

JOURNAL OF MUSIC, TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION (in press)

Title: The non-traditional music student in secondary schools of the United States: Engaging non-participant students in creative music activities through technology

Author: David Brian Williams, Illinois State University

Abstract

This article discusses the 'non-traditional music' (NTM) student in secondary education in the United States as a unique population of students who are 'non-participants' in traditional music ensembles. Through the use of current music technology, teachers are offering technology-based music classes (TBMCs) and are successfully engaging NTM students in performing, recording and composing. Eight attributes are proposed to characterize NTMs. An estimate of the non-participant music population and the validity of the proposed NTM attributes are examined through an analysis of anecdotal and empirical data from several extant studies. The results suggest that these attributes reasonably describe NTMs with some modification. NTMs are in the sixth through twelfth grades, do not typically participate in traditional performing ensembles, and most likely do not read standard music notation. More than 67 per cent of these students may play an instrument or sing, 28 per cent have an active music life outside of school, and many aspire to a career in music industry or performance. There is also evidence that TBMCs are motivationally beneficial to academic- and discipline-challenged students. Revisions to the set of attributes for NTMs are offered and suggestions for future research are proposed with special attention to parallels in music programmes internationally.