

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: York St John University		
Unit of Assessment: 33. Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Changing Music Education Practices within Umbrella Societies and Higher Education Contexts		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Lee Higgins	Professor of Community Music and Director of International Centre for Community Music (ICCM)	2015 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Research by Professor Higgins into the function and pedagogy of community music has changed music education practice at an international level in two specific ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Influencing the overhaul of the constitution of the International Society of Music Education to recognise the benefit of informal approaches to music education. This has changed practices and had benefits for the society's membership across 90 countries and resulted in the dissemination of socially engaged approaches to music pedagogy. 2. Changing teaching approaches to courses on musical pedagogy, through working with educational institutions and national societies in developing programmes that engage with the socially transformative power of music. 		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Community music is an expanding field within academia, drawing together the concepts of music education, social justice, pedagogy, opportunity and policy. Higgins's research has been a driving force within community music scholarship, helping to broaden the field through developing a platform in which to interrogate the foundations of community music practice. At the centre of Higgins work lies the bases of cultural democracy and the idea that community arts should provide accessible opportunities of creative engagement that are enjoyable, celebratory, and open to all [3.1; 3.3].</p> <p>As a body of work, Higgins's research about community music does two main things: Firstly, it critiques existing perspectives and approaches to participatory music-making [3.3; 3.4] It locates its central ideas around an ethnomusicological argument that, as human beings, we are all inherently musical. From this starting point, and then drawing upon current research from the fields of music education, applied ethnomusicology and community music therapy, the research utilises post-structural tools in order to offer insights into how music educators might (re)conceive of shaping musical pathways for people of all ages and abilities. One such way is through recognising community music as an act of 'hospitality', an ethical consideration of the relationship between facilitator and participant that distinguishes a way of working together [3.4]. Operating within a larger narrative of music and the life-course Higgins's work is orientated around the areas of, people, participation, places, diversity, and equality which are crucial to the ideas of cultural democracy [3.1; 3.2; 3.5; 3.6].</p>		

Secondly, Higgins's research focuses on how community music practices are illuminated through ethnographic strategies. This includes fieldwork that has resulted in case study examples excavated across the globe and accessed through methods of data collection such as participant-observation, interviews, focus groups etc. [3.2]. Developing thematic areas which include social justice, non-formal education, inclusion, hospitality, intervention, collaboration, facilitation and participation, Higgins's research constructs and articulates conceptual frameworks through which statements can be made to challenge current institutional practices and teaching and learning programme delivery and curricula [3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6]. For instance, Higgins's work [3.4] regarding non-formal music-making in five distinct contexts showcased distinct approaches to non-formal music making, while addressing the potential benefits that such an approach may foster including enhancing meaningful musical experiences for the participants that honour their contributions.

Higgins's body of work has had an identifiable trajectory for the past two decades. Since 2014 the research continues to include outputs such as books, book chapters, journal articles, and development of research networks (MUSOC Research Network) and research symposia. One most notable publication is Higgins's co-authored 'Oxford Handbook of Community Music' (2018), the first handbook of community music that provides an international view of community music. The development of this increasing research and scholarship in community music has resulted in a tangible shift toward impacting international organisations and the way music teaching and learning is understood in educational environments.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[3.1] Higgins, L., & Willingham, L. (2017). *Engagement in Community Music: An introduction*. New York: Routledge. [Listed in REF2]

[3.2] Higgins, L. (2020). Rethinking Community in Community Music: The Call, the Welcome, and the 'Yes'. In B. Jansen (Ed.), *Rethinking Community through Transdisciplinary Research* (pp. 231- 246). Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-31073-8_13

[3.3] Higgins, L. (2018). The Community in Community Music. In G. McPherson & G. F. Welch (Eds.), *Special Needs, Community Music, and Adult Learning: An Oxford Handbook of Music Education* (Vol. 4, pp. 104-119). New York: Oxford University Press. [Can be Supplied by the HEI upon Request]

[3.4] Higgins, L. (2016). My Voice is Important Too: Non-formal music experiences and young people. In G. McPherson (Ed.), *The Child as Musician* (2nd ed.). (pp. 594-605) New York: Oxford University Press. [32-McPherson-Chap32.pdf \(yorks.ac.uk\)](#)

[3.5] Higgins, L. (2015). Hospitable Music Making Community Music as a Site for Social Justice. In C. Benedict, P. Schmidt, G. Spruce & P. G. Woodford (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice and Music Education*. (pp. 446 – 455) New York: Oxford University Press. [Can be Supplied by the HEI upon Request]

[3.6] Higgins, L & Henley, J. (2020). Redefining Excellence and Inclusion. *International Journal of Community Music*, 13(2). https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00020_1

Research grants

[3.7] AHRC Research Network Grant: £45,000. Joint project between ICCM and the Royal College of Music. (2016 – 2018). *Excellence, inclusion and intervention; navigating contexts and building sustainable working practices for musicians*.

[3.8] JM International: \$480,000. (2019 – 22). *Ethno: Exploring the transformational sociocultural and musical significances of Ethno music camps.*

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research presented in this case study has fundamentally impacted music education as a field in two specific routes: 1) influencing institutional practice of the International Society of Music Education; 2) changing approaches to music pedagogy within music educational institutions. The benefits of this are more socially engaged and inclusive approaches to music pedagogy across international contents.

1. Impact on ISME Institutional Practice

In 2014, as a consequence of his leading research in the field, Higgins became President-Elect of the International Society of Music Education (ISME), an organisation established by UNESCO with a membership of 2500 from 90 countries. As the first community musician to be elected to this role, Higgins was able to use his research to present arguments for change, working with an international team to restructure and reconstitute the organisation. For instance, Higgins's work on community music and cultural democracy [3.1; 3.3] has supported a cultural shift in how music education is traditionally thought about particularly around the areas of accessibility, which has enabled ISME to begin to address issues of diversity and equality within the organisation and within their international sponsors and partners. The Acting CEO for ISME describes Higgins's time as President as 'influencing a shift in music education, bringing informal learning and community music approaches into mainstream consciousness' [5.5].

An example of this can be seen through Higgins's work with one of ISME's sponsors the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). The NAMM Director of International Affairs describes how Higgins's research into the effectiveness of non-formal education [3.4] resulted in changes beginning to be made to the traditional conservatoire approach to music education systems within China and Russia [3.4]. As a consequence of this dialogue, both China and Russia have begun looking towards ways of incorporating the approaches and methodologies of community music practice outlined by Higgins's work [3.1; 3.3] within their respective music education systems.

2. Impact on Educational Institutions

Higgins's work has been instrumental in the establishment of community music as a distinct field within music pedagogy, supporting the development of programmes in community music nationally and internationally. Higgins is the founder and current senior editor of the International Journal of Community music, which helps support community music curricular and programme development within higher education institutes. A professor of music education at Wilfred Laurier University, Canada, describes Higgins's work exploring the conceptual notions of community music as 'essential for helping inform and progress undergraduate and masters students' practice' [5.7]. Two further testimonials evidence the impact of Higgins's work in community music pedagogy in the USA [5.8] and Canada [5.9]. Two geographical examples illustrate how Higgins's work has changed practice in educational institutions at an international level.

Historically, Germany's music education system has been dominated by conservatoire music education. This system favours the Western European classical cannon and is an approach to teaching and learning grounded in instrumental lessons and structured towards those in a higher economic bracket; as a result, music education has been available to only a few. Against this background the possibility of expanding music education through community music was met with discontent. In response to this, and as a pathway to impact, Higgins collaborated on the development of a conference in Munich 2015, followed by two publications: *Community Music verstehen – Theorie und Praxis* (2017) and a special issue of the International Journal of Community Music, *Community Music in Germany* (2016).

Supported by Higgins's work in developing community music as a distinct field of music pedagogy in Germany, the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt began an MA in Community Music in 2017. This is the first Masters in community music in Germany and the Course Leader describes Higgins's work as being key to helping develop community music within the German context [5.3].

Elsewhere in Germany, Higgins's research has opened up discussions surrounding the development of community music activity and how this may both enrich and complement existing education practice. This has been instrumental for shifting practice in other institutions, such as the establishment of a new position, Patron of Community Music, at the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra in 2015 [5.4]. As part of this appointment, funding provided by the Bavarian municipal government supported local community musicians in three projects which took place in 2015-16.

In the second geographic context, Italian music education is similar to Germany's, i.e. dominated by a conservatoire model. Research by Higgins with Italian scholars in the form of two conferences, *Perspectives and Relevancies* (2017), *Intersections, Crossfields, and Ecologies* (2018) led to the development of a growing Italian Community Music Research culture, led by the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano's community music centre [5.6]. This is evidenced further in the forthcoming book *Community Music in Italy: Perspectives and Relevance* (in Press), which is the first academic text of community music specifically focusing on an Italian context and written within the native language.

Higgins's research has changed the landscape of music education through his work in community music. The core concerns associated with the field are now on the international agendas of organisations such as ISME and NAMM. Within international education institutions, exemplified here from Europe, Australia and North America, music education has been rooted within a paradigm that has resisted change. By establishing different frameworks through which music teaching and learning can take place, Higgins's research has had a direct impact on changing these environments and consequently the experiences of those that engage in them. This has had the effect of influencing national conversations regarding music teaching and learning both within education institutes and within a wider national and international context.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[5.1] Testimonial: Director, Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University, Australia

[5.2] Testimonial: Director of International Affairs, NAMM International

[5.3] Testimonial: Lecturer, Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany

[5.4] Testimonial: Lecturer, Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany

[5.5] Testimonial: Acting CEO, International Society for Music Education

[5.6] Testimonial: Professor of Music Education & Community Music, Free University of Bolzano, Italy

[5.7] Testimonial: Professor of Music Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

[5.8] Testimonial: Professor & Chair of the Department of Music Education and Music Therapy, University of Miami, USA

[5.9] Testimonial: Associate Professor of Music and Culture, University of Toronto, Canada

