Informal Learning. The learning practices of unschooled musicians display broad commonalities of characteristics distinct from the teacher- and institution-directed

methods of **Formal Education**. A primary alternative to reading notated music is to learn by way of critical listening, a habit shared by many cultures around the globe.

Common-Practice Music. Common-practice music refers to Western art music of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods, which laypeople broadly tend to describe as “Classical Music” and musicians as “the Western Canon.” Common-practice music provides the musical foundation for nearly all Western music, high and low, that has been written since. Familiarity with the common-practice styles forms the basis of most theory and musicianship pedagogies to this day.

Popular Music. Popular music is hard to define, particularly in that the notion of what is popular changes over time, meaning different things to different people at different times for different reasons (Rodriguez 2004; Schippers 2010). For Zacharias (2011), the term is used to refer to any music other than Western art music. Bowman (2004) describes popular music as having breadth of appeal, commodity character, amateur engagement, relevance, and informality. Objectively, popularity may be empirically measured in terms of current consumption, prevalence in contemporary media, and relevance to a specific group of students (Rodriguez 2004).

For practitioners, the most salient finding is that the students retain the power to define what is considered popular, not the teacher (Powell 2011). Furthermore, the musical tastes of young people change so fast that one can never hope to develop a truly contemporary and relevant repertoire. For this reason, formal instruction of popular music has been criticized for trending towards the development of a “popular music canon” (Green 2006) comprised of non-classical materials that are equally irrelevant to student lives.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter examines recent findings in sociology, curricular studies, and music education research with the aim of understanding new directions in music education, the implications of these innovations for practitioners, and avenues of potential redressing action. We will look at cultural and pedagogical divides between school music and popular music making, examine attempts to reconcile the two, and contextualize this thesis project within the recent scholastic narrative.

Cultural Chasms in Music Education

Numerous academics, teachers, and government ministries have noted that music in secondary schools is of little interest to many musically active students (Jeanneret 2010; Rowland 2011). According to Allsup (2004), “in spite of the educational superstructure that supports it, the irony of high school band is that it is isolated within the world of music” (p. 209). Students in music classes often express disconnectedness with the music-making experience, and chafe at repertoire restrictions (Powell 2011; Bowers 2012). Music ensembles seem unrelated to students’ lives, and many successful popular musicians have turned their back on formal music programs (Green 2006; Constantine 2011). Motivation has been found to be of central importance in the acquisition of musical skill sets (Swindells 2009), yet the musical enthusiasms and aspirations of many young people are not addressed by the current curriculum (Jaffurs 2004; Bula 2011). As classically trained educators are by and large incapable of developing their students’ musical interests, students tend to develop musical self-identities that are predicated on open antagonism towards the music they are compelled to perform at school (Saunders 2010; Welch et al. 2010; Constantine 2011).

A body of literature exists detailing the how and whys of adolescent musical preference and identity (Powell 2011). From these writings, several strands emerge: firstly, it is increasingly clear that young people strongly prefer the popular music of their day (Rentz 1994; Hebert & Campbell 2000; Seifried 2002; Rodriguez 2004). Secondly, music plays a vitally important role in student lives and occupies a fundamental place in the construction of teenage identities (Hebert & Campbell 2000; Downey 2009). Thirdly, students will develop meaningful musical identities regardless of whether or not these identities are reinforced by the music studied at school (Bartel 2004; Powell 2011). Finally, it is well-discussed that musical taste is already almost fully developed when adolescents begin high school (Peters 2004; Mulder et al. 2010).

Educators, in much the same way, tend to construct a strong part of their professional identities around their musical and methodological preferences (Saunders 2010). Teachers retain a great deal of control regarding curricular content and the reasons for which teachers implement and adapt curricula are highly personal, as music curricula reflect the individuals' ideology and agency (Abril 2009). For many of us, music is central to our sense of who we are, and few music teachers have qualifications and experience in non-classical musical cultures (Emmons 2004; Welch et al. 2010). A distrust of popular genres persists, marked by a value-laden hierarchy of seriousness and taste regarding repertoire selection (Bartel 2004; Seddon 2004). This has been known to manifest in the continued delivery of Western art music regardless of student participation. It would appear also that many music undergraduates were put off potential teaching careers because of fear of pupil behaviour and disinterest (Welch et al. 2010).

Although highly effective pedagogical resources for the incorporation of popular music are currently emerging (Biamonte 2010), most teaching methodologies do not generally include popular content (Peters 2004) and most schools do not offer extracurricular opportunities in popular music genres (Pitts 2011). Classically-trained musicians (and thus most music educators) tend to have unfavorable preconceptions about popular musicians, summed up in the false belief that popular musicians are musically less capable and have inferior aesthetic taste (Bartel 2004; Hebert & Campbell 2000). Furthermore, classical musicians perceive achievement in popular music as effortless and fortune-based, devoid of the dedicated work ethic necessary for success in classical music (Rodriguez 2004; Green 2006). Commensurate attitudes amongst educators include the beliefs that popular music will be naturally learned outside of class time, that the mission of the schools is to elevate students beyond their natural inclinations, and that popular music is morally bankrupt (Hebert & Campbell 2000). Secondary music educators have little desire to meet students halfway: rather, they report a desire to teach the best, brightest, and hardest-working students (those who will create the best performances) and career advancement is seen as movement in the direction of elite schools and elite students (Bartel 2004). These dismissive attitudes towards vernacular music are reflected in the scholastic literature as well, where mainstream music genres have consumed the bulk of their ink as tangential phenomenon attached to cultural trends (Kato 2012).

Allsup (2004) has noted that “while all students belong to a range of musical subcultures, schools sanction (and finance) only a few such groups” (p. 208). Where popular music offerings do exist, they are often considered to be on a lower educational

echelon, conceptualized as diversionary, lacking academic standards, and a necessary evil to increase enrollment; popular music teachers at both the secondary and tertiary levels often lack appropriate background, experience, and training (Oehler & Hanley 2009).

Music teachers, in sum, continue to embody a belief in the superiority of Western art music and the profession persists in futile attempts to elevate the nation's musical tastes against its wishes (Humphreys 2004).

Enculturation in Musical Transmission

In pondering the problematic disconnect between school music and student lives, it is useful to consider the environmental aspect of “enculturation”, meaning immersion in the musical culture being transmitted. Enculturation plays an important role both in formal education settings and in lives of unschooled popular musicians (Green 2004). It is important to note, in the first place, that Western art music has never been the music of choice in the USA (Humphreys 2004). Most students in a given North American classroom are simply not enculturated to the music presented therein (Green 2001; Peters 2004). Music is a vitally important part of American life and culture, yet only a relative handful of musically active American households own wind instruments (Bowers 2012). Furthermore, children rarely listen to the Western canon; “without repeated listening, stylistic familiarity cannot develop, and without some stylistic familiarity, positive experience of inherent meaning is unlikely to occur” (Green 2006, p. 104).

The chasm is not inherent to wind instruments but rather is due to their absence in American culture, as an example from Greece makes clear. Organized wind band institutions date from the year 1840 on the island of Corfu, and they teach music and loan

free instruments to the present day. These bands are an important part of Corfu's culture and identity; they are popular with children, demand active participation into adulthood, proactively preserve musical social structures, and are a source of pride and status (Dionyssiou 2011). Public institutions in America, by way of contrast, operate in a more hostile context, lacking community support for classical music and thus conferring limited social prestige (Schipper 2010, p. 108).

In response to such findings, a growing movement is prioritizing music on the basis of familiarity and relevance for students. Although there are inescapable issues of authenticity involved in attempting to co-opt or incorporate elements of popular cultures into mainstream schooling (Hebert & Campbell 2000; Green 2006; Low 2011), a great deal of innovation has been pushing the boundaries of possibility.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Music educators can enhance their practice through considerations of cultural studies (Storey 2003). Such perspectives are cognizant of the need for learning to have relevance and potential application in order to be meaningful for students (Allsup 1997). A cultural studies lens further recognizes that "the factors that influence schooling may have their source far from the school or school district" (Eisner 1979, p. 374). Such an emphasis is welcome and overdue, considering the irrelevant curriculum currently taught in schools (Seddon 2004; Powell 2011). Adolescents are fiercely protective and passionate about their musical identities, a fact that formal education can no longer afford to ignore (Saunders 2010).

The music educators' quest for culturally relevant materials can be informed from a variety of tangential areas of inquiry. The academic literature on youth-driven popular culture has long wrestled with issues surrounding the development of relevant, culturally negotiated curricula (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2005). There is a great deal of literature on multicultural education in general; these insights can be applied to specific areas of music education, especially considering that the multicultural/multiethnic movement in education has been found to be easily advanced through the music curriculum (Campbell 1992, Carlisle 2011). (Multicultural education refers here to a pedagogical recognition of diversity and the move away from Eurocentric curricula. It is not to be confused with the multicultural music or "world music" pedagogy of the 1990's, characterized by emphasis on an exposure to indigenous music from across the planet.)

Discourse surrounding issues of cultural representation in schooling structures provides relevant lessons for music educators attempting to serve an alienated student body. The concept of "culturally relevant pedagogy" is particularly enlightening in this case. An egalitarian, culturally pluralistic outlook in all aspects and subjects of schooling has been rightly described as a need and a right (Gay 1995). A culturally relevant curriculum is necessary for the success of students whose wants and needs have been largely ignored in the past (Ladson-Billings 1995a), and is a moral imperative of teachers working with culturally diverse student populations (Ladson-Billings 1995b; Gay 1995; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade 2002). In particular, Gay's (2002) recommended priorities for teachers engaged in culturally relevant programming are directly applicable to school music classes: namely development of a cultural diversity knowledge base; design of

culturally relevant curricula; cross-cultural communication; and cultural congruity in classroom instruction.

Cultural considerations do not necessarily have to be ethnic in nature. Hip-hop culture, for example, is arguably the most influential strain of popular culture currently shaping the social landscape of North America. This culture, encompassing not only music but also dress, language, and values, is changing the way that students interact and learn, but is rarely incorporated into formal learning structures (Low 2011). Some forms of hip-hop pedagogy are slowly but surely making their way into widespread usage. Scholars have acknowledged the curricular merit of youth popular culture, and hip-hop more specifically, as existing on myriad levels (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2005; Low 2011). Over the last fifteen years, numerous studies have examined the use of rap music as an instructional text in middle and high school humanities classrooms, revealing hip-hop to be a powerful tool for engagement and learning (Kumar 2012). Authors have argued for the inclusion of hip-hop scholarship as a consideration in the design of curricula, educational experiences, and instructional materials (Stovall 2006; Hill 2009). Yet educational institutions remain suspicious of and antagonistic towards it, contributing to a problematic and detrimental disconnect between school life and the life which students construe as “real” (Low 2011).

In this context, the notions of popular music and culturally relevant music are intertwined to the point of being nearly synonymous. According to Green (2004), the multicultural music movement failed precisely because of efforts to diversify, in which it looked even further afield for pedagogical materials, thus actually decreasing the relevance of content. For music education to be successful, it must look to the students

themselves as authorities of what is motivational: “an appropriate first step in respecting the process of enculturation would be to ensure that the sounds that first greet our students when they walk through our classroom doors are sounds that they are most accustomed to hearing – the music of their everyday lives” (Peters 2004, p. 7).

Numerous music education organizations have underlined the need for formal music education to evolve in the direction of inclusiveness and cultural relevance, and the importance of cultural diversity in music education is reflected in numerous policy documents (Schippers 2010). In the United States, the issue of low enrollment in school music and the notion of implementing non-traditional musical offerings to connect with students was first addressed by formal music education bodies at the famed Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 (Choate 1968). Since 1989, the Music Educators National Conference has maintained that school music must be more broadly defined to encompass the ethnic diversity of the student population (Anderson & Campbell 1989). The *National Standards for Music Education* (1994) more specifically suggested the implementation of music from different cultures as a way of maintaining relevance to the rapidly changing American society, providing a guideline and benchmark for innovative music educators. In 2000, MENC reinforced its long-term commitment to culturally relevant music programming in a document entitled *Vision 2020* (Madsen 2000). Similar proclamations have been issued by educational ministries around the world (Wemyss 2004; Vaveka 2006; Hallam 2011).

Ghosh (1996) epitomizes a truly pluralistic curriculum as one that is infused with multiple perspectives: “infusion means permeating the entire school curriculum with the lives, experiences, works, attributes, and dreams of those traditionally left out” (p. 42).

Early research has applied the insights and visions of cultural studies to the problem of alternative music programming, hypothesizing that culturally relevant offerings might be able to serve a broader range of students (Turner 2009; Constantine 2011; Conklin-Ginop et al. 2011; Pitts 2011). Music educators from around the world are working towards Ghosh's goal of an infused curriculum, although they use different terms such as *culturally relevant music* (Turner 2009) or *internationalizing the curriculum* (Joseph 2005).

The documented social benefits of a culturally responsive music education are many (Seifried 2006; Stovall 2006), although the academic benefits have received much less attention. For students, a culturally responsive approach can result in improved academic achievement, meaningful and tangible lessons, and respect for one's own culture and others (Turner 2009). The ability to build communicative relationships with students of different cultural backgrounds will be an increasingly central competency in the new century and curricula should be informed by respect for a variety of cultural considerations (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2005). Progress is discernable but still relatively new, and Low's (2011) observation regarding hip-hop could be said to be equally applicable in broader application towards popular music education in general: Although researchers have studied the implementation of hip-hop content in formal education, and the pedagogical value of hip-hop is strongly supported by evidence, hip-hop pedagogies are still very much in their infancy; hordes of scholars need to contribute in a similar vein before academia is posited to develop and describe validated, large-scale pedagogies.

Popular Music in Schools

Students demand that music allow them to express their individualism (Rodriguez 2004), and it is of utmost importance for learners to enjoy the music they are studying (Green 2004). Students simply must have input in the selection of musical materials if they are expected to experience a sense of ownership in a music program (Green 2008; Abril 2009; Bula 2011; Davis 2011; Zacharias 2011). A variety of research has further established that the inclusion of student voice and preferences in curricular design can be beneficial to student motivation, buy-in, and work ethic (Rentz 1994; Bolden 2009; Hauser 2010; Saunders 2010). On a larger scale, Bowers (2012) has called for research into the effects of implementing student-recommended music courses.

Evidence suggests that while popular music may be relatively uncommon in schools, it is not impossibly incompatible with school music, and many educators can adapt it into their personal teaching practices (Bowman 2004; Feichas 2010; Powell 2011). Models of successful, goal-oriented, long-lasting alternative programs are described in the academic literature (Seifried 2002). Truly, although formal popular music pedagogies and scholarship have been historically lacking, popular music has in fact been taught in American schools to some extent for most of the country's existence (Humphreys 2004). Advocates point to ways in which a greater emphasis on popular music may benefit programs at large, such as "greater participation, more meaningful experiences, more practical musical training, a greater understanding of music or those involves, and a greater number of consumers with a high-level understanding of music" (Emmons 2004, p. 173).

The National Standards for Music Education represent a set of educational values

intended to guide music teachers towards an approach that transcends the limitations of performance preparation within a large-ensemble format. Teachers of traditional bands, choirs, and orchestras are developing new ways to broaden the focus of their teaching beyond the traditional pursuits of singing, playing, and reading (Wang & Humphreys 2009; Zacharias 2011). Popular music genres can hypothetically be used to address any and all of the nine broad standards and the incorporation of popular music may in fact be a way to facilitate educators' abilities to address the other standards (Emmons 2004; Lee 2004; Zacharias 2011).

Currently, reform and renewal efforts in North America lag behind those of other countries (Humphreys 2004). Popular music in secondary schools is already widespread around the world (Rosenberg 2010) and national efforts in Finland, Sweden, Australia, and the United Kingdom have attempted to develop and implement formal popular music curricula for middle and high school (Frazier 2012). In Sweden the majority of music education occurs through pop and rock music in small-group instruction, with an emphasis on practical skills that students can use in their personal music lives (Karlsen 2010; Georgia-Hemming 2011). Popular and world music play a similarly important role in Dutch music education (Evelein 2006). Microphones, drums, electric bass and guitars are the most common types of instruments found in Finnish high schools (Westerlund 2006), and rock music has successfully become a staple in the Scottish music curriculum (Byrne & Sheridan 2000). In Australia, popular music was mandated in the 1970s and has since matured into an established component of formal music structures (Wemyss 2004). Recently, Argentina has seen a rapid proliferation of state-sponsored formal institutions of popular music education, addressing genres that have historically been excluded from

the country's formal music education systems (O'Brien 2008). Brazil is witnessing similar upheavals in its state music schools, where a changing demographic student is bringing popular music into formal institutions for the first time (Fieschas 2012).

Around the world, tertiary educators are likewise responding to the need for innovation in pre-service music teacher training (Byrne & Sheridan 2000; Evelein 2006). This is evidenced in certain admission examinations, where some practical knowledge of popular music is required of all applicants (Vaveka 2006). One Australian conservatory has developed a route towards teaching credentials through its Bachelor of Popular Music program (Lebler 2008). Today, popular music is even becoming institutionalized even in America, as evidenced by the proliferation of pop-oriented performance degrees (Woodson 2004).

Indeed, although music education structures in other countries have embraced American popular music genres ahead of the US (Westerlund 2006), the American system is showing some signs of impending change (Powell 2011). Popular music has made significant inroads into school music education over the last half-century and at present, the inclusion of popular music as a content area in music education is no longer uncommon (Lebler 2008). Although the band model continues to be at the center of American music education, clear and sustained attempts have been made to diversify school musical offerings (Pitts 2011; Zacharias 2011). Progress has been made towards more varied repertoire and more inclusive outlooks (Seddon 2004; Green 2008).

Some schools are exploring partnerships with established community music organizations as a way of complementing formal instruction both during and outside of class time, displaying a great deal of potential for cooperation with community music

organizations (Seddon 2004; Zenker 2004; Pitts 2011). Important breakthroughs may be perused in the realm of community building (Kennedy 2004), budget considerations (Sinsabaugh 2006), and teacher training and resource development (Woodson 2004).

The gradual inclusion of popular music in formal music education systems is undoubtedly welcome and overdue (O'Flynn 2006). There is now some precedent for using popular music in the classroom to achieve the traditional instructional goals of formal American music education (Rodriguez 2012). Unfortunately, the pedagogical uses of popular music remain relatively limited, usually employed in social and historical aspects of study (Oehler 2009), in generalist classes (Rodriguez 2012), or as arrangements of contemporary repertoire in traditional concert or jazz bands (Zacharias 2011). Non-traditional music offerings are often used as a bald-faced recruitment tool to feed the traditional school performing ensembles (Humphreys 2004; Constantine 2011).

Although most of the relevant scholarship regarding the inclusion of popular music into formal educational structures has revolved around the wind band, striking similarities have been described in the world of secondary string orchestras and choral ensembles. Each ensemble format has seen the gradual inclusion of popular styles into performance genres, and increased student access to popular music instructional opportunities over the years. Ensemble directors have recognized the retention power of performing popular music, and have reconciled popular genres with external curricula and standards. Lack of training and professional development have been identified as obstacles, as has a generationalized lack of popular music experience and knowledge. Both orchestras and choirs tend to include popular content in relatively superficial ways, noting a lack of established research and pedagogy (Turner 2009; Lindamood 2011).

Pedagogical Chasms in Music Education

The inability of music educators to connect with students is especially frustrating in light of the fact that human beings are intrinsically motivated to create and play music: “if tomorrow we were to close down all conservatories and public and private music schools and cancel music lessons in school, certain musical practices would undoubtedly suffer, but music would not stop” (Schippers 2010, p. 90). Indeed, even non-participating students care about and communicate through music, and enjoy deeply musical lives (Peters 2004). Eisner (1979) reminds us that education and learning are distinct from schooling. The lack of understanding regarding learning and accomplishment in popular music, furthermore, in no way implies that the musical skills involved are unsophisticated or easy to achieve (On Nei Mok 2011).

Since the founding of the United States there has been a wide chasm between the pedagogical traditions of school music and of popular music. As a result of the exclusion of popular genres from formal musical education, the 19th Century saw the widespread establishment of community music schools, which set the pedagogical precedent for the reliance on alternative learning traditions in American popular music. Both pedagogical styles, therefore, have well-established historical roots in America and rich, robust traditions (Humphreys 2004; Rodriguez 2004). American popular music, furthermore, deserves consideration from a formal education perspective merely on the basis of its runaway worldwide success (Lee 2004; Frazier 2012).

The popular music learning practices take place in marked contrast to the sequential style of formal education, and may exhibit “distance from and even mistrust of formal structures” (Schippers 2010, p. 94). Green (2006) describes the popular music

culture's ideological conviction that "the music is a direct, unmediated and authentic expression of feeling, untrammelled by the dictates of convention" (p. 106). This can often manifest as outright hostility towards the knowledge contained in a traditional music formal setting (Westerlund & Vakeva 2011). This attitude is epitomized in a best-selling instructional video by the legendary bassist Flea (1992), who repeatedly sneers at the limitations of unfunky, over-educated musicians: "The left hand is pretty simple . . . You press down, voilà ! A different note! Then it just boils down to, you know, what's eking out of your soul for what notes you're gonna play."

Material from popular music genres has made inroads in areas of performance repertoire (Woodson 2004; Bula 2011), but the introduction of new content has only recently led to an interest in renewed teaching practices (Green 2004) and the work ethic and commitment levels of dedicated musicians in informal contexts has traditionally been ignored (Green 2008). "The gap between conventional music curricula in North American schools and the musical practices in which most people engage in everyday life is enormous, and it is growing wider at a breathtaking rate" (Bowman 2004, p. 29). It is important to remember that the effects of the parallel cultures are pervasive and far-reaching, affecting learning, notating, creating, and performing (Rodriguez 2004). While it is not unheard of for a popular musician to have studied music either in school or through private lessons, most learning occurs informally (Jenkins 2011; Zacharias 2011). Indeed, informal practices continue to form the foundation of popular music learning cultures to this day (Woodson 2004; Green 2008). The pedagogical gap is as problematic as the cultural one (Green 2004).

The habits of popular musicians have been further described in comprehensive studies of how popular musicians prefer to learn. “Informal learning” is defined by five primary characteristics: using culturally relevant music; aural learning; group learning; unstructured or haphazard learning; and “integrated listening, performing, improvising, and composing in all aspects of the learning process” (Green 2008, p. 23). The learning process is typically characterized by active participation and self-directed or collaborative learning (Byrne & Sheridan 2000, Schippers 2010).

One of the most significant findings of the research into informal learning has been the revelation that in the absence of a literate tradition, popular musicians have developed sophisticated critical listening skills superior to their classical counterparts (Green 2004; 2008). The development of aural capabilities may be one area in which formal education can be especially valuable in our quest to enrich students’ empowerment, abilities, and independent musical lives. Much of the discourse revolving around the differences in learning styles between popular and formal musicians can be summed up in a simple dichotomy: the classical tradition learns through reading and writing, while popular musicians learn through speaking and listening. In other words, informal popular music pedagogy exists within the aural/oral tradition.

Academic descriptions of musically advanced but illiterate cultures date to Blacking’s (1973) depiction of the Venda people living in the South African Transvaal, in which an entire community was shown to be musically capable through direct aural/oral transmission. Ethnographic studies have since described a variety of distinct aural/oral pedagogical traditions around the world (Campbell 1992). More recently, frameworks from popular musician research have been applied to a study of the Filipino diaspora

in Hong Kong, a disproportionate number of who are able to sing in harmony by ear. The lay musicians were found to enjoy proper enculturation opportunities (Green 2004), to learn through processes including self-learning (Finnegan 2007), and to practice self-regulated listening (Green 2002). Similarly to the successes of popular musicians, the capabilities of Filipino lay musicians are developed over time and only with sustained and deliberate effort (On Nei Mok 2011). For the modern educator, a primary challenge remains bridging this gap between aural and written musical learning (Rodriguez 2004; Woodson 2004).

Informal Learning in Schools

Although the rate of change in pedagogical approaches in music lags behind that of other disciplines (Shieh & Conway 2004), the surge of interest in informal learning is historically sited in a long tradition of attempts at reform of the music curriculum. These include the creative music movement in the 1960s and 1970s, intended to use popular music as a bridge to high art, and the world music curricula of the 1990's, both of which offer valuable lessons for popular music pedagogies (Green 2008). From the relative failure of these various initiatives, authors have speculated as to the relevant lessons for continued attempts at overhaul. The inclusion of disparate types of music in a traditional music education paradigm can fall short of a truly inclusionary value system. Past world music initiatives have often proved unsuccessful when they emphasize traditional appreciation values in their curricular design (Schipper 2010), while popular music resource development in education reproduces traditional values while remaining distant from pupils' tastes (Green 2008). In noting that despite the inclusion of popular content

the learning practices of popular music have not been incorporated into schools, Green (2008) considers the problem fundamentally pedagogical in nature; teacher-led approaches may be un-motivational in and of themselves, regardless of the nature of content.

Within the last decade, as our understanding of community music becomes sharper, great excitement is being generated regarding the potential for using these alternative processes in formal education paradigms (Green 2006; Schippers 2010). According to Emmons (2004), Lebler (2008), and others, the very act of including popular music requires changes to music education structures, as the new content necessitates changes to goals, methodologies, and school organization. “Popular music has always been problematic for music educators because . . . it does not inhere in the principles and processes of formal music instruction” (Rodriguez 2004, p. 3). Indeed, where informal learning has been welcomed into widespread mainstream education, teachers have transformed their teaching in terms of philosophy, methodology, vocabulary, and goals; the changes wrought by the inclusion of popular music content are reflected in syllabi, pedagogical practices, teacher self-conception, and program organization (Wemyss 2004).

A great number of teachers have reacted to informal learning revelations by considering the adaptations that traditional concert bands may need to undertake in order to survive in such a time of changing values. As tradition frames our current practices, the persistence of the band rehearsal model, geared towards preparing the best possible performance in the least amount of time, has created a teacher-centered environment that fails to foster individual student development (Bartel 2004; Green 2004; Zenker 2004;

Bula 2011; Hauser 2011). Within the performance preparation process, time pressures leave little room for the exploration of student musical identities (Allsup 2004; Jaffurs 2004). Davis (2011) maintains that the problems lie not with format, but rather with content and teaching practices, maintaining that student ownership, agency, relevance, expression, and choice are more important, in this context, than instrument selection. Underexplored opportunities for learning within the band format are getting more attention, characterized largely by an emphasis on constructivist learning practices. Allsup (1997; 2012) agrees that broadening the pedagogical focus towards composition, improvisation, and student nurturing can effectively address the problems facing band. Composition activities are making inroads (Seddon 2004), and well-developed models of creation pedagogy exist (Kennedy 2004).

Others envision a much broader paradigm shift, affecting fundamental aspects of school programming and organization (Bowman 2004; O'Brien 2010; Rosenberg 2010). Shivley (2004) has stated "sustaining this conductor/ensemble member dynamic will make it difficult to move ensemble classes beyond what is often the singular focus of preparing performances" (p. 180). One obvious area of institutional adoption revolves around the need to engage in haphazard and collective learning. One of the central pragmatic challenges for the institution of informal learning practices may be the difficulty in logistically providing for self-directed learning opportunities (Peters 2004; Davis 2011; Jenkins 2011), although by the same token, many scholars regard collaborative learning to be an indispensable aspect of reform (Andrews 1996; Davis & Blair 2011; Hallam 2011).

In recent years, scholars have increasingly placed the onus of compromise upon educational institutions, a point of view encapsulated by Pitts (2011): “the school production model is heavily dependent on the musical expertise and authority of the teacher . . . alternative ways must be sought to achieve similar musical outcomes” (p. 233). One of the most exciting initiatives to emerge from this is the Musical Futures approach, a pioneering use of “institutionalized garage bands” (Emmons 2004) in order to bring opportunities for informal learning into formal educational settings. The Musical Futures has pilot projects around the world, include several in the United States and one in Ontario. With proper support, Musical Futures schools have completely revolutionized their music programs to provide workshopping formats in small, student-directed ensembles.

Hallam’s (2011) landmark study of the implementation of the Musical Futures approach sheds much light on both the strengths and the weaknesses of embracing such sweeping reforms. The Musical Futures project was shown to have strong and positive impacts on student motivation, attitude, enjoyment, behavior, and self-reliance. Teachers and administrators identified academic and social benefits, such as increased concentration and organizational skills, which spilled over into other classes and had positive affects on the larger school. A minority of students agreed, furthermore, that participating in informal music learning helped in other school subjects, particularly through the development of cooperative work skills (Hallam 2011).

Hallam’s study has been recreated in Victoria, Australia, with similar results (Jeanneret 2010). The Musical Futures project has provided and will continue to provide for enormous breakthroughs in our understanding of the ways that music education may

be possible. For those with the ability to restructure music programs so drastically, Musical Futures may well prove to be a comprehensive future.

As exciting as the initiative is, however, not every music teacher will have the flexibility, agency, and/or desire to adopt such an approach in its entirety, and garage band will simply not work for everybody. School organization and logistics constitute obstacles to small ensemble paradigms in formal music education (Humphreys 2004), and external standards and expectations may similarly interfere (Green 2008). The Musical Futures approach is especially resource-intensive. Hallam identified far-reaching resource demands of the small-ensemble workshop approach relating to classroom space, instruction time, instrument access, staff supervision, and noise pollution. Shivley (2004) reminds us that the large ensemble has partially earned its prevalence through the need for school efficiency: “restructuring ensemble classes in consideration of the needs of individual students would require more teachers, space, and equipment, and subsequently, more money” (p. 181). Unfortunately, these demands may be beyond the means of most Canadian schools, where educators have identified lack of funding and lack of time as the most significant challenges to providing quality music instruction (Coalition for Music Education in Canada 2010).

As logistically challenging as informal learning is for school organization, it is pedagogically challenging for teachers, especially that majority of whom have classical backgrounds (Green 2008). While Musical Futures projects have been successful in terms of student output, some teachers have found the sheer energy output required by the high-intensive project to be exhausting and unsustainable (Hallam 2010).

Unrealized Potential of Popular Guitar Instruction

Despite the appeal of comprehensive reform, changes of the extent necessitated by a Musical Futures project may not be desirable in all contexts. For many teachers a teacher-centered methodology, in a classroom with a high student-to-teacher ratio, may be an enduring reality. Inside of these constraints, popular guitar may prove to be a viable option in certain contexts. From this perspective, the inclusion of guitar instruction and of materials from popular guitar-based genres does not necessarily imply a wholesale adoption of informal learning techniques.

In attempting to realize the goal of providing a meaningful, authentic music education to contemporary students, educators should look to the strengths and weaknesses of extant alternative music offerings, of which there are many examples. Music teachers need to be aware of the power their programming has to affect the future musical lives of their students (Pitts 2011), and should strive to impart students with useful and relevant knowledge. Steel pans, drumlines, and glee clubs all have established places in American schools and in the music education literature. “One way to see the effect of music programs targeted at non-traditional music students is to study high school guitar classes” (Bula 2011, p. 11), which are a promising example of culturally relevant programming. Guitar can be considered potentially culturally relevant because it is so prevalent in many types of popular music, and guitar instruction has been shown to attract students who would otherwise opt out of music programs (Seifried 2006). Moreover, the guitar may expose traditional music students to a wider variety of music: the structure of guitar class can allow for a great deal of student choice and input (Seifried

2006), and the cultural niche it creates for some students can have social benefits for the school at large (Seifried 2002).

In Scotland, the profusion of guitar classes was encouraged by national-level curricular reform and a top-down mandate to broaden participation (Byrne & Sheridan 2000). In America, by contrast, advances in guitar instruction came mostly by way of popular demand, and the last fifty years witnessed a significant increase in secondary guitar electives (Lorenz 1993). Guitar class has practical advantages in school settings regarding matters of budget, classroom materials, and school environment (Lowry 1978). In recent years, guitar instruction has been supported by a burgeoning wealth of educational infrastructure such as teachers' resources and method books, formal advocacy, competitions and festivals, conventions and workshops, and organized advancement associations such as the Guitar Foundation of America (Merry 2010).

The most common use of guitar in popular culture is as a relatively simple accompaniment instrument, a trend that appears to be reflected in guitar pedagogy (Lorenz 1993). An article by Orr (1984) from a bygone trade journal describes guitar programs as an easy alternative to high school students who otherwise might not be involved in school music, and school programming has continued to reflect this bias. Guitar classes often teach practical accompaniment skills while ignoring melodic reading altogether, and many guitarists never advance beyond rudimentary realms of theoretical understanding (Fridley 1993; Lorenz 1993; Merry 2010). As opposed to most other widespread models of music education, guitar instruction has not yet been correlated with academic successes (Seifried 2006). Emmons (2004) identifies missed opportunities in guitar pedagogy: "techniques frequently taught do not provide the experience of

knowledge needed for success with popular music. Guitar classes, for example, currently educate students in folk music accompaniment and simple melodic performance. This knowledge should be supplemented with skills in improvisation (especially minor pentatonic and blues scales), barre chords used in rock, and accompaniment styles used in today's popular music" (p. 165).

For all of the justifiable interest in the informal learning practices of popular musicians, it is worth reiterating that formal music education has historically turned its back on popular music in general, and thus abandoned popular musicians to develop their own learning styles in the absence of formal assistance. A similar lack of perspective is found in the history of guitar instruction in general in America, particularly at the secondary level (Merry 2010). This lack of attention to vernacular musical interests is especially apparent in the dearth of achievement-oriented popular guitar methodologies, for as Harrison (2010) complains, "the role of the guitar in the context of Western music suggests a lingering incompatibility with traditional academic musicianship" (p. 2).

As a result, reading skills among guitarists are lower than possibly any other group of instrumentalists, and most classical guitar majors arrive at university both technically and musically undeveloped compared to those who play other instruments (Merry 2010). Although the lack of reading ability among guitarists has been a stated concern of music education for nearly forty years, little ameliorative progress has been made (Lorenz 1993). While guitarist's attitudes toward notational literacy run the full spectrum, many do not find that they have ever been compelled to learn to read in order to play popular music, reporting a lack of connection between school guitar course content and the relevant material they pursued in private instruction (Ward 2011).

Teaching models and guitar teachers themselves often lack basic literacy skills, while the culture of popular guitar pedagogy continues to be predicated on a mechanical rather than a tonal approach (Lorenz 1993).

One clearly identified limitation is the tendency for guitar textbooks to eschew traditional notational-based literacy reading in favor of an emphasis on practical music literacy such as chord boxes and tablature (Fridley 1993; Lorenz 1993). Both parallel systems rely on physical representations of the guitar neck, and thus discourage advanced musicality by providing a means to an end which can circumvent musical knowledge and understanding, as well as critical thinking. Fridley's explanation of the shortcomings of tablature is illuminating, and worth quoting at length: "Trend (1925) succinctly defines tablatures as 'a code which tells a man not what note he is to think of, but where he is to put his fingers' (p. 35). This process is contrary to the findings of research that support the importance of audiation in musical performance . . . Audiation 'takes place when one hears music silently through recall' (Gordon 1984, p. 2). Although learning music through tablature or oral tradition methods will enhance audiation skills, standard music notation (as the symbolic representation of sound) is the only generally used visual representation that can stimulate accurate audiation" (p. 113).

In many respects, the liberation from the necessity of reading music can be seen as one of the guitar's greatest strengths, offering many possibilities in terms of inclusionary outlook and success for all students. Scholarship from the history of American guitar expression celebrates this potential, summed up in Love (1974), who specifically detailed the possibilities guitar offered for having students enjoy and create music, as opposed to being stuck in the realm of interpretation. Unfortunately, however,

while the literature has documented many of the social and institutional benefits of popular music instruction, it has shown much less interest in legitimizing the pedagogical value of the guitar, although countless detailed guitar-specific methods exist. Instead, where guitar has appeared in regards to the traditional curriculum, commentary has often been overtly dichotomous. Given the current context of musical education, and the proven importance of guitar-based music to student cultural lives, it is important to research the possibilities of using guitar class in public schools as a vehicle for teaching traditional notation and developing comprehensive musicianship (Fridley 1993).

For many years there were precious few texts on how to create rock music (Jaffurs 2004), and a true direction for formal popular guitar education remains elusive; music educators have yet to reach consensus regarding the appropriate role of guitar instruction in schools, as teachers lack agreement on content and teaching practices (Merry 2010). Yet while this lack of adequate teaching methods for the beginning guitarist was noted for decades, recent innovations in guitar methodology are belatedly addressing the pedagogical deficiencies in highly effective ways (Merry 2010).

A perusal of extant published guitar curricula does demonstrate elements of progress. The MENC (Purse et al. 1998) has published a guide to implementing the National Standards in beginner guitar class instruction. The guide advances formal guitar methodology in acknowledgement of the fact that powerful pedagogical innovations have yet to emerge: “though the guitar boasts a long history both in the United States and other countries, development of curricular class guitar is a fairly recent phenomenon” (p. 1). The guide includes a large variety of music, and represents a broad swath of teaching methods to complement the holistic and far-reaching Standards. Learning is

constructivist and student-centered, while remaining loyal to traditional values of performance and interpretation. Similarly, the “Hands-On Training” manual for first year guitar students and teachers (Marsters 1995) squarely addresses the traditional disconnect between guitar performance and musical literacy. Throughout, emphasis remains on sequential skills progression and achievement-oriented formal instruction, through a medium of western notation. The musical materials of her comprehensive methodology are drawn from authentic American folk genres as opposed to classical art music.

In spite of the clear advances, however, the body of extant secondary guitar curricula nevertheless exhibits areas for attention and extension. Marsters (1995) relies on a canon of Americana that most students would find highly irrelevant. Opportunities for student choice, as well as aural skill development, are lacking. Emphasis remains focused on practical guitar playing, particularly chordal accompaniment, as opposed to a rounded development of student musicianship. Purse (1998) spurs the imagination with possibilities, but does not directly focus upon the intersection between theory and performance, and does not explicitly prioritize cultural relevance outside of standard repertoire, “Understanding Music in Relation to History and Culture”, a limitation shared by Lee (2004) Zacharias (2011), and others. The Standards, and thus the guitar lessons presented within, are geared towards encouraging a rounded set of musical experiences, as opposed to high-level literacy or musicianship skills.

Guitar curricula have become increasingly codified and diversified as the popularity of guitar classes continue to spread. The Ontario Ministry of Education is but one of many to develop and publish excellent, relevant, and comprehensive multi-year guitar curricula, all of which teach some music theory skills such as note reading or scale

construction, and all of which incorporate popular music to at least some extent. My personal interests remain unexplored only in that I am attempting to balance very specific aspects of formal and informal structures, theory and performance objectives, and student-relevant and teacher-directed materials. The fact that I could not discover a ready-to-implement guitar curriculum for my students is reflective not of the quality of extant curricula, but rather the comparative dearth of relevant instructional material in this particular emergent area.

Chapter III: Towards a Popular Guitar Pedagogy

Over the past ten years, scholars have increasingly called for fundamental restructuring of the philosophies and practices of formal music education in schools. One of the recurring stumbling blocks has been our inability to incorporate popular music culture in fundamental ways to the curriculum: “Content theorists, philosophers, and others in music education have contributed to the sharp divisions made between content taught ‘about’ music and the direct experience of musical sound as performer or listener. The distance between the cognitive and the musical remains wide” (Lee 2004, p. 108). An obvious thrust for reform and renewal is the challenge of how to adapt teaching strategies in a way that enables young students to independently create music that is meaningful to them (Bolden 2009; McPhee 2011), a vision that goes far beyond the token inclusion of popular music in appreciation lessons or performance repertoire. Currently, most popular music education scholarship has focused on teaching history and appreciation, and remains marginalized in the overall curriculum (Oehler & Hanley 2009). Noting that research on popular music in the classroom is relatively limited and incomplete, authors have identified the need for further research into how to incorporate popular music more centrally into the traditional music curriculum, particularly regarding musicianship and music theory (Westerlund 2006; Wang & Humphreys 2009; Rosenberg 2010; Zacharias 2011). Frazier (2012) aptly distinguishes between merely having a popular music component with a program, and the loftier goal of education through and with popular music.

While these needs have been identified, practitioners have yet to fully demonstrate the myriad ways that materials from popular culture can be used to

accomplish goals of formal education (Kumar 2012). According to Dunbar-Hall (1993), “unlike art music, a developed and accepted teaching model for popular music does not exist” (p. 79). Popular music studies have hitherto largely neglected the question of which skills popular musicians must learn (Zacharias 2011). We know that popular musicians use traditional musical elements effectively without consciously knowing the concepts and terminology (Green 2001), but educators have yet to truly adjust and focus curricular content.

The need for formal education is shown in the fact that popular musicians, including those uninvolved in school music, often take private musical instruction (Zenker 2004). Educators have a responsibility to consider the role that formal education may have in preparing students for lifelong informal music-making, as “the spectrum from informal to formal learning environments is of considerable importance when we look at the potential and the obstacles faced by music traditions when shifting processes of instruction, educational acts, or environments” (Schippers 2010, p. 116-117).

Benefits of Formal Music Education

Academia is fully satisfied that formal music education is valuable: the benefits of music education have been documented in literally hundreds of empirical studies. There is no longer much debate over *whether* formal music education helps students: instead, inquiry increasingly revolves around *how* and *why* musical instruction is such an aid to school performance. Although there are many competing theories being tested, and many different scientific paradigms employed in the research effort, the positive outcomes of

music education are generally measured by one of two yardsticks, as promoting academic achievement or as fostering healthy social development.

Firstly, it has been shown that sequential, skill-building instruction in the arts can greatly improve children's overall academic performance. Middle school and high school students who participated in instrumental music classes scored significantly higher than their non-musician peers in standardized tests (College Board 1999; Jones 2010). Other subject-specific studies have confirmed that studying music strengthens students' academic performance in literacy and math (Gardiner 1996; Legg 2009; Deere 2010; Leguizamon 2010). These strong correlations between achievement and musical participation suggest that formal music instruction may also affect and enhance basic cognitive functions such as reasoning, memory, and language (Wallace 1994; Legg 2009; Kurt 2010). Imaging studies have furthermore suggested that the act of performing and listening to music may significantly enhance brain development in children (Dickinson 1993; Hodges 1996). Neurologists have found that by adulthood, the cerebellum itself is approximately five percent larger and heavier in extensively trained musicians (Hotz 1998). Studies into both neurological and psychological causes of this correlation continue, and are continuously adding to the evidence that music education is an extremely powerful force for one's overall academic development.

Secondly, participation in music instruction and performance has been shown to have positive impacts on the social development of children. Documented benefits include improved discipline, self-image, hope, motivation, temperance, and relationships with adults and peers alike (Deniz 2010). The value of extracurricular programming has been demonstrated as well: Involvement in after-school music programs may help

discourage dropouts, and daily music instruction in schools has been correlated with lower rates of truancy (Barry et al. 1990), as well as reinforcing appreciation among students for the social and democratic foundations of public schooling (Bowers 2012). Other data, examining the effects of a music mentorship program for at-risk teens, indicates that music participation in any form may greatly assist in improving students' self-esteem (Costa-Giomi 2004; Darrow & Novak 2009). These positive impacts on social development have correlating effects on psychological well-being, in turn affecting physical health (Welch et al. 2010; Conklin-Ginop et al. 2011).

Overall, the benefits of music education, as described in the research, are widely acknowledged and accepted by the general public. Most Americans, and significantly the overwhelming majority of American educators, consider the arts to be an essential component of a thorough education (Fermanich 2011; Bowers 2012), and the appreciation is similarly high in Canada (Coalition for Music Education Canada 2010).

In light of said proven benefits, it is important to maintain an appreciation for the success of formal music education, as well. Our desire to make music education more inclusive should not mean that we completely abandon the tried-and-true aspects of established school music paradigms.

Future Directions for Formal Music Education

Much of the early writing regarding informal learning practices has been largely concerned with establishing the validity thereof: “for all of the pride and importance we (often rightly) attribute to well-conceived, well-funded, and well-organized programs of music education at all levels of ambitions and competency in our contemporary societies,

it is useful (and sobering) to remember that people have always enjoyed, learned, and performed music, even without funding bodies, arts organizations, and formalized music education” (Schippers 2010, p. 89). A newfound appreciation for the role of informal music learning practices in our society has been matched by an enthusiasm to include these practices in our classrooms, and much of the discourse has focused on how to best accommodate these learning practices as a daily reality in the formal classroom setting (Green 2006; Schippers 2010).

For some, the appropriate institutional response appears to be a comprehensive move away from normative formal education. Pitts (2011) envisions the role of the teacher as a “broker of arts opportunities” (p. 234). Feichas (2010) and Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) similarly envision the teacher as a facilitator in the student’s journey of self-discovery. In doing so, these scholars join a proud tradition (Andrews 1996; Allsup 1997; Smithram & Upitis 2004) of advocacy for an emphasis on the academic and social benefits of more interactive, participatory, and cooperative music classroom environments. However, recent re-conceptualizations of teacher roles may go further than those of previous theorists, as in Vaveka’s (2006) assertion that “we have to acknowledge that much music education takes place, so to speak, without scholastic intervention. In this scenario, the most natural role left for a general music educator is that of critical guide . . . Then cultural critique, rather than mere initiation into its ways, would be the general music educators’ main goal” (p. 128-129).

The time has clearly come for music educators to embrace the possibilities of popular music instruction in their classrooms, and schools and administrators have become increasingly receptive towards popular music in recent years (Frazier 2012).

There are, however, well-deserved reservations towards the wholesale adoption of informal learning practices in the classroom. Research into these practices is still in its infancy. In noting that students did not acquire technical vocabulary during an informal learning project, Green (2008) reminds teachers to exercise some caution in implementation: “very importantly, more work is needed to ascertain the extent to which the incorporation of informal learning practices in the curriculum does, or does not, prepare students for further study in and beyond the school, particularly within higher education, and the extent to which it does or does not prepare them for professional roles in the music industry” (p. 185).

A study of the widespread adoption of the informal learning approach in Swedish schools, marked by an overriding emphasis on fostering personal musical development in students, indicates that there is a heavy price to be paid for the wholesale abandonment of formal learning practices. Swedish curricula provide no content standards, notational reading material, or clear expectations for its music teachers. In recent years, it has become relatively limited in terms of repertoire, content and teaching method, and is described as lacking overall goals and direction (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall 2010). The idealistic emphasis on student choice, specifically regarding material selection and direction of practice, runs a similar danger of sliding into directionless relativism. Teachers need to retain their leadership roles in the selection of content, as opposed to embracing an ethic of anything goes (Zenker 2004), and music instruction in all genres will respond to a strong teacher role in the design and selection of learning activities, including those that are both teacher-and student-lead (Byrne & Sheridan 2000).

The progress of music education towards creative and constructivist practices, with a corresponding openness towards non-classical musical traditions (Schipper 2010), raises interesting questions regarding not only the role of the teacher in the classroom but also, more broadly, the role of formal education itself in the relevant musical education of young people. Successful music programs are characterized by clear goals and specific expectations from their students, and standard determinators of teacher effectiveness (such as management skills, relevant knowledge, and so on) are found to be as equally applicable in guitar classrooms as they are in band and chorus settings (Merry 2010). Music students will benefit from good teaching practices regardless of the content studied or the setting those practices occur in (Byrne & Sheridan 2000). Teachers have continued to report the strong desire to teach, to impart knowledge, and to influence their students' musical direction (Powell 2011). Teachers do not want to abdicate their roles as imparters of valued knowledge, nor should they be expected to, as one finds many good reasons to retain elements of the Western tradition in classrooms. Informal learning practices are not yet a part of the educational mainstream, whereas western music theory is here to stay as a staple of music education (Rosenberg 2010). Jaffurs (2004) has rightly objected to the dichotomous frame of mind characterizing the discourse regarding informal learning practices. Ideally, a balance can be struck between formal and informal approaches (Green 2008; Powell 2011). Support for a balanced pedagogical approach (between performing, listening, and creating) is widespread (Kennedy 2004). The overlapping pedagogical space between informal and formal learning practices is potentially harmonious: "if school pupils were to follow the project and nothing else, they would be likely to miss out on what most people would agree are some essential aspects

of the music curriculum. These would include theoretical knowledge of harmony, scales and other pitch relations, rhythm, meter, technical vocabulary, and skills in reading and writing notation. It is important to stress that there is no *necessary* disjunction between informal learning and the acquisition of such theoretical knowledge” (Green 2008, p. 182).

Informal learning practices can be used to acquire knowledge of other musical traditions, including Western art music (Green 2008), and accomplished popular musicians tend to profess respect for the traditional western canon (Green 2004). Both popular and classical musicians share an overriding emphasis on achievement. Students find pleasure in being able to play music accurately, be it from the score or from aural transcription (Davis 2011), and as such, guided education remains a stated priority of many popular musicians. Clearly, there is a role for formal, traditional music education structures within the music education of the future. Conversely, the simple act of playing popular music in a formal educational setting sparks new levels of interest in formal education among students of any age (Oehler & Hanley 2009).

Authors have recently demonstrated that broad collusion is possible between the musical traditions of both western art music and the popular genres, and that there are much the two communities could learn from one another (Zacharias 2011). Popular musicians do not construe fun as being in opposition to learning (Green 2008). Indeed, while some contemporary music teachers are successfully connecting with students through modern styles, certain concessions to "fun" have been reflected in increased motivation and work ethic, and thus measurable academic achievement (Kennedy 2004; Seifried 2006; Conklin-Ginop et al. 2011; Powell 2011). In noting that both musical

traditions are marked by a forward-thinking progress through a succession of competencies achieved through systematic imitation of superior musicians, Rodriguez (2004) notes that “successful musicians, whether classically or orally/aurally trained, share many of the same attributes, such as a developed musical memory, sensitivity and competence in ensemble playing, self-critical analysis and evaluation, effective practicing strategies, creative energy, and a sufficiently strong ego to perform regularly and well for audiences. I propose here that the *differences* between these types of musicians are, in contrast, largely irrelevant” (p. 19).

Perhaps the strongest potential pedagogical bridge that already exists between the disparate musical traditions is that of fostering the development of aural skills. Such a goal is consistent with the stated aims of the AP curriculum, the RGT curriculum, the MENC national standards, and cutting-edge scholarship. Critical listening skills are currently neglected in the mainstream education of popular music (Lindamood 2011), but teachers should respond to recent research demonstrating the centrality of aural skills to the popular musician, as well as criticisms of classically-trained musicians as being somewhat deficient in this regard. The move towards aural skills and away from notation-dependency may prove a central element in the drive to make music education more inclusive (Green 2002; 2004; Emmons 2004; Seddon 2004;).

Guitar and the Traditional Curriculum

The obstacles to high standards of academic achievement in guitar classes are cultural and historical as opposed to being inherent to the guitar itself. There is nothing specific about the guitar that makes it pedagogically incompatible with advanced

musicianship and music theory, and indeed, the classical guitar genres have been legitimized in Western art music and tertiary music conservatories (Merry 2010). Reading skills are widely considered essential for serious classical guitarists, and although guitar has instrument-specific reading problems like any other instrument, none are insurmountable (Lorenz 1993). Furthermore, traditional notation has been and continues to be used in the creation of some popular music, even if most popular musicians are functionally illiterate (Rodriguez 2004).

As a group, literate popular musicians enjoy more learning and performance opportunities than others (Rodriguez 2004), which is not to downplay the many other skills found to be equally necessary. The importance of reading skills for popular guitarist is likely to increase as popular music pedagogy becomes increasingly embraced by the educational establishment, as appears to be the trend. For one example, rock-specific teaching resources are becoming increasingly available, integrated into elementary textbooks, sheet music publishing catalogues, method books, and online lessons and pedagogical material, as well as The New Grove Dictionary and a bottomless well of recordings (Hebert & Campbell 2000).

Significantly, research has shown that guitar can be used as effectively as piano to demonstrate and illustrate concepts from traditional music theory. The guitar is a versatile and powerful instrument, and authors have provided specific examples of ways in which guitar can be used to teach elements of common practice music such as four-part chorale writing and voice leading (Engstrom 1995), multiple-staff score-reading (Gallardo 2011), and texture (Lorenz 1993).

Popular Music and the Traditional Curriculum

One of the primary stated objectives of the Advanced Placement music theory curriculum is to familiarize students with the musical materials of the so-called “common-practice period.” In the European high-art music tradition, this period lasted from circa 1600 to 1900 and encompassed the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras. The music from all three periods is tied together by a set of common characteristics; which together lay a foundation of harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic materials for almost all music written later, including the popular music genres of today: functional tonal harmony characterized by harmonic movement; contrapuntal voice leading; and a steady pulse supporting clear, measured rhythms (Bonds 1998). The tonal organization of modern jazz and rock music is derived from and similar to traditional common-practice music (Tymoczko 2011). Other commonalities include elements of phrase structure, large-scale organization, texture, and the interplay between consonance and dissonance (London 1990).

While a great deal of progress has been made in using popular literature to inform cultural, societal, and historical studies (Lee 2004), and while the literary and social content of popular music has found its way into the English, social studies, history, and political science curricula (Woodson 2004), only well after sociological studies had matured did scholars begin to connect contemporary popular music and culture to issues in music education (Jaffurs 2004). Both popular music education scholarship and pedagogy, according to Oehler & Hanley (2009), “reflect the fact that our approaches to popular music are anchored in new musicology and ethnomusicology, areas in which pedagogical discussions are being mounted” (p. 6). The relative lack of popular music in

formal North American music education is especially apparent in the realm of theory and musicianship. Traditional analytical methods are rarely applied to popular music. As a result, despite the inroads rock music has made into both secondary and tertiary curricula, “music theory programs continue to focus almost exclusively on classical music for the teaching of music fundamentals” (Rosenberg 2010, p. 6).

Scholarship has established the validity of popular music as a vehicle for theoretical study (Biamonte 2011), and music theorists have shown some rock music to be as musically sophisticated as its common-practice counterparts (Everett 2008; Covach & Spicer 2010). Theorists continue to debate, however, the extent to which 20th century popular music adheres to common-practice principles as well as the extent to which traditional theory can adequately describe popular music styles (Rosenberg 2010).

Much of the common-practice musical conventions are in fact present in later genres (MacLachlan 2011). The College Board (1999) states that “despite this traditional focus, many relevant concepts can still be illustrated by non-tonal, non-European, and popular music. Accordingly, twentieth-century art music, world music, and popular music are often included on the AP Music Theory exam” (p.18). Although contemporary musicians do not always employ the formal terminology, the elements can often be illustrated through popular materials, as in the Leonard Cohen (1984) example below:

“It goes like this: The Fourth, the Fifth, the Minor Fall,

C major:

I

IV

V

vi

the Major Lift, the Baffled king compo - sing Hal-le-lu-jah”.

IV

V

A minor: VII

V7

I

PAC

Many theory educators have long supplemented teaching materials with music from the popular genres, employing them primarily as drill material for practicing aural skills (Rosenberg 2010; MacLachlan 2011) and scholars continue to compile specific resources to aid teachers in the exploration of said concepts (Zacharias 2011). At the same time, it is apparent that some elements of popular genres may be in conflict with the norms of bygone years. The disparate genres may use the same diatonic chords, for example, but in completely different types of relationships: common-practice music avoids parallel fifths and octaves in harmonic motion, for example, yet most popular guitar songs employ Barre Chords, which commit this sin on every single chord change. Rock and roll, for another example, has been shown to follow distinct systems of tonal organization: although the organization systems can be described using elements of common-practice theory, they vary greatly from those used in the construction of classical music (Everett 2008). For the purposes of this paper, we will distinguish between “common-practice” music of the classical ages and the “tonal” characteristic of much contemporary music, which is built upon the same rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic materials but does not adhere to the requisite idiomatic voice-leading. Deliberate teacher-led instruction, however, can provide students with the tools necessary to establish strong and beneficial links between common-practice concepts presented in theory class and their own music-making preferences and practices (MacLachlan 2011).

Model Experiments

Studies of student achievement have shown that alternative music genres can be effectively employed to teach elements of the traditional music curriculum. A

comparative analysis by Schaus (2002) looked at the pursuit of the Ontario music curriculum through Chinese musical materials. Measurable learning outcomes were found to be the same as those for a control group studying the Western canon, suggesting that a substitution of genres makes little difference in the application of concept-directed teaching. A similar experiment (Teitsma 2010) focused more narrowly upon a comparison of the acquisition of the aural discrimination skills in two groups of middle-school students, one which used classical music as study material and one that used popular music. Once again, having negated other variables, the study indicated that students learned the concepts equally well regardless of the genre employed.

At the tertiary level, educators have begun documenting specific areas of pedagogical overlap existing between popular music and the traditional common-practice theory and musicianship curriculum. Biamonte (2011), Rosenberg (2011), and others have provided a useful model for popular music theory resource development and have published partial compilations of popular music examples designed to reinforce specific theoretical concepts. Published examples of such initiatives are few and recent, representing but the tip of an iceberg of potential discovery related to student-centered outlooks, bridging the aural/notational gap, bridging the popular/classical genres gap, and supporting individual elements of the theory curriculum (Rosenberg 2011). MacLachlan (2011) has identified the viability of creating parallel music theory textbooks consisting entirely of popular music examples, demonstrating how popular music can be employed to advance aural skill development in the mastery of such sophisticated concepts as chord inversion, modal mixture, sequence, and four-part composition.

This study therefore assumes that popular music can be employed in the specific targeting of traditional theory and musicianship concepts, and that popular tonal music shares sufficient overlap with common-practice music to be useful. It is also assumed, as shown by Lee (2004), Duncan-Andrade & Morrell (2005), and others, that materials from popular culture can be employed to fulfill external requirements, curricula, and standards.

Proof of Concept

The excerpt that follows is from a simplified transcription of the classic reggae song “Three Little Birds”, released by Bob Marley on the Exodus album (1977). My research isolated and catalogued 274 separate vocabulary words in the Advanced Placement Music Theory Curriculum. Interestingly, 86 of these terms are exemplified in this fun, well-known, and extremely simple pop song. Each of these pedagogical intersections, representing potential teachable moments, is annotated directly into the score. The content areas below, taking from the AP curriculum, represent broad topical intersections. This song can introduce the concept of scale degrees, for example, although this exact melody does not include all seven notes.

Genre	Scales & scale degrees	Tonal centers
Tempo	Diatonic relationships	Diatonic motion
Dynamics	Intervals to 2 octaves	Diatonic triads
Articulation	Transposition	Triad inversions
Instrumentation	Chord construction	Plagal cadence
Beat & meter type	Chord function	Motive development
Rhythmic devices & procedures	Song forms	Embellishing tones
	Treble & bass clef	Texture

Three Little Birds

B. Marley, (1977)
Reggae

Tempo
Moderato

Dynamic
Mezzo Forte

Time Signature
Quadruple Meter
Simple Beat

Key Signature

Form
Song
Song Forms
Introduction

Genre
Common-Practice Style

Intro

Moderato
mP

Anacrusis / Pick-up

Vocal Melody

Instrumentation
Rhythm Section
Timbre

Melody

Counter-Melody

Counter-Melody (Organ)

Harmonic Reduction

Bassline

The Staff
Treble Clef
Bass Clef
Grand Staff

Chorus

Chorus Refrain

Metrical Accent
Accented Passing Tone

Dynamic Accent
Syncopation

Ostinato

Bar Line
Measure
Note Value
Duration
Rhythm

Beat
Pulse
Note
Beam
Stem

Figured Bass Realization
Figured Bass Analysis
Arabic Numeral Designations

Accidentals
Ornament
Embellishing Tone
Neighboring Tone

Rest

Flag

Simple Interval
Compound Interval
Inverted Interval

Octave
Unison

Don't

wor - ry a bout a thing — Cause

ev ry lit - tle thing gon - na be all right Sing - in don't Rise up this

The musical score is presented in a grand staff format, consisting of four staves. The top staff is the vocal melody, the second staff is the counter-melody for the organ, the third staff is a harmonic reduction, and the bottom staff is the bassline. The score is divided into sections: an introduction, a chorus, and a chorus refrain. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato' and the dynamic is 'Mezzo Forte'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, beams, and stems. It also features several annotations and labels pointing to specific musical elements, including 'Anacrusis / Pick-up', 'Metrical Accent', 'Dynamic Accent', 'Ostinato', 'Bar Line', 'Beat', 'Figured Bass Realization', 'Accidentals', 'Rest', 'Flag', and 'Simple Interval'. The lyrics are written below the vocal melody staff.

Verse

Melody / Harmony
Register & Range
Chord Accompaniment

Morn - ing Texture Smile at the rise - ing sun Three lit - tle birds

Phrasing Motive

Conjunct Motion / Disjunct Motion

Tonic Chord Ionian

Dominant Chord

Predominant Chord

15

Sit by my door - step Sing - ing sweet

Tonality
Diatonic Motion
Harmonic Rhythm

Roman Numeral Analysis
Roman Numeral Realization
Roman Numeral Designations

Triads
Chord Inversion
Chord Voicing

Half Step / Whole Step

19

— songs a me - lo - dy pure and true Sing - ing

Major Scale
Diatonic Steps

Pentatonic Scale

23

this is my mes - sage to you you you Sing - ing don't

Chapter IV: Procedures

We have seen that the traditional values of Western music education have been proven to be extremely beneficial to students, both academically and socially; we have also seen the advantages of popular guitar instruction as being relevant, motivational, and accessible to a larger number of students. Unfortunately, the literature has documented only extremely limited use of popular guitar instruction in classrooms, and it remains unclear how and if popular guitar instruction can be used in service of the traditionally defined academic excellence in music.

The goal of this project is, in a sentence, to synthesize two disparate music curricula into one. This must be done such a way that the two overlap, harmonize, and complement each other along areas of commonality. Our ultimate objective is a workable, aligned set of learning targets and practices synthesized into a hybrid curriculum. The exercise is referred to hereafter as the process of “curricular alignment”.

In this process, I first chose a model example of each curriculum. I next described a general vision for the course under development, and then determined a methodology of alignment for disparate curricula, applying it to each source curriculum in turn. Each curriculum was inventoried for overall objectives, content, vocabulary, and assessment practices. The two inventories were compared and modified for maximum alignment, then examined for conflicts and unaligned materials. A hybrid curriculum was developed from this data, refined to fit my classroom context, and implemented in my middle school music classes. In accordance with McGill University ethical standards regarding research involving human subjects, I sought and received project approval from the McGill Ethics Review Board, the school district, and my local school administration.

Both parents and students were informed of the experiment and my intention to disseminate the results.

Methodology of Alignment

Just as there is no published music program that balances the design and content of these two very different music curricula, neither is there a prescribed method for how best to align such disparate sets of priorities. The uncertainties of this exercise necessitated a deliberate, methodological approach. Experience with earlier hybrid lessons (see preface) had demonstrated how top-down planning was absolutely necessary for the achievement of a thorough set of objectives, lest important topics be left uncovered and important links unconnected. Trial and error gradually determined what the most important practices of curricular alignment were going to be.

In order to effectively compare and align standards, one must thoroughly research extant curricula for sources of inspiration and select those that are closest to the overarching vision. One should prioritize overlap between the curricula to be aligned. The alignment work itself occurs within four primary stages: preparing the analysis; doing the work of actual alignment; adjusting for implementation; and then learning and refining during the implementation stage. In other words, one needs to describe the vision, then inventory, compare, and align the source curricula. One must reconcile conflicts and unaligned material, then develop resources, modify them as needed, and implement the new curriculum, continually assessing and revising experimental material.

In this section, I offer my ten-step process of curricular alignment for review. It is proposed in general terms, and may be applicable to other subjects and other situations

than the one described here. Over the course of this project, I developed my hybrid curriculum by following the methodology of alignment as described below. The curricular development section describes my journey through the process of creating my unique curriculum. Data was derived from published source documents from both the College Board and the RGT but in all cases, the presentation of the information here represents my work. In many cases, the raw data had to be significantly manipulated in order to be effectively compared.

Preparing the Analysis

1. Describe a general vision for the curriculum under development.
2. Inventory all source curricula in terms of the following four categories:
objectives, content, vocabulary, and assessment practices.

Curricular Alignment

3. Compare and contrast curricula in terms of the categories above.
4. Rearrange, rename, or modify items for either or both curricula in order to create maximum alignment along areas of commonality.
5. Reconcile conflicts if any exist.
6. Triage unaligned material.

Preparing the Implementation

7. Develop new teaching resources, if any are needed.
8. Modify for contextual factors in the implementation.

Curricular Implementation

9. Implement and assess.
10. Revise and refine.

My progress through this process is presented in this section as it unfolded. I describe the source curricula and present data from the comparison and alignment process. The compiled taxonomies of course objectives, content, vocabulary, and assessment practices are displayed individually, with each category discussed in turn. Due to space restrictions, all information is presented in aligned format, meaning that all reorganization and modification has already been carried out. The changes were done with the explicit purpose of enabling comparison, by attempting to impose symmetry on disparate materials. In many cases, this was as simple as rearranging items from the RGT curriculum within the broad topical headings of the AP curriculum. Both curricula, for example, demand knowledge of the seven modes; modes are presented here under the AP organizational heading of “Modes and Keys”, although the RGT materials only mention it in their “Scales” section.

Each analysis, in turn, introduces the specific methods of alignment employed, presents the processed information for comparison, and then discusses the reconciliation and triage of conflicting or unaligned materials. In some sections, as in the alignment of curricular objectives, I have used the published goals of the AP Theory curriculum as a framework for comparison. In other words, I describe the RGT objectives (which had to be surmised) in terms of their comparison and contrast to those of the College Board. Both taxonomies were compiled independently, and only compared and rearranged after the survey was complete.

The College Board publishes free and thorough guidelines to the AP Music Theory objectives, content, vocabulary, and assessment practices. Although I reorganized some of the compiled taxonomies for clarity, the information was easy to access. The

RGT, by way of contrast, sells exam preparation booklets that provide detailed but incomplete content. I needed to do a fair amount of research simply in order to compile the necessary information. After that point, I was ready to proceed with the comparison.

Describing a Curricular Vision

Before engaging in any of the technical work itself, one must have a clear, if sparse, set of priorities for the curriculum under development, for this vision will guide the process of alignment itself. Curricula are driven by ideologies, beliefs about what schools should teach for what ends, and for what reasons. Curricular ideologies can be understood in terms of normative theory – education is concerned with the aims that society considers worthwhile, participation in a set of sanctioned values. These values are needed to provide direction in curriculum planning (Eisner 1979).

In this case, while I was determined to include as much of both curricula as possible, it was clear that the AP curriculum was going to be the dominant one, being more comprehensive in scope, better organized, and maintaining higher academic standards. Therefore, compromises invariably favored AP as the stronger curriculum. I have used the AP terminology for equivalent terms. I rearranged the content of the guitar curriculum to meet the AP organization headings. In conflicts, I sacrificed items from the RGT curriculum. Other studies, due to circumstances, may require different priorities in alignment, although the presence of a preferred curriculum greatly simplified the task.

Defining the Traditional Curriculum

The traditional standards of musicianship may mean different things to different people, and can thus be difficult to define. Before proceeding with this experiment, it was necessary to decide on a set of standards to inform and guide comparison, analysis, and alignment.

For both the traditional and the popular music curricula, I sought out a set of criteria to help define the overall essence of each respective curriculum. In each case, I was looking for standards that were clearly stated, widely validated, and externally certified by a reputable institution. Another determining consideration was the relative level of achievement demanded by each curriculum. In general, I was looking for a high standard of excellence, requiring determination and self-discipline to achieve, yet also realistic to accomplish in a school of average academic ability. One obvious guideline was that the content should be equivalent to that covered in a first-year college course. These requirements dovetailed almost perfectly with the requirements of the Advanced Placement Music Theory examination.

The AP Music Theory exam is published, administered, and certified by the College Board, an international non-profit organization with the mandate of encouraging college success through scholastic preparation of high school students. The Music Theory exam is just one of many, across a large variety of subjects, for which high achievement is widely recognized. Indeed, there are countless institutes of higher learning which reward achievement on AP exams with course exemptions and advanced standing credits to new college students. Teachers have documented the pedagogical benefits of the AP exam preparation process (Colwell 1990; Lucia 1993). As such, I

have accepted the College Board standards as defining an appropriately high bar for traditional musicianship at the high school level.

Finally, and significantly for this project, the Advanced Placement curriculum itself is published in great detail. The College Board has generated nearly comprehensive skills summaries, practice exams, vocabulary lists, teachers' guides, and so on. The organization has instituted a Course Audit system (which I have passed) in order to ensure that teachers are adequately preparing the material. Dozens of independent textbooks teach to the prescribed curriculum. Organization of published materials is, for the most part, consistent and clear. In short, I was able to appropriate a very thorough taxonomy for the basis of analysis and comparison. In consequence, I have based my understanding of the traditional theory and musicianship curriculum on their stated expectations.

The level of scholarship prescribed by this course assumes strong prior abilities in notational literacy and knowledge of music fundamentals, as well as at least basic performance ability on voice or an instrument. The scope of the course is defined as covering musicianship, theory, devices, and procedures for music of the European classical tradition. Primary areas of focus include the development of speed and fluency in listening skills, performance skills, analytical skills, and compositional skills through large variety of classroom tasks. Another important goal is to become increasingly familiar with the procedures based in common-practice tonality. As distinct from instrumental performance considerations, theoretical understanding and analytical application of common-practice tonality represents the primary scope of the program.

Defining the Popular Guitar Curriculum

The societal popularity of the guitar means that a great variety of academic standards for popular guitar performance are available. It is even possible to study popular guitar as the primary component of a four-year performance degree in certain Bachelors programs, as is the case at Berklee School of Music in Boston.

Following the same set of guiding criteria I used in selecting the AP theory standard for the traditional curriculum – namely, an externally validated set of standards boasting widespread acceptance and published expectations – I eventually settled upon those demanded by the London-based Registry of Guitar Tutors in their administration of level-specific electric guitar examinations.

The RGT is an international organization of guitar teachers, a professional association somewhat like a guild. Their mandate is to legitimize and improve the guitar teaching profession through the development of accredited standards and formalized programs of study. They maintain a network and registry of certified teachers and administer exams on electric guitar, popular music theory, and many other musical subjects. Within the formal Electric Guitar curriculum, certification is awarded on eight distinct levels, of which the highest level represents an ambitious yet appropriate standard for secondary students.

The RGT exams and examiners are accredited through the London College of Music Examining Board, in partnership with the University of West London. High-level achievement in RGT exams is recognized by the university application organization in the UK, and may be rewarded by some institutions of higher learning.

In contrast to the AP materials, the RGT standards are not published in exhaustive detail. There are no comprehensive vocabulary lists, skill summaries, or teacher's guides. Exam preparation books are sold by the RGT, but the expectations within are not always clear. Some research was necessary in order to piece together a comprehensive review of the performance and musicianship standards of this exam.

This level assumes no ability in notational literacy, but does quiz knowledge of fundamental music theory, and expects a high level of proficiency on the instrument. The scope of material at this level is roughly defined as that which an aspiring professional guitarist would need. The exams evaluate speed and fluency in listening skills, performance skills, analytical skills, and improvisational skills as determined through a variety of tasks. Ultimately, of the guitar curricula I encountered, the RGT published the broadest areas of content and represented the most rounded, holistic, musicianship-minded approach. It also featured some of the highest standards of musicianship, and contained the most overlap with the traditional curriculum. Although there are clearly fundamental differences between this and the traditional curriculum, the similarities are strong enough to convince me that they could be made to dovetail (Registry of Guitar Tutors 2005).

Aims, Goals, and Objectives

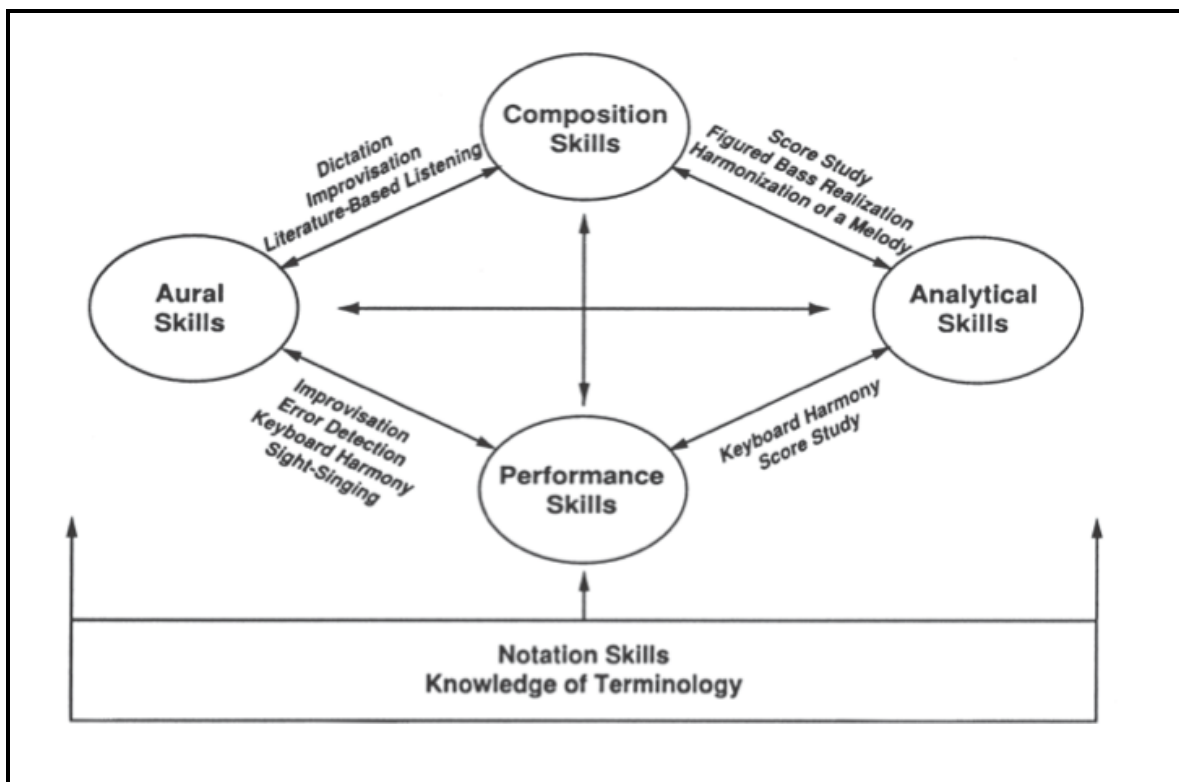
From identification of overarching ideologies, clear definitions of aims and goals will guide the process of curricular development towards specific course content, learning objectives, and methodology. Aims are general statements of values, describing broad areas of intention, whereas goals are more specific, purpose-oriented statements of intent.

Objectives are specific statements of what students should be able to do after having experienced a curricular element. Objectives can describe desired behaviors, abilities, attitudes, areas of agency, and so on (Eisner 1979, p. 134-136).

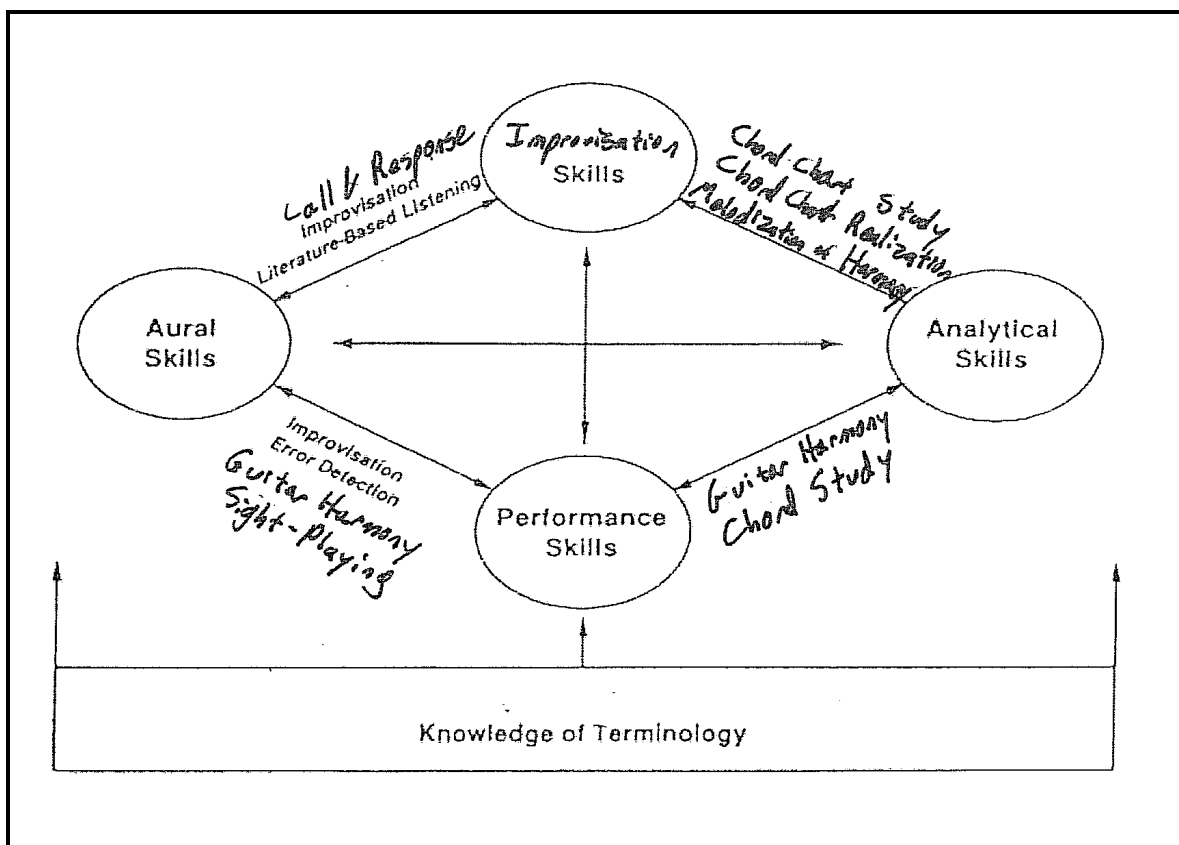
AP Theory Objectives. As seen in the description of the traditional curriculum, the AP theory course prioritizes the development of multifaceted understanding and abilities. Students are expected to know course content with both their eyes and their ears, and should be able to demonstrate concepts in writing. For each given curricular item, students should be able both recognize it and reproduce it in all of its forms, including notational, aural, and analytical.

For example, consider the C Major scale. Students should be able to recognize this scale if they see it notated on the staff, hear it performed, read its definition in writing, find it within a composition, or encounter it in an analytical representation. Conversely, they should be able to notate it on the staff, perform it on voice and piano, provide a definition for it, use it in a composition, and analyze it within a context.

The College Board publishes the diagram below in apt illustration of the holistic, agile understanding that the AP curriculum fosters. In reductionist form, the objectives can be summarized as thus: students must be able to identify, hear, define, notate, perform, use, and analyze the all of the basic musical materials found in the construction of common-practice music.



(College Board 2010, p. 8).



RGT Guitar Objectives. As seen in the description of the popular guitar curriculum, the RGT certification prioritizes the development of multifaceted understanding and abilities. Students are expected to know content with their guitar fretboard, their ears, and in an applied performance context. For each given exam item, students should be able to recognize it and reproduce it in all its forms, including physical, aural, and analytical. The handwritten modifications to the AP diagram are mine, and are intended to show the broad philosophical similarities between the two.

For example, consider the C Major scale. Students should be able to recognize this scale if they see it played on the fretboard, hear it performed, read its definition in writing, or encounter it in an analytical representation. Conversely, they should be able to perform it on guitar, provide a definition for it, use it in an improvisation, and analyze it in context.

A modification of the public objectives of the College Board illustrates the similarly holistic, agile and versatile understanding that the RGT standard fosters. In their most succinct form, the objectives can be summarized as thus: Students must be able to identify, hear, define, perform, use, & analyze the basic materials of popular guitar performance.

Analysis of Learning Objectives. The overriding objectives of both curricula are remarkably similar. Both envision a thorough, multifaceted, and holistic understanding of curricular items, and both expect that students should be able to apply their understanding to variety of real-music tasks. If we consider improvisation to be an equivalent form of composition, then the objectives draw closer still. Neither

composition nor improvisation needs to be excluded from the aligned curriculum, as students in the new curriculum will be required to create and compose music both on paper and on the guitar, both over time and on the spot, and every effort will be made to establish clear links between the two.

The fundamental conflict of objectives is that the guitar curriculum approaches analytical and performance tasks through the study of guitar, whereas the vehicle of study in AP is the piano (although piano skills are not directly tested on the exam). Needless to say, the hybrid curriculum will use electric guitar study as the vehicle for enriching our understanding of heretical concepts. The purpose of the piano, in the AP curriculum, is for studying purposes only, whereas the guitar can be used both to study theory and to accomplish the other goals of the program.

The largest segment of unaligned material is the AP requirement of proficiency within the traditional Western notation system. The AP curriculum requires literacy whereas the RGT curriculum does not. In the aligned curriculum, for reasons described above, literacy will be one of the primary focuses. The AP curriculum requires sight singing, whereas the RGT curriculum requires sight-reading of chord charts. Both are beneficial practices that I intend to encourage, separately and together, to reinforce the links between literacy and performance. The RGT curriculum remains focused on musical performance, and requires much more practical application of concepts than the AP evaluations do. This is one of the primary strengths of the RGT curriculum, and in the new curriculum elements of the AP course will be applied and practiced through guitar performance as well as in writing.

Course Content

Issues surrounding the organization and selection of content require a great deal of attention as they have a profoundly deterministic affect on the curriculum under development: because goals seldom prescribe the content that can be used to achieve them, attention to the selection of content is always an important curriculum consideration (Eisner 1979).

The tasks of content and vocabulary alignment were greatly assisted by the online curriculum guides published by the College Board, who released near-comprehensive materials organized into similar categories such as Beat and Rhythm, Pitch and Notation, Scales and Tonality, and so on. With very minor modifications, both content and vocabulary are presented here under the same headings. The most common modification I made was to condense and combine items in the name of concision and clarity. The AP guide, for example, itemizes “Pitch in Treble and Bass Clefs” separately from “Pitch in Treble, Bass, Alto, & Tenor clefs”, whereas only the latter makes an appearance here.

The RGT content areas, having been inventoried separately, were grouped into the AP categories by individual item. Identical content was identified. In some cases, AP terminology was applied to an equivalent term on the RGT side. The RGT content area of “Root Chords”, for example, refers not to root-position chords but rather the tonic tonality, and is therefore listed here as “Tonal Centers.” In many cases greater alignment was created when RGT content was recombined, or broadened in scope in order to correspond to AP materials. The guitar requirements to be familiar with “”Measures”, “Time Signatures”, “Beat / Pulse”, and “Repeats”, for example, are catalogued here as a need to understand “Rhythmic Devices and Procedures.” On the AP side, this same

category refers to some thirty-one similar curricular items. The implication throughout is that the AP curriculum, being much richer in content, subsumes and surpasses the theoretical understanding required for the guitar. Where either the AP or the guitar content has no equivalent on the other side, it is presented here on its own line, as is the case in the “Pitch & Notation” category, where only the AP curriculum requires knowledge of pitch on the staff, and only the RGT curriculum requires knowledge of notes on the fretboard.

AP Theory Content Summary	RGT Guitar Content Summary
Students Must Identify, Hear, Define, Notate, Perform, Use, & Analyze:	Students Must Identify, Hear, Define, Perform, Use, & Analyze:

Beat & Rhythm

Meter type (Duple, Triple, Quadruple)

Beat type (Simple, Compound)

Rhythmic Devices & Procedures

Rhythmic Devices & Procedures

Pitch & Notation

Pitch in Treble, Bass, Alto, & Tenor Clefs

Pitch on the Fretboard

Scales & Tonality

Chromatic

Diatonic

Pentatonic

Natural, Harmonic, & Melodic Minor

Chromatic

Diatonic

Pentatonic

Natural & Harmonic Minor

Blues & Whole-Tone Scales

Modes & Keys

The 7 Modes

Major & Minor Keys

Diatonic Relationships

Cross-key Relationships

The 7 Modes

Major & Minor Keys

Diatonic Relationships

Relative Minor

AP Theory Content SummaryStudents Must Identify, Hear, Define,
Notate, Perform, Use, & Analyze:**RGT Guitar Content Summary**Students Must Identify, Hear, Define,
Perform, Use, & Analyze:

Intervals & Transposition

Intervals to 2 Octaves

Transposition of Scales, Modes & Melodies

Intervals to 2 Octaves

Transposition of Scales & Chords

Chord Construction & Inversion

Chord Construction

Diatonic Triads

Diatonic 7th Chords

Non-diatonic Chords

All Inversions of All Triads and 7th Chords

Chord Construction

Diatonic Triads

Diatonic 7th Chords

Altered & Augmented Chords

Chord Extensions

Instrumental Chord Voicing

Cadence

Authentic

Half

Plagal

Deceptive

Perfect

Imperfect

Plagal

Interrupted

Melodic Organization

Scale Degrees

Motive Development

Periodic Phrase Structure

Scale Degrees

Motive Development

Harmonic Organization

Tonal Centers

Chord Function & Relationships

Diatonic Motion

Multiple Tonal Centers

Tonal Centers

Chord Function & Relationships

Form

Song Forms

Blues Forms

Canon & Fugue

Binary & Ternary Forms

Song Forms

Blues Forms

AP Theory Content SummaryStudents Must Identify, Hear, Define,
Notate, Perform, Use, & Analyze:**RGT Guitar Content Summary**Students Must Identify, Hear, Define,
Perform, Use, & Analyze:

Voice LeadingContrapuntal Motion
Cadential Motion
Dissonant Motion***Chorale Writing***All Inversions of All Triads & All 7th Chords
Modulation & Secondary Tonicization
Idiomatic Motion***Figured Bass***All Inversions of All Triads & All 7th Chords***Roman Numeral Analysis***All Diatonic Triads & 7th Chords***Non-harmonic Tones***Passing & Neighboring Tones
Anticipation & Suspension
Non-Harmonic Cluster Groups

Chord Extensions

Texture

Textural Devices & Procedures

Textural Devices & Procedures

Performance ConsiderationsGenre
Tempo
Dynamics
Articulation
InstrumentationDynamics

Prepared Performance
Instrumental Knowledge

Analysis of Course Content. The comparison of the processed data reveals few direct conflicts, most notably surrounding the labels for various types of cadences. Knowledge of cadence types forms a relatively small area of the RGT exam, whereas it is a fundamental understanding in the Western tonal traditions, so the RGT terminology was again changed to match that of AP.

There is, however, quite a significant amount of unaligned or non-overlapping material, because the AP curriculum is much broader in scope than that of the RGT. Of the 51 AP content areas identified in my taxonomy, only 27 of them have equivalents in the guitar curriculum. Some of the neglected content areas represent enormous topics, such as traditional notation. In many instances, furthermore, the topical areas on the RGT side are considerably thinner than their AP counterparts. Whereas the AP curriculum demands a detailed knowledge of all cross-key relationships, for example, the RGT curriculum is satisfied with the relationship that exists between relative keys only. The guitar standards can also appear inconsistent and arbitrary at times. They require knowledge of dynamics, for example, but not tempo. At first glance, the RGT standards seem somewhat sophomoric.

A second look, however, reveals a more interesting phenomenon. Much of the unaligned AP material falls within a mere five categories, all of which are genre-specific, dealing with musical elements that are unique to common-practice idioms of the classical eras. If we exclude these categories, we are struck by a far greater amount of symmetry, with alignment in 27 out of only 34 content areas. Additionally, much of the unaligned curricular items within these remaining categories are employed in popular music genres and can be taught using popular common-practice materials.

Several other curricular concepts, while not perfectly symmetrical, perform somewhat of an analogous function. For example, both curricula expect students to understand the place and function of non-harmonic tones inside the music. The difference is found in contextual application: where the traditional genres utilize and express these harmonic ingredients in melodic ornament tones, guitar music expresses these exact same notes as non-harmonic chord extensions in guitar-specific chord voicing. Conversely, however, the traditional conception of ornaments as being outside of the chords, in contrast to a popular conception of chord extensions as variations within the chord itself, is telling of the more restricted tonality of true common-practice style.

At the same time, it must be noted that there are quite a few extremely wide-ranging areas of the guitar curriculum that have no equivalent on the traditional side. Most of these concepts are specific to the guitar, namely instrumental knowledge and technique, notes on the fretboard, chord voicing, and chord extensions. These topics are included in the aligned curriculum as they are essential to guitar performance. As the AP curriculum expects that students are simultaneously pursuing instrumental study of some sort or another, furthermore, these items are not in conflict and do not need to be triaged.

My decision to teach the entire AP curriculum, including all unaligned content, has already been made, even if some of the content must be taught in traditional ways independently of the guitar. This study, however, has shed light on issues of content pacing. If instruction is beginning from music fundamentals, which overlap with the tonal content of the guitar curriculum, the task of alignment will be a lot more straightforward than it will be at the upper levels, when unrelated topics are being compared. In my case, instituting a course that requires no prerequisite knowledge, I will

begin with fundamental concepts that are easily taught on the guitar. In a few years, when student are more advanced, it will easier to engage in dichotomous instruction.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary as presented below is nearly a direct transcription from the published AP Course Guide (College Board 2010). As with the content areas, the only modifications made are that redundancies have been eliminated, and the broad organizational categories adapted so as to be the identical to those for broad content areas.

The RGT had no official published vocabulary list, requiring me to investigate various materials while creating my own. I first identified vocabulary words found directly within the RGT topic listings, such as “Major Scale”, and then moved on to inferring necessary vocabulary words from the task descriptions. Finally, I identified those vocabulary words, such as “rhythm” and “rest” that would probably be necessary to pass the exam, although these are not published requirements.

The vocabulary was crosschecked for similarity. The RGT vocabulary, having been inventoried separately, was grouped into the AP categories. Identical content was noted. In some cases, AP terminology was applied to an equivalent term on the RGT side, as in the case of the equivalent “Pick-up” and “Anacrusis”.

From the AP vocabulary lists, I identified which words would be necessary to know for the RGT exam. Afterwards, I identified which vocabulary words could potentially be taught via popular genres. For each such vocabulary word, I determined exemplars that could illustrate the concept or provide assessment material. By the end of

this exercise, I possessed a list of AP vocabulary that could overlap with the guitar curriculum, and a list of vocabulary that could not.

AP Music Theory Vocabulary Found on the RGT Exam. The following terms from the AP Music Theory Exam are necessary for success in the RGT Electric Guitar exam:

Beat & Rhythm. Anacrusis (Pick-up, Upbeat); Bar Line; Duration; Measure; Note Value; Rhythm; Tempo; Time Signature.

Pitch & Notation: Steps; Accidentals.

Scales & Tonality: All Numerical Scale Degrees; Major Scale; Harmonic Minor; Natural Minor; Whole-Tone Scale; Pentatonic Scale; Blues Scale; Chromatic; Diatonic.

Modes & Keys: Ionian; Dorian; Phrygian; Lydian; Mixolydian; Aeolian; Locrian; Key & Key Signature; Tonic (Root); Parallel Key; Relative Key.

Intervals & Transposition: Unison; Octave; Half Step (Semitone); Whole Step; Tritone.

Chord Construction & Inversion: Chord Quality Designations; Triads; 7th Chords; Non-Diatonic Chord Tones.

Cadence: Plagal.

Melodic Organization: Motive.

Harmonic Organization: Consonance / Dissonance; Tonality; Harmonic Rhythm Tonic; Diatonic Motion; Tonic Chord; Dominant Chord; Predominant Chords; Dominant 7th Chords.

Performance Considerations:

Form: Cadence; Introduction; Bridge; Verse; Chorus; Song Forms; Blues Forms; Lyrics; Phrasing.

Texture: Melody & Harmony; Register & Range; Arpeggiation; Walking Bass.

Instrumentation: Percussion; Rhythm Section; Strings; Solo, Soli.

Dynamics: Crescendo; Decrescendo; Diminuendo; Pianissimo; Piano; Mezzo Piano; Mezzo Forte; Forte; Fortissimo.

AP Music Theory Vocabulary Teachable via Popular Guitar. The following terms from the AP Music Theory exam are not necessary for success in the RGT Electric Guitar exam, but they can be taught using materials from popular guitar pedagogy:

Beat & Rhythm. Agodic Accent; Dynamic Accent; Metrical Accent; Asymmetrical Meter; Augmentation; Compound Beat; Simple Beat; Cross Rhythm; Diminution; Dot, Double Dot; Dotted Rhythm; Duplet; Hemiola; Irregular Meter; Duple Meter; Quadruple Meter; Triple Meter; Polyrhythm; Pulse; Rest; Syncopation; Tie; Triplet.

Pitch & Notation: The Staff; Treble Clef; Bass Clef; Alto Clef; Tenor Clef; C Clef; Grand Staff; Ledger Lines; Beams; Stems; Flags.

Scales & Tonality. Melodic Minor; Diminished Scales.

Modes & Keys: Circle of Fifths.

Intervals & Transposition: Simple, Compound, and Inverted Intervals.

Chord Construction & Inversion: Roman Numeral Designations; Interval Designations; Inversion; SATB Idioms; Arabic Numeral Designation; Analysis of a Figured Bass; Realization of a Figured Bass.

Cadence: Half; Deceptive; Picardy Third.

Melodic Organization: Conjunct Motion; Disjunct Motion; Augmentation; Interval Expansion; Phrase Extension; Fragmentation; Diminution; Truncation; Phrase Elision; Literal Repetition; Octave Displacement; Sequential Repetition; Transposition; Retrogression; Melodic Inversion; Rhythmic Transformation; Motivic Transformation; Melodic Period; Antecedent Phrase; Consequent Phrase; Contrasting Period; Double Period; Parallel Period.

Harmonic Organization: Supertonic; Mediant; Subdominant; Submediant; Subtonic; Leading Tone; Leading-Tone 7th Chords; Non-Dominant 7th Chords; Secondary Dominant Chords; Tonicization; Common Tone Modulation; Pivot Chord Modulation; Phrase Modulation.

Form: Cadential Extension; Coda; Codetta; Contour; Countermelody; Elision (Phrase Elision); Fragment (Fragmented Motive); Theme & Variation; Through-Composed; Canon; Fugue; Binary Form; Rounded Binary Form; Ternary Form; Refrain; Stanza; Strophic Structure; Melisma; Syllabic; Antiphonal.

Voice Leading: Common Tone; Leading Tone; Chordal 7th; Contrary Motion; Oblique Motion; Parallel Motion; Similar Motion; Voice Exchange; Parallel Fifths and Octaves.

Chorale Writing: Chord Inversion; Doubling.

Roman Numeral Analysis: Roman Numeral Analysis; Realization.

Non-harmonic Tones: Ornament / Embellishment; Preparation; Resolution; Accented Passing Tone; Unaccented Passing Tone; Neighboring Tone; Embellishing Tone; Double Neighbor; Neighbor Group (Cambiata); Appoggiatura; Escape Tone (Echappee); Pedal Point; Anticipation; Retardation; Suspension; Re-articulated Suspension; Suspension Chain.

Texture: Alberti Bass; Walking Bass; Ostinato; Obbligato; Tessitura; Imitative Polyphony; Nonimitative Polyphony; Heterophony, Heterophonic; Chordal Homophony; Monophony; Species Counterpoint; Chorale.

Performance Considerations:

Instrumentation: Brass; Continuo; Percussion; Strings; Timbre; Woodwinds; Tutti.

Tempo: Adagio; Allegro; Andante; Andantino; Grave; Largo; Lento; Moderato; Presto; Vivace; Accelerando; Ritardando; Ritenuto; Rubato.

Dynamics: Crescendo; Decrescendo; Diminuendo.

Articulation: Arco; Legato / Staccato; Marcato / Tenuto; Pizzicato.

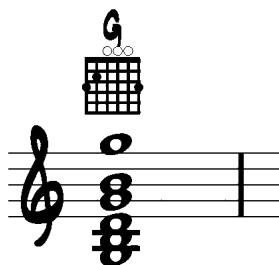
AP Music Theory Vocabulary Inapplicable to Electric Guitar. The following terms from the AP Music Theory exam are specific to common-practice music and are thus problematic to teach using materials from popular guitar pedagogy: Open vs. Closed Position; Chord Voicing; Perfect /Imperfect Authentic; Direct Fifths & Octaves; Hidden Fifths & Octaves; Cross Relation (False Relation); Crossed Voices (Voice Crossing); Overlapping Voices; Figured Bass Analysis; Figured Bass Realization; Common-Practice

Style; Art Song; Aria; Opera; Interlude; Prelude; Postlude; Sonata; Concerto; String Quartet; Symphony.

Analysis of Vocabulary. Of the 274 vocabulary words appearing on the AP exam, only 75 of them may be needed for the RGT guitar exam. Among the remaining number are many vocabulary items that refer to universal features of all tonal music. Once again, we find that items specific to common-practice genres, namely the concepts of figured bass and chorale writing, would be hard to teach with popular music.

Conflicting vocabulary occurs in two separate areas; British versus American cadence labels and the terminology of “Open” versus “Closed” chords. On guitar, “open” positions, chords, and strings often refer to physical configurations in which at least some guitar strings are played without being fretted by the left hand. In the theory curriculum, the notes of closed chords are voiced within a small range, as in a triad stacked within a major sixth. “Open” guitar chords can be “closed” theory chords, and vice versa.

Open Strings; Open Chord



Compact Voicing; Closed Chord

Additionally, the RGT and the College Board use conflicting vocabulary to label and describe cadences. The AP terminology was adopted for the aligned curriculum.

<u>AP Terms (American)</u>	<u>RGT Terms (British)</u>
Authentic	Perfect
Half	Imperfect
Plagal	Plagal
Deceptive	Interrupted

Assessment Practices

Evaluation – both of students and of the program itself – is essential to curricular design as the inclusion or exclusions of modes of presentation and response can serve as an opportunity barrier: “one of the least-considered options in curriculum planning deals with the modalities through which students encounter and express what they learn . . . yet the forms through which knowledge and understanding are constructed, stored, and expressed are considerably wiser than verbal or written discourse” (Eisner 1979, p. 147).

One area of potential strength for the process of curricular alignment is that of assessment practices, which necessarily inform teaching and learning practices. In comparing curricular assessment paradigms, the teacher must ask: how is knowledge assessed? What kinds of questions are being asked? What are strategies for success in examinations? How does this affect classroom learning practices? Far from “teaching to the test”, deliberate planning based on summative assessment practices is a beneficial way to guide the development of hybridized learning objectives and so on and so forth.

In contrast to the other categories of comparison, the information in this section is not presented in aligned form, due to the almost complete lack of overlap in testing philosophies, formats, and priorities. Rather, each exam is described separately, and then

compared in sum. From this larger perspective, then, it may be possible to discern broad commonalities despite the vast procedural difference.

The AP Theory Exam. The Advanced Placement exam in Music Theory tests the student's knowledge of, fluency with, and application of all of the content and vocabulary inventoried in the previous sections. Assessment is conducted according to the primary objectives of the course, meaning that correct responses must demonstrate aural, compositional, performance, and analytical skills based upon a strong knowledge of music terminology, notation, and fundamentals.

The exam is divided into two primary sections, lasting a total of three hours. Most of the exam takes place in a group setting. Written and recorded test materials are provided by the College Board, who also certifies the testing institution (although not the individual examiner). The role of the examiner is to distribute and collect materials, play the official recording, and provide student supervision. Procedures followed by examiners are very specific, and leave no room for interpretation. Exams occur once a year and are marked by the College Board at a central location, using certified AP exam readers. An overall mark is awarded on a scale of zero to five, and many institutions of higher learning recognize achievement at the upper end of this scale.

Section I: Multiple-Choice. The first section consists of 75 multiple-choice questions, further divided into two parts. In Part A, students respond to questions based upon recorded excerpts, in which they must make connections between what they hear and what they see. For example, they may listen to an excerpt and identify it in notational form amongst four printed possibilities. They may be asked to detect errors

between a printed score and a recorded excerpt. Or they may have to describe a recording in terms of vocabulary or theoretical concepts.

Part B consists of questions that require analysis of written material only. Students may be asked to identify course content in individual items. They may also be asked to conduct a more in-depth analysis of longer written excerpts.

Section II: Free-response. The second section consists of seven notated free-response questions followed by a performance challenge. In the free-response questions, students are asked to notate their own answers on provided manuscript paper. The first four questions are so-called dictation exercises based upon recorded excerpts. Students are provided with the time signature, key signature, length, and starting pitch of two short melodies, and then asked to notate them based on several listenings. They are provided with the same information for two short harmonic progressions, usually four-part chorales, and are asked to notate the bass and soprano voices.

The final three free-response questions are without aural stimulus, meaning that they evaluate written competencies only. Students are asked to notate brief, theoretically sound compositions in two parts. For the first question, they are asked to realize a figured bass, in the second to realize a Roman numeral chord progression, and in the third to compose a counterpoint bassline for a given melody.

The performance challenge (which is the only task to test performance skills, and the only one administered individually) requires students to make a recording of themselves sight-singing two brief melodies. Students are given a written melody, a sounded starting pitch, and a short practice period. Marks are awarded based on accuracy, not quality of performance.

The RGT Electric Guitar Exam. The Registry of Guitar Tutors exam in Electric Guitar tests the student's knowledge of, fluency with, and application of all of the content and vocabulary inventoried in the previous sections. Assessment is according to the primary objectives of the course, meaning that correct responses must demonstrate aural, improvisational, performance, and analytical skills based upon a strong knowledge of guitar terminology and music fundamentals.

The exam is divided into six primary sections, the total duration of which is up to the discretion of the examiner. The exam takes place in a one-on-one setting. Written and recorded test materials are provided by the RGT, and the examiner may perform some test material live. The examiner must be individually certified by the RGT. Evaluation sheets are provided by the RGT and the role of the examiner is to administer the test questions, provide guitar accompaniment when necessary, and evaluate the abilities of the student. Exams occur several times a year and are marked by the examiner on the spot. An overall mark from 0 to 100 is awarded, and some institutions of higher learning recognize achievement at the upper levels.

Section I – Scales and Arpeggios. Students are asked to play selections from a variety of requisite scales and arpeggios in a variety of fretboard positions. Scales must be played ascending and descending, from memory, without hesitation, at a moderate speed, and in any key. Marks are awarded based on accuracy, evenness, and clarity. (For a full list of scale, chord, and arpeggio requirements, see Appendix A).

Section II – Chords. Students are asked to play a variety of requisite chords in a variety of voicings. Chords must be played from memory, without hesitation, on a single down stroke, and in any key. Marks are awarded for accuracy and clarity.

Section III – Rhythm Playing. Candidates are provided with an unfamiliar written chord progression showing a time signature, measures, and chords from Section II. Candidates perform a rhythmic accompaniment after a brief study period. Dynamics and form are indicated, but tempo and style markings are only suggestions. Marks are awarded based on accuracy, attention to detail, clarity, fluency, inventiveness, and musicality.

Section IV – Lead Playing. Candidates are provided with a chord chart showing an unfamiliar progression. Candidates improvise a lead melody after a brief study period. Candidates are expected to demonstrate correct application of the scales from Section 1. Marks are awarded based on accuracy, fluency, clarity, and musicality.

Section V – Spoken Tests. Candidates respond verbally to questions regarding their knowledge of both the guitar and of music theory. They are expected to answer without physical reference to the guitar. Topics are limited to guitar anatomy, mechanism, maintenance, techniques, and tone production; identifying notes on the fingerboard; naming intervals to two octaves; diatonic relationships, keys, and transposition; application of scales and arpeggios; and chord construction.

Section VI – Aural Assessment. Candidates are asked to: listen to and repeat both a rhythm and a melodic phrase; listen to an excerpt, identify the meter, and clap the beat to a second playing; listen to a melodic interval, verbally identify it by letter or interval name; listen to a brief progression, name the non-tonic chords and the cadence.

Section VII – Specialization. Candidates are asked to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of a performance specialization on guitar. This may take the form of a technical etude, an unaccompanied performance, additional rhythmic or melodic

improvisation, or an exposition of sight-reading ability (in which traditional notation, tablature, and chordal lead sheets are all acceptable mediums. Standards are not provided.

Analysis. A similarity in the overall philosophy of these tasks is largely representative of the similarities in primary curricular goals. Both tests ask candidates to demonstrate practical application of their knowledge in a variety of contexts. Success on both exams requires an active, constructivist engagement with the material. Above and beyond mere memorization of facts, these exams determine holistic understandings of the material via a great variety of assessment practices.

Indeed, many of these evaluate fundamentally similar abilities. Both require students to respond quickly to new material, either read or listened to. Both require students to use their understanding in complicated, multi-faceted tasks, and both come at the material content (much of it identical) from many different angles. In short, both exams require students to prove that they can identify, hear, define, perform, use, and analyze the basic materials of tonal music. Both place emphasis on aural skills, theoretical analytical skills, composition skills, and performance skills (although they are, for the most part, tested in very different ways).

For all these broad similarities, however, there are very few specific assessment practices that appear in identical form on both examinations. The most similar assessments are rhythmic, melodic, intervallic, and harmonic dictation, but even these identical tasks utilize different response formats.

The largest curricular disconnects, yet again, stem from the lack of classical notation content in the guitar exam (RGT candidates are not asked to put pen to paper at all), and the neglect of performance considerations in the AP exam. Despite this fact, the

two major unaligned assessment practices serve roughly similar function in the assessments – as a vehicle by which students can demonstrate their understanding of the requisite knowledge. Whereas AP candidates show their understanding on paper, RGT candidates demonstrate it on the guitar neck. Where AP candidates are expected to recognize written representation of the elements of common-practice music, RGT candidates must recognize similar elements of tonal music on a fretboard.

Furthermore, much of the same fundamental understandings are examined in both tests. Both evaluations, for example, ask the student to demonstrate knowledge of chord construction, application, and analysis. AP candidates may show their knowledge of chord construction by realizing a Roman numeral analysis on paper, whereas RGT candidates may build these chords from a requested root on guitar. AP candidates apply chords in chorale composition and analyze them in score studies, whereas RGT candidates apply chords in rhythm playing and analyze them in lead improvisation. Both tests require candidates to recognize chords in a harmonic dictation exercise.

There are no explicit conflicts to reconcile between the assessment practices, but there are a great many practices found in only one of the exams. Besides notation and performance, these include instrument care and technique, sight playing, call-and-response, verbal questioning, verbal response, improvisation, composition, notation, sight singing, and error detection.

While all of the assessment practices have their advantages, students may be done a disservice by attempts to include too many tasks on a single examination, particularly if working with students of a relatively young age. Some of the task formatting, depending on context, may be better suited to formative rather than summative assessment.

Personally, I prefer not to use verbal questioning in summative evaluations. Similarly, my self-conscious teenaged students have requested that public sight-singing challenges be restricted to rhythmic chanting only.

In balancing a curriculum that includes both theoretical study and guitar performance, the sheer volume of skills to assess may encourage a dichotomous approach. In my implementation phase, I indeed found it best to divide end-of-term exams into two separate class periods, one for written theory and one for performance tests. At the same time, however, the implementation of an aligned curriculum reinforces the cross-curricular links to the greatest extent possible. My students, for example, are regularly asked both to perform knowledge of theory concepts (“strum a pattern in a compound beat”), and notate guitar ones (“write the strumming pattern that you hear”). They are also allowed to physically refer to guitars during dictation exercises, although the answers evaluated are the written ones. Some students have even told me that they visualize strumming a guitar to help in a variety of rhythmic assessment tasks, a means to an end that I fully encourage.

Resource Development

Having described the new curriculum, the teacher must implement it in actual practice. This may involve resource development or modification for context.

Resource preparation may prove to be an arduous task, depending on the overlap with existing teaching resources. In my case, certain elements of the aligned curriculum, such as “Pitch on the Treble Clef”, had many ready-made materials to implement. In the specific niche I was creating, of course, there were relatively few beyond those described

in Chapter III. I found myself with what felt like an endless amount of legwork in compiling, cataloging, and transcribing popular music to reinforce theoretical concepts from the traditional curriculum.

For example, the Italian words for tempos can easily be taught using musical materials from any genre. The figure below displays tempo terminology, along with the approximate metronome marking and popular-music exemplars for each.

Tempo Marking	Metronome	Musical Material
Lento	(40-45 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Type O Negative, "Haunted" <input type="checkbox"/> Loreena McKennitt, "Arthas Destiny"
Largo	(45-50 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Whitney Houston, "I Will Always Love You" <input type="checkbox"/> Bon Jovi, "Bed of Roses"
Adagio	(55-65 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Beyonce, "Flaws and All" <input type="checkbox"/> Sinead O'Connor, "Nothing Compares 2U"
Andante	(75 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> No Doubt, "Don't Speak" <input type="checkbox"/> Taylor Swift, "Knew You Were Trouble"
Andantino	(80 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Talib Kweli, "Get By" <input type="checkbox"/> Rihanna, "Take a Bow"
Moderato	(85-95 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jay-Z, "Kingdom Come" <input type="checkbox"/> Mary J. Blige, "I Can Love You"
Allegro	(110-130 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Boston, "More than a Feeling" <input type="checkbox"/> KC & Sunshine Band, "That's the Way"
Vivace	(140bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Beatles, "Birthday" <input type="checkbox"/> War, "Low Rider"
Presto	(170 bpm)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tonedeff, "Velocity" <input type="checkbox"/> Mighty Mighty Bosstones, "Impression I Get"

Having developed the ideal curriculum in theory, the teacher must then balance the ideals with the realities in classroom teaching. Adaptations may have to be made to account for such determining factors as scheduling constraints, student ability levels,

availability of lesson preparation time, and so on. Just as any teacher working with an existing curriculum must decide how to best achieve the learning targets in his or her own practice, original curricula must be subjected to the same cautionary consideration.

In this instance, my original curriculum targets a relatively high level of musical standards for high school students. My learning targets are ambitious, and will require a fair amount of time to achieve. While my long-term goal is to prepare students for the AP and RGT exams over the course of five years, my short-term goal is to launch a successful initiative inside of my middle-school classes. Many of these students have no prior knowledge of either music theory or guitar performance, and must develop their abilities via a logical succession of competencies. From the large amount of information in the original curriculum, I had to decide on long-term pacing.

For every item cataloged in this development section, I decided upon a logical order of presentation. The excerpt below details the order and speed at which I decided to introduce the increasingly complicated scale material to students. From juggling this information, I was able to decide on reasonable and attainable goals for my 7th grade classes, ones that were true to the spirit of the curriculum and built a strong foundation for further study. The modifications, in this case then, were primarily act of reductionism as I attempted to fit my objectives into those available class schedules and student ability levels with which I was working.

Scales & Tonality	Grade7	8	9	10	11(AP)
Pentatonic	■	■	■	■	■
Diatonic	□	■	■	■	■
Natural, Harmonic, & Melodic minor	□	□	■	■	■
Chromatic	□	□	□	■	■

Implementation Phase

Curricular evaluation occurs in three primary stages: Hothouse trials (proof of concept), field testing (real-world experimentation), and final modifications prior to publication and dissemination: curricular evaluative techniques include problem diagnosis, curricular revision, program comparison, identification of needs, and reflections upon achievement of objectives (Eisner 1979). Any unique curriculum will never be perfect the first time, and must be continually revisited for quality assurance.

The mechanics of self-reflection will differ between every individual teacher, but it is absolutely necessary to have some formal systems of feedback and assessment. After implementing a curricular element, large or small, the teacher must ask such questions as: were the learning targets attained? Were there unforeseen obstacles to comprehension? What were the high and low points of the implementation?

In order to improve upon original pedagogical material, a teacher must have the opportunity to revise and re-teach it. The answers to the questions asked in assessing materials should be directly applied, ideally as soon after the initial class period as possible. The materials will improve over time, as teachers fix problems and encounter new ones, developing perspective on the effectiveness of these materials, increasing their relative effectiveness, and gaining experience in dealing with areas of incomprehension.

In this case, I was very fortunate to have four different class sections following this same new curriculum. Often, as part of my own learning process, I found myself teaching the same lesson in a very different way between the first and the fourth attempts.

Chapter V: Results

Following the methodology of curriculum described in the previous section, I designed a unique curriculum over the summer months, and began teaching it in September. My initial implementation with the program has made for an exciting and enlightening experience, and I am looking forward to the years ahead of improving and refining what appears to be the start of an effective and powerful reform.

In this section, I preset the explicit intended curriculum as it existed in its initial form. A brief overview of the school and program provides context for the curriculum as it was originally designed. General objectives, content, vocabulary, and learning/assessment practices of the aligned curriculum are summarized and described, and a brief rationale provided for each. A cross sampling of unique materials is provided.

Course Description and Overview.

Our downtown public high school consists of approximately 900 students, grades 7 – 11, including approximately 230 who are enrolled in voluntary music classes. Students are co-ed, come from many different ethnic groups, and represent a wide range of socio-economic statuses. Many have had no musical experiences outside of elementary school choir, recorder, music appreciation, or Orff instruction, although a fair number sing in church or community choirs, and several are pursuing independent music projects, primarily rock bands and rap crews. Students are issued instruments by the school, and enjoy several performance opportunities each year in a variety of formats.

Classes meet every third school day for 80 minutes at a time, for a total of roughly 65 instructional hours over the course of each year. Classes in the older grades rehearse in

large ensemble settings; the 7th and 8th graders, as of this year, have begun group instruction on electric guitar. At the middle-school level, students are not required to have any background in music, and this course begins in September assuming no prior knowledge or ability. Students have access to lunchtime tutorials in addition to their regular class lessons, and additional drill materials are provided as needed for out-of-class practice. Private tutors are available through the Schulich School of Music at McGill University. Class material is posted online, and parents are notified when students are struggling academically.

Students are immediately exposed to the learning practices of traditional musicianship, with a strong emphasis on aural skills, theoretical understanding, and notational literacy. From the very beginning, although the material may be simple, students are expected to analyze and compose, to listen, read, perform, and improvise. Dictation, sight-singing, and improvisation tasks all begin in the first week.

Course content is divided into cohesive units, which are taught and assessed holistically, according to the learning objectives. Therefore, a typical class period could include a dictation exercise (listening), a sight-reading challenge (performance), and transcription (written), a lead improvisation (creative), a chord chart interpretation exercise (analytical), or all of the above. Texts and materials are generated by the instructor from popular music genres, including notes, worksheets, review guides, reference materials, quizzes and tests, and so on.

Learning Objectives. The primary objectives may be summarized as follows: understanding of the rudiments and terminology of tonal music; speed and fluency in the rudiments and terminology of tonal music; understanding of the rhythmic, harmonic and

melodic organization of tonal music; interpretive skills such as sight-reading and sight singing; analytical skills such as score dissection; aural skills such as attentive listening, musical memory, and dictation; compositional & improvisational skills; electric guitar performance ability regarding technique, scales, chords, arpeggios, rhythm playing, and lead playing; and performance preparation.

Theory Content. Students must be able to hear, identify, perform, notate, compose, analyze, and improvise using the basic materials of tonal music. These include: rhythm, meter, and temporal organization; pitch and notation; scales and tonality; modes and keys; intervals and transposition; chord construction; cadence; harmonic and melodic organization; and performance considerations.

Guitar Content. Students must be able to hear, identify, perform, notate, compose, analyze, and use the basic materials of guitar performance. These include: scales; chords; arpeggios; notes on the fretboard; prepared performance considerations; technique; and care and maintenance.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary is selected from the modified AP vocabulary list. At this novice level, students are responsible for a relatively small portion of the total vocabulary, a percentage that will grow every year as more concepts are introduced. Guitar-specific vocabulary is not included as part of their formal responsibilities, although understanding it is essential for success in the course.

Evaluation. Students are marked in all three terms through a wide variety of assignments, activities, quizzes and tests. Assessment practices test student abilities in all course content and vocabulary according to the stated learning objectives. Specific challenges include multiple-choice and written free-response questions, with and without

aural stimulus, as well as guitar performance tasks such as sight-reading, item construction, rhythm performance, and lead improvisation.

Formative assessment is provided daily, while summative evaluations follow a dichotomous format. Theory exams test music literacy, aural comprehension, and knowledge of theoretical concepts covered in class. Performance exams test instrumental ability and knowledge of performance concepts covered in class. Midterm Exams take place in December, and final exams take place in May.

Excerpts from Aligned Materials

Throughout the course planning, a great variety of original material was created by the teacher and distributed to students. This section displays excerpts from original student handouts, all of which are selected to illustrate the primary categories of curricular design as described in the development section. Each excerpt showcases unique examples of the aligned program's content, vocabulary, and learning/assessment practices.

Excerpts are further intended to illustrate the point that effective links can be made across the various elements of the source curricula. In arguing that guitar can be used as a vehicle for study, and that popular performance genres can reinforce concepts from the traditional curriculum, I have selected materials that display proof of concept. In the examples on the pages that follow, one can discern the guiding influences as originating in the overlapping areas of the AP and RGT curricula. Throughout my process of material development, I tried to remain true to the original curricula as much as possible, and to impart the guiding philosophy and organization of the course directly to the students, in the hopes that their learning will become increasingly self-directed.

The first excerpt is from the student handout conveying the expectations of guitar skills. Connections are reinforced to the AP content, as theoretical knowledge is portrayed here through guitar skills. In this conception, notational literacy is considered an essential competency for guitar performance. As a result, theoretical knowledge, rather than being studied as an abstraction, will be internalized with instrumental application.

The multifaceted learning requirements for the content of the aligned curriculum have been reproduced here in simplified, student-friendly form. Students are instructed to ask themselves, for each given concept, “am I able to see it, hear it, write it, play it, and use it?” For example, students should know the A Major Pentatonic Scale backwards and forwards. They should be able to recognize it if read from a score or diagrammed on a guitar neck, or if they hear it played. They should be able to write it in traditional notation, as well as on a guitar diagram, play it on a guitar, and they should be able to apply it appropriately in improvisational and composition tasks. These content requirements surpass those of the RGT curriculum in asking students to put pen to paper, and they surpass the AP requirements in asking students to demonstrate instrumental application of all material. While the scope of the content is necessarily limited in this beginners’ course, the goal is to incorporate most content from both source curricula.

As in the content summary, the handout of vocabulary words empowers students to begin taking charge of their own understanding and progress through the curriculum. Once again, students are directed to know these curricular items in any variety of different ways. Cross-curricular links are reinforced by the requirement to play the vocabulary items on guitar. For example, students should thoroughly understand the concept of a scale or chord root note. Student should be able to identify the root note in a

guitar chord as well as recognizing one on a notated scale. They should be able to recognize it if read from a score or diagrammed on a guitar neck, or if they hear it played on a guitar. They should be able to write it in traditional notation, as well as on a guitar diagram, play it on a guitar, and they should be able to apply it appropriately in improvisational and composition tasks.

The sample from the summative midterm exam reveals how the two curricula can overlap and reinforce each other. Beyond the mere employment of popular guitar genres as examples in an essentially dichotomous curriculum, this assessment reveals how the study of guitar can truly enrich student understanding of the AP curriculum, and vice versa. All of these tasks test the student's ability to make connections between the pitches on the guitar neck and pitches on the staff in traditional notation. In order to pass this evaluation, students must also have a clear grasp of scale and chord construction.

This same essential knowledge, incidentally, has been tested in any number of different ways. Students have been asked to name the notes of a scale seeing it played on guitar or reading it on the treble clef. Given a root note on a guitar neck or staff, students have been asked to identify and notate the scale from listening to it. Given a notated or diagrammed scale, students have been asked to play it. They have also been asked to analyze where it fits in a chord progression, what chord or key corresponds to it, and how it may be used. Students have been asked to use this material themselves in improvisation, composition, and so on and so forth.

Excerpt 1: Course Content

Basic Guitar Skills**I Understand How to**

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read in Treble Clef | <input type="checkbox"/> Hold a Guitar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read Chord Diagrams | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the Parts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read Rhythm Charts | <input type="checkbox"/> Name the Strings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read Key Signatures | <input type="checkbox"/> Tune a Guitar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read Rhythms | <input type="checkbox"/> Pick Single Notes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play <i>Horse with no Name</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a Capo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play a <i>12-Bar Blues</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Strum Full Chord |

Advancing Guitar Skills***I Am Able to . . .***

	See it.	Hear it.	Use it.
	Write it.	Play it.	

Chords:

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A Major, D Major, & E Major | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A Minor, D Minor, & E Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G Major & C Major | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Power Chords | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Major, Minor, & 7 Barre Chords | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Scales:

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A Major Pentatonic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A Minor Pentatonic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All major and Minor Pent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ionian | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Natural Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixolydian | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Excerpt 2: Vocabulary

<i>I Am Able to . . .</i>	See it?	Hear it?	Use it?
	Write it?	Play it?	
Tonic (Root) Note _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Ionian Scale _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Aeolian Scale _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Pentatonic Scale _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Mixolydian Scale _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Half Step (semitone) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Whole Step _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Octave _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Tonic chord _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Dominant chord _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Major Chord _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			
Minor Chord _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____.			

Excerpt 3: Summative Assessment

1. Name the following notes, and notate them in the treble clef:

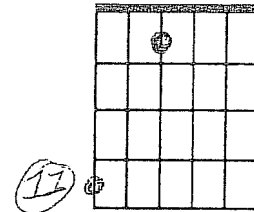
Handwritten notation on a treble clef staff: Bb (flat B) on the second line.

Five guitar fretboard diagrams (4x4 grids) showing note positions:

- Diagram 1: Note on the 3rd fret, 2nd string.
- Diagram 2: Note on the 2nd fret, 3rd string.
- Diagram 3: Note on the 4th fret, 4th string.
- Diagram 4: Note on the 1st fret, 1st string.
- Diagram 5: Note on the 3rd fret, 4th string.

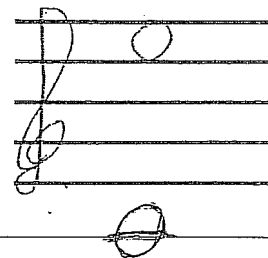
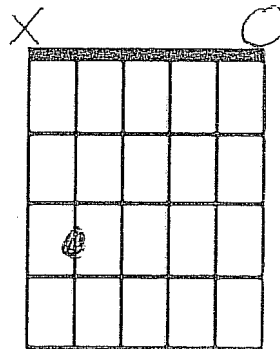
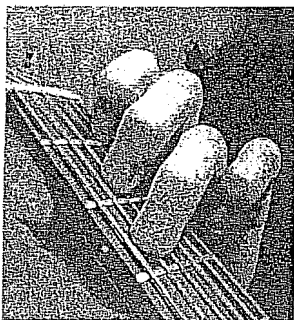
2. Name the notes of the scale, and diagram them on the neck, no open strings.

Handwritten notation on a treble clef staff: Eb (flat E) on the second line, Bb (flat B) on the second line, and Bb (flat B) on the second line.



What is the name of this scale? _____

3. Name the notes of the chord, diagram them on the neck, and notate them in the treble clef.



X C — — — E

What is the name of this chord? _____

Chapter VI: Discussion and Implications

Throughout this process of curricular design and analysis, I have attempted to remain fully grounded in the existing academic literature and published curricular standards. All source pedagogical materials came from validated institutions. The analysis revealed some interesting patterns and correlations among the data, with strong implications for future practice. The resulting data is discussed below in terms of my purposes stated in the introduction.

From a review of the relevant literature regarding both the traditional musicianship and the popular guitar curricula, it was possible to discern several proven benefits of each. The traditional curriculum has been empirically shown to be disciplined, achievement-oriented, and overwhelmingly beneficial for participants in terms of academic success, life skills, and general social health. Unfortunately, only a small minority of secondary students choose to access these benefits. Conversely, the popular guitar curriculum has been proven to be motivational and inspirational, leading to increased participation and impact among disaffected students. Very little has been written, however, regarding the scholastic dividends of popular guitar instruction, which remain un-described. From the literature, it can be seen why a balanced approach may possibly reap both kinds of benefits, and why it may be necessary to place an explicit emphasis on academics when implementing a fun, alternative music program.

In order to determine if popular music can be used to illustrate elements of the traditional music curriculum, I began by taking an inventory of the musical ingredients found in the common-practice period in European art music. Discovering that classical music is defined by fundamental tonal, rhythmic, and contrapuntal elements, I determined that two out of the three determining characteristics have generally survived into the

popular genres of the 20th century. Rock, folk, blues, pop, and hip-hop are all characterized by functional harmony and corresponding scalar melodies, which move forward through time via clear, steady beats and precise, measured rhythms. Most popular music of today, however, is organized according to very different tonal conventions than those of the common-practice period. As a result, it is possible to teach many but certainly not all of the elements contained in the AP music theory curriculum by way of popular guitar genres. The two different stylistic periods overlap in terms of fundamental musical materials such as a functional triadic harmony, and many aspects of classical music are clearly illustrated through contemporary exemplars, but the traditional curriculum does require detailed knowledge of the procedures and devices specific to Baroque, Classical, and Renaissance music. These curricular items simply must be taught using true common-practice materials. In distinguishing between common-practice style and the popular tonal genres, it is possible to detail and isolate those many specific elements of traditional knowledge that may be conveyed and practiced using cultural relevant material of study.

Model for the Alignment of Disparate Curricula

Throughout the process of curricular alignment, it is necessary to apply a concrete and deliberate methodology in order to ensure a balanced and successful pedagogy. By engaging in this process carefully, it is possible to extract relevant guidelines for a truly hybridized, aligned curriculum. By following the ten steps proposed in my methodology of alignment, I was able to arrive at a curriculum which reflected strong elements of both source curricula, accomplished my guiding vision, and was appropriate to the school and

context in which I teach. I am continually upgrading and refining it as strengths and weaknesses reveal themselves, as the curriculum slowly continues to improve. I am trying to establish cross-curricular links to the greatest extent possible, as reinforced by my choice of content and vocabulary, my overall objectives for the course, and my selection of teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

In order to identify the central goals and tenets of both the traditional and the popular guitar curricula, I sought out and analyzed the requirements of select accredited examinations. While these curricula do not describe the complete range of curricular possibilities within their respective fields of pedagogical focus, they nonetheless represent widely accepted sets of standards. A secondary finding was that it is possible to describe and define a curriculum even in the absence of clearly published criteria, as was the case with the RGT exam. Via a comprehensive survey of available materials, it may be possible to fill in the gaps left by official publications.

In the end it was possible to develop an aligned music curriculum that teaches the traditional curriculum by way of guitar and used traditional knowledge, in turn, to inform guitar performance. As noted above, the aligned curriculum has concrete limitations, which I am still in the process of discerning through field-testing. My specific course programming begins with novice students, and assumes a lack of prior knowledge regarding music theory or guitar performance. Therefore, it may be more accurately and humbly described as a course in music fundamentals. I can, however, claim the ability to teach many elements of musical theory and organization via electric guitar, and I do believe that my program will adequately prepare students for a separate AP Music Theory course in their senior year.

Academic Legitimacy of Popular Guitar Instruction

My central purpose in this thesis has been to advocate for the development of popular guitar pedagogy, one that pursues traditional goals of music education while using culturally relevant materials. In doing so, I was able to establish that a move away from the traditional band paradigm of high school music class does not necessarily have to be at the expense of traditional academic standards. This is an original contribution to the literature, as few authors have shown this link. My aligned curriculum was demanding, achievement-oriented, and prioritized academic success. Although we may have been using student-selected materials, the overriding goal was not just to have fun. Indeed, the enjoyment and motivation factor was the secondary consideration, specifically incorporated with the idea of encouraging academic achievement and not as an end in and of itself. Teachers have an obligation to strive for high-quality education, and researchers have extolled the benefits of formal music study for popular guitarists as well as traditional band students (Lorenz 1993).

The process was informed throughout by an appreciation for the fact that popular music pedagogical cultures are highly effective in their own right; “While this informal learning is commonly referred to as being “self-taught,” it does not mean that musicians who learn informally do so in a vacuum” (Zacharias 2011, p. 4). Teachers clearly have a great deal to potentially learn from popular music practices, particularly by “making use of the substantial ‘aural library’ that almost all young students have built up by learning holistically, having been exposed to thousands of hours of music as a matter of course in contemporary societies” (Schipper 2010, p. 129). Researchers have already done so in focused ways: identifying practice habits inherent in the musical games of young

children, elementary educators were able to exploit the children's natural learning processes into formal learning (Harrop-Allin 2011). Although popular music is underrepresented in traditional pedagogical material, the two are by no means inherently incompatible.

Institutionalization of Emergent Research

The spark of informal learning has ignited a variety of fires in music education research. A number of scholars have expanded upon Green's original thesis and are branching out into deeper realms of understanding regarding this intersection of popular music, informal learning, and formal music education structures. Bula (2011) has pursued further descriptions of non-traditional music students, whereas O'Flynn (2006) has mapped social and pedagogical relationships among various genres of popular music. Scholars have followed Green's example and methodology in examining the informal learning practices of other music genres, such as hip-hop (Soderman & Folkestad 2004), and Veveka (2010) has begun considering formal implementation of informal music pedagogy based on practices and ensemble formats other than the rock bands which have heretofore remained the primary vehicle of inquiry.

Educators have an obligation to respond to a growing body of research that clearly states a need for reform and renewal in formal music education. A student's musical education should prepare them to become fulfilled, independent, and capable musical adults (Peters 2004; Shivley 2004; Smithram & Upitis 2004). Zenker (2004) is asking the correct questions in considering what concepts, values, critical abilities, and

music making skills would be involved in an education that prepares students for lifelong learning.

At the same time, however, music teachers have long resisted the informal learning approach, and small-ensemble formats in particular, for a variety of reasons, both value-laden and practical (Woodson 2004). For many teachers, the demands of such pedagogical reforms may be simply impossible to accommodate (Hallam 2011). Other difficulties in catering to student tastes include the sheer scope of reform needed to fundamentally overhaul music education practices, the problematic collusion of the commercial and educational spheres, and the breathtaking rate of change in popular musical tastes (Bowman 2004). If educators are to respond effectively to research frontiers, actions must be balanced with the realities of their professional situations.

Innovation in Teacher Preparation

A body of literature describes the obstacles facing the dominant formal music education structure in attempts to reinvigorate itself. While beginning teachers are generally well prepared to provide experiences in choir, band, orchestra, and general music from a Western European art tradition, they are ill-equipped to provide authentic popular music instruction (Emmons 2004; Schippers 2010). If we are to competently address the needs of future music classrooms, we need to follow the example of other countries that have instituted pre-service teacher popular music training (Humphreys 2004). We must proactively recruit music education students from more diverse musical backgrounds (Seddon 2004), and remove entrance barriers between popular musicians and universities. A similar need for university support has been identified in the

culturally relevant movement more broadly (Kumar 2012). If we are to see widespread changes in our approaches to school music, the relevant overhauls in teacher training are imperative and overdue (Rosenberg 2010; Wang & Humphreys 2009).

Indeed, most music educators have positively identified the elusive desire to have children experience as many genres, instruments, and experiences as possible (Emmons 2004; Smithram & Upitis 2004; Green 2006). Surveys of practicing music teachers reveal that many would incorporate more popular music into their classrooms if they had clearer pathways to do so; one survey of orchestral teachers revealed that while 82% of respondents agreed with a survey statement that “electric instruments have a place in my classroom”, only 25% actually utilized them (Lindamood 2011). Where popular music has been incorporated, furthermore, it has often been in relatively tangential ways (Jaffurs 2004).

Obstacles persist in all levels of institutional organization; beginning music teachers often lack the agency to engage in critical reflection or fundamental overhaul of their practice (Shieh & Conway 2004). It can be hard to consider student musical identities when immersed in the overwhelming responsibilities of running a music program (Pitts 2011), and beginning teachers must furthermore fit their ideologies and innovations into the structure of the school, often resulting in the discouragement of initiative (Eisner 1979). As Schippers states, “the tension between visionary ideas and a practice that takes time to implement these visions is a reality of the sector. This is not because music teachers are unwilling or unable to teach music in the best way possible but because our systems . . . are not conducive to change” (Schippers 2010, p. 128).

Need for Further Investigation

There are a variety of possible future research directions that may potentially draw upon the work of this thesis. The methodology of alignment needs to be validated, and the goal of a popular guitar pedagogy needs to be substantiated by other studies. Continued inquiry into the definition of guitar performance standards, and the way that these expectations interact with traditional music expectations, will yield a more complete picture of guitar pedagogy than was possible within this brief treatise. Much more detail is needed to adequately describe the classical overlap with popular genres, and the ways in which popular music genres can be employed to cover traditional musicianship concepts. The potential for the study of music theory via the guitar is an under-described area, as the physical layout of the fretboard may actually prove to be an especially beneficial way of internalizing theoretical concepts such as transposable chord construction. The proliferation of popular guitar video tutorials on the Internet represent a golden opportunity for research into “flipped classroom” organization, as well as on increased understanding into the nature of popularly-vetted instructional materials.

Furthermore, many aspects of the implementation phase of this curriculum may lend themselves to fruitful inquiry. Issues of voice and identity come to the forefront in such a power-sharing experiment, including those of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. There are questions regarding issues of egalitarianism and equal access to information, given the availability of free pedagogy and the ubiquity of the guitar in North American culture. The especially low price of guitars has financial implications for schools and families, as does the relative ease of transport and the significant availability of tutors. Electric guitars, played through headphone amps, are nearly silent,

and it would interesting to study this impact on practicing opportunities at home, as well as on ambient noise levels inside of the classroom, which can be dangerous to music teachers. Finally, as a tangential line of thought, we have little understanding of the implications of non-traditional forms of guitar literacy such as tablature. While scholars have detailed the benefits of traditional notation over tablature, it is entirely possible that there are demonstrable benefits from learning this system that are currently unreported.

The findings within this thesis have many potential uses. The RGT itself could respond to my critique of their poor organization, and improve the quality of their published objectives. The College Board, conversely, could cite this study in support of their assertion that popular music has a useful place in the 21st-century theory course. Both organizations could draw upon my writing in their respective quests to a) keep traditional music education strong and relevant for future generations, and b) legitimize guitar instruction within the educational mainstream.

In further application, other teachers may attempt to apply my methodology of alignment to various tasks of curricular design, such as the reconciliation of personal goals with externally imposed requirements. The ten-step process may potentially work for other guiding sets of priorities. It may also be used as a hypothetical or theoretical guideline in establishing cultural relevance in other subject areas.

Finally, my conception of musicianship standards as the need to holistically understand content – to read it, write it, hear it, analyze it, define it, and use it - may be a beneficial way to organize course content in various musical pedagogies. The student-friendly language combines with the relative sophistication of tasks to enable twelve-

year-olds to engage in AP-style learning, no matter how basic the content may be. This approach may be applicable to different contexts and ability levels.

Conclusion

This paper examined the state of music education in contemporary public secondary schools, arguing that we are witnessing a crisis of access despite the ready availability of music programs. Music education remains a widespread institution in public schools because it is incredibly beneficial to a student's intellectual, academic, and social development. Researchers, educators, and the public continue to appreciate and prioritize the value of a formal music education. Unfortunately, students tend to voluntarily opt out of music courses, due largely to the prevalence of outdated, Eurocentric paradigms of music education. The growing diversity of the student population calls for the development of a culturally relevant music education paradigm. Teacher-researchers are making concrete strides in this direction, although the line of inquiry is still very young.

This paper has argued for the continuing development of specific devices and parameters to incorporate popular guitar performance within an achievement-oriented music pedagogy. In doing so, I have shown that it is possible to create new music education paradigms which are responsive to the proven benefits of the traditional curriculum as well as being accessible to a greater number of students. Other guitar teachers and popular music theoreticians need to contribute in a similar manner.

From this study, it is clear that curriculum design at the intersection of popular music, electric guitar, and traditional music theory is not necessarily an exercise in

futility. My pilot program was able to meet the validated standards of the published curricular literature, as certified by the College Board and the London College of Music Examinations. It was able to do so via a systematic construction of an aligned curriculum, based upon clear and specifically defined pedagogical goals. The small success of this experiment encourages future alignment of academic goals with culturally relevant material.

In analytical comparison, the disparate pedagogical areas proved to have a great deal of overlapping material. Through minor modifications, it was possible to maximize these areas of congruence, and to design a curriculum responsive to both sets of priorities.

When standards were asymmetrical, content was often complementary. A plethora of cross-curricular links made themselves apparent. Guitar was again shown to be a useful instrument for the study of traditional theoretical concepts. While achievement standards have tended to be lower for popular guitar than for other instruments and styles, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Guitar is a versatile and virtuosic instrument, and the only thing that needs to change is the culture of low expectations, as some groups are already attempting to do. Concrete advances on a number of fronts are being made in this general pedagogical direction.

My central research question was to determine if the AP curriculum could be effectively taught using materials from the popular music genres. The answer is that most but not all of it can be. Fundamentals of literacy, harmony, melody, rhythm, and procedural knowledge are all well illustrated in the guitar genres, but common-practice idioms such as voice-leading and formal idiomatic structures are not. While a traditionally oriented pop guitar pedagogy was successfully designed, and is now in the

implementation phase, there is an upper limit to the amount of Advanced Placement content that can be conveyed. Eventually, genre-specific considerations will mandate the study of orchestral symphonies, piano concertos, and sacred chorales.

The research project as undertaken here had a great number of strengths and an equal number of weaknesses. The research, on one hand, was thorough, systematic, and sincere. Grounded in the rigorous analysis of original source documents, the research accurately and innovatively described accepted curricula (including one which was poorly described in the first place), and successfully developed a set of ideals that are well anchored in the essential elements of both original standards. Research questions were thoroughly and effectively addressed, representing a small but nonetheless original insight.

On the other hand, the research as presented here was by and large a hypothetical endeavor. The process of development is still incomplete, as it is currently still in the early phases of implementation, and must be continually reassessed and refined over the coming years. Every day, substantial and unforeseen obstacles are presenting themselves as I move from an idealized theory into the harsh realities of classroom practice. Furthermore, it is important to note that this project represents but one teacher's perspective only. My experiential biases, personal preferences, and situational priorities dictated the direction of this research, in a way that may not be applicable to all other practitioners. Finally, there are countless important sociological considerations in the development of popular guitar pedagogy that remain wholly unaddressed in this work. Much more needs to be said, for example, regarding the method of selection for musical content. To ensure that the musical materials are actually pertinent, the teacher must

implement specific procedures: how will the teacher ensure that the students, and not the teacher, determine which music is considered motivational? My initial experiences in popular music implementation have soundly reinforced the existing body of research stating that non-classical genres do not necessarily equate to relevant ones (Bartel 2004; Green 2006, 2008; Powell 2011), as evidenced by my students' overwhelming contempt for much of my "old man music" such as AC/DC and A Tribe Called Quest. Issues of student voice, power, and identity will be instrumental in the successful development of a program that truly balances my priorities with theirs. At this point in time, my educational experiment can be legitimately presented as a theoretical exercise only.

Coda

Advancing music education research states a convincing case for the need to draw upon informal learning practices in order to "recognize, foster, and reward a range of musical skills and knowledge that have not previously been emphasized in music education"(Green 2008, p. 1). The converse statement, however, is equally true: Popular musicians must come to recognize and reward a range of skills and knowledge that have not previously been valued in American informal learning cultures. American educators, therefore, must make a sincere effort to impart the traditional curriculum to secondary popular musicians, in addition to merely bolstering ensemble enrollment. According to Lee (2004), "one of the obvious goals of formal education should be to provide circumstances where they can learn better than on the street or on their own" (p. 120).

Popular music culture in the United States is theoretically and procedurally impoverished. Young popular musicians in the West tend to learn alone or in groups of peers precisely because of a lack of guidance from competent adults – the enculturation aspect of popular music has been lacking in the provision of theoretical knowledge and well-rounded musicianship. Furthermore, it would appear that popular musicians are sincerely thirsty for the skills, knowledge, and advantages offered by culturally relevant formal education, as evidenced by the worldwide profusion of semi-formal musical education opportunities and the private music instruction industry (Green 2008).

Despite the relatively dichotomous presentation of popular versus formal musical transmission, however, learning does in fact occur on a continuum of structural and guidance formats. A great deal of knowledge sharing occurs as what Schippers (2010) has termed “non-formal learning”, defined as “learning outside of organized music education where there is deliberate teaching” (p. 91). An ideal situation would combine formal and informal practices, following the advice of most Musical Futures teachers: progress is being made towards functional integration of the disparate approaches, although these aspects remain unanalyzed (Green 2008).

Criteria for scrutinizing popular music repertoires and learning strategies are increasingly useful and clear (Rodriguez 2012), and reform-minded research activity is approaching a critical mass. Innovation to future classroom practice should retain the intention of educating more students and imparting more knowledge, as opposed to trending towards a reduction in the quantity of formal education opportunities in student lives. The formal music structures in North America must exercise the leadership, expertise, and pedagogical direction setting that is required in the development of

culturally relevant music pedagogies. While educators have established that need, and while teaching resources are proliferating, there is a marked dearth of literature regarding how to impart the time-honored aspects of the music curriculum via culturally relevant musical material.

Despite this, the obligation of secondary music educators to impart normatively valued knowledge is as acute as ever, and there is a future for formal music education in the musical development of young North Americans. This project concludes by encouraging others to follow in the footsteps of Rodriguez (2004), as I have done here, in attempting to “explore whether formal music teaching and learning might incorporate the essential aspects of popular music in mutually supportive and balanced ways” (p. 3).

Appendix A: Complete RGT Level 8 Electric Guitar Exam Requirements

Scales in all KeysMajor Scales

- 2 octaves in 2 different fingerboard positions
- 1 octave in 5 different fingerboard positions
- 1 Octave in 8^{ths}
- 1 Octave in 3^{rds}
- 3 octaves in the keys of F# to C inclusive

Major Pentatonic Scales

- 2 octaves in 3 different fingerboard positions

Minor Pentatonic Scales

- 1 octave in 5 different fingerboard positions
- 1 octave in 5^{ths}
- 3 octaves in the keys of F to C inclusive
- 1 Octave in 8^{ths}

Blues Scales

- 2 octaves in 2 different fingerboard positions
- 1 octave in 5 different fingerboard positions
- 3 octaves in the keys of F to C inclusive

Natural Minor Scales

- 2 octaves in 2 different fingerboard positions
- 1 octave in 5 different fingerboard positions
- 1 octave in 8^{ths} Natural Minor scale
- 3 octaves in the keys of F to C inclusive

Harmonic Minor Scale

- 2 octaves in all keys

Modal Scales

- Dorian, Mixolydian, Phrygian, Lydian, Locrian – 2 Octaves
- Dorian and Mixolydian, 1 Octave in 3 different fingerboard positions
- Phrygian and Lydian, 1 Octave in 2 different fingerboard positions

Non-Diatonic Scales

- Chromatic scale – 2 octaves
- Chromatic scale – 3 octaves F to C inclusive
- Whole-tone scale – 2 octaves

Arpeggios in all Keys

2 Octaves:

Major 7th

Minor 7th

Dominant 7th

1 octave in 2 different fingerboard positions:

Major 7th

Major 9th

Major 13th

Minor 7th

Minor 9th

Minor 13th

Dominant 7th

Dominant 9th

Suspended 4th

Augmented 5th

Diminished 7th

1 Octave:

Minor 7th, altered 5th &/or 9th

Dominant 7th, altered 5th &/or 9th

Dominant 11th and Dominant 13th

Chords in all Keys

Major chords and Dominant 7th chords in 5 different fingerboard positions

Barre chords at all roots, in 2 different fingerboard positions

Major

Major 7th

Major 9th

Sus 4

Major 6th

Minor 6th

Minor

Minor 7th

Minor 9th

Diminished 7th

Augmented 5th

Dominant 7th

Dominant 9th

Dominant 11th

Dominant 13th

Major & Minor, 'non-root' bass notes

Minor 7th & Dominant 7th, altered 5th & 9th

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