

141 (Re)Discovering the research on online music assessment: A systematic review

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Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Prior to COVID-19, studies indicated a limited use of education technology and online learning in music education across Australia. How music was taught and assessed online during, and after the pandemic pose potential solutions to known issues (i.e., sound quality, latency, technology skill requirements, etc.). In today's teaching environment post-COVID, tertiary music academics need a working-understanding of online music assessments and identification of their direct links to learning outcome achievement. Using Systematic Review, this project explored multiple databases to identify global online music assessment practices with primary focus at the higher education level. This presentation will address the key themes rising from the results of the systematic review --including challenges and opportunities Key recommendations for future research and recommendations for integrating online music assessments as sustainable practices will be considered.

Full paper

As we look to the future of higher education music teaching, online learning and its integral counterpart of online assessment have potential to be key pedagogical tools for continuing to enrich music teaching and learning by way of technology-enhanced learning experiences. It specifically addresses the sustainability challenge facing the conservatoire wherein "music will no longer be able to sustain its place in the curriculum in a world that sees technology as the elixir for international competitiveness" (Mantie, 2017, p. 24). Therefore, this Systematic Research investigated the topic of online music assessment to evidence the potential, as well as the limits, for integrating online music assessment into higher education music teaching.

Background

With the required shift to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many music instructors experienced online teaching for the first time, especially in Australia (Johnson & Cheok, 2021). Various technology challenges and curriculum planning issues were identified by those new, and not so new, to teaching music online (Cheng & Lam, 2021; Biasutti et al. 2021). However, rising above the challenges of the pandemic and emergency remote teaching, music academics also experienced positive teaching and learning outcomes to suggest online music learning allowed for improved performance feedback (Habe et al, 2021), increased student self-efficacy when submitting online performance assessments (Ritchie & Sharpe, 2021) and "important changes in approaches to rehearsal and time management, setting career goals, and establishing novel collaborative interactions with peers" (Schiavio et al., 2021, p. 175). With the field of online music learning increasing, it is timely to advance the corpus of research of online music assessment.

Scholars in the area of online music learning identify that the online music learning experience can better support music students with differentiated learning through the use of asynchronous and synchronous online learning tools (Pike, 2020). Further, it can decrease anxiety due to its flexible nature of access (Blackburn & McGrath 2021) and support "potential in online music education to leverage technologies more to decentralize the teacher, engage more of the learner, and adapt to the specific needs of each" (Johnson & Lamothe, 2018, p. 203). Overall, online music learning can use a Learning Management System (LMS) for presenting learning materials and resources, provide

asynchronous and synchronous music lessons (see King et al, 2019; Pike, 2020), upskill students' integral software towards their professional music career (Schiavio et al., 2021), support scaffolded curriculum resources (Johnson, 2022) and encourage novel activities for music student learning (Schiavio et al., 2021).

Together, these online music learning opportunities can activate constructivist and participatory learning experiences (Johnson, 2022; Keast, 2009). Yet, during the pandemic, some online music instructors refrained from teaching "pitch, resonance, pedal use fingering, embouchure and timing" (Vaizman, 2022, p. 161). Known research in online music teaching and learning needs to be located, and shared among researchers and practitioners. This builds upon Biasutti's 2015 call for "the effectiveness of the online tools, and resources needs to be tested, and the pedagogical and didactic approaches to the online learning activities need to be assessed" (p. 49). To date, there is still limited thorough investigation of the research surrounding online music assessments at the higher education level.

Therefore, a Systematic Review of the literature on online music assessment was completed. Three databases (i.e., JSTOR, ERIC and ProQuest) were used to identify research within the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The results indicated a limited amount of research in the discipline-specific topic (i.e., online music assessment in tertiary learning). Further, it suggests that we cannot assume that research conducted in other disciplines are not directly applicable to online music assessment. Finally, the results suggest that there are secondary items (i.e., research regarding online music assessments in middle and secondary schools, and informal online learning) that pose potential for further research and implications for online music assessments at the tertiary level. These areas will be explored in the presentation along with recommendations for future research. From the small amount of research within online music assessment located, we suggest that there is potential indication for it to contribute to the sustainability with higher education teaching and learning to promote accessibility, financial feasibility, and inclusive learning for all.

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