International Journal of Health and Music

Volume 1, Issue 1
July 2024

Exploring Confidence and Experience in Improvisation: Insights from Music Education Professionals

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Abstract

This study examines the role of improvisation in music education and the challenges of integrating it into collegiate-level courses. Despite its significance in music learning, improvisation is often overlooked in school curricula. The research reveals a gap between the importance of improvisation and its limited presence in music education beyond jazz. The case study focuses on undergraduate music education students and addresses key research questions related to professors' perspectives, challenges in providing improvisational experiences, current implementation, and possibilities for further integration. Five participants, who are music professors specializing in music education, performance, and entrepreneurship, were interviewed, and observed. Data analysis identified primary themes, including confidence and experience, value, relevance, and time constraints as the main challenges to integrating improvisation. Further research will shed light on professors' views and the incorporation of improvisation in collegiate music curricula.

Keywords: college, improvisation, music education, music major, undergraduate.

Abstract (Spanish)

Este estudio examina el papel de la improvisación en la educación musical y los desafíos de integrarla en cursos a nivel universitario. A pesar de su importancia en el aprendizaje musical, la improvisación suele pasarse por alto en los planes de estudio escolares. La investigación revela una brecha entre la importancia de la improvisación y su presencia limitada en la educación musical más allá del jazz. El estudio de caso se centra en estudiantes universitarios de educación musical y aborda preguntas clave de investigación relacionadas con las perspectivas de los profesores, los desafíos en brindar experiencias improvisativas, la implementación actual y las

posibilidades de una integración más amplia. Se entrevistó y observó a cinco participantes, quienes son profesores de música especializados en educación musical, interpretación y emprendimiento. El análisis de datos identificó temas principales, incluyendo confianza y experiencia, valor, relevancia y limitaciones de tiempo como los principales desafíos para integrar la improvisación. Investigaciones adicionales arrojarán luz sobre las opiniones de los profesores y la incorporación de la improvisación en los planes de estudio universitarios de música.

Palabras clave: universidad, improvisación, educación musical, estudiante universitario.

Exploring Confidence and Experience in Improvisation: Insights from Music Education Professionals

Improvisation plays a crucial role in the music learning process, providing a foundation for understanding and performing music. Snell & Azzara (2015) emphasized that students who learn to improvise can cultivate autonomy, mastery, and relatedness, which are essential for intrinsic motivation, musical self-expression, and creative collaboration. However, despite its significance in music-making, improvisation is often overlooked in modern school music curricula, particularly at the collegiate level (Azzara, 1999; Song, 2013). Many music education faculty and educators identify improvisation as the most challenging standard to incorporate into their teaching, revealing their least confidence in this area (Song, 2013). The lack of engagement in improvisatory activities has resulted in many students feeling hesitant about developing their improvisational skills (Azzara, 1999). Consequently, pre-service music educators may graduate without the necessary proficiency to teach improvisation effectively to their future students. The elementary classroom recognizes the importance of improvisation, but as students' progress, it becomes limited to jazz ensembles (Beckstead, 2013; Azzara, 1993). Jazz stands as one of the few genres where improvisation consistently features in music curricula, albeit constrained by its stylistic boundaries (Song, 2013; Hickey et al., 2016). Surprisingly, despite the wide variety of music styles and traditions that require some degree of improvisation, little effort has been made to incorporate improvisation as a teaching tool outside of the jazz genre (Palmer, 2014; Baker, 1980).

Bridging the Gap: Fostering Improvisation Skills in Higher Music Education for 21st Century Musicians and Educators

Integrating improvisation into higher education is essential to adequately prepare students for successful careers as performers and teachers in the 21st century (Palmer, 2014). While jazz instruction enjoys popularity, improvisation is not widely implemented beyond this genre, despite countless examples of improvised music in diverse contexts (Baker, 1980; Hickey, 2009). Research by Bernhard (2013) explored the confidence of undergraduate music education majors in teaching improvisation and found variations based on primary instrument area, with overall confidence levels ranging from "slight" to "moderate." The pre-service participants exhibited greater confidence in teaching improvisation standards at the elementary school level, followed by

middle school and high school (Bernhard, 2013). Despite advocacy and recognition of improvisation as a valid instructional technique, many music educators feel ill-prepared to teach it (Bernhard, 2013; Hickey et al., 2016). Limited exposure and practice during pre-service teacher training programs contribute to this deficiency, as most teachers are not trained as improvising musicians, making improvisation an ambiguous and unfamiliar concept (Ward-Steinman, 2007; West, 2011). Collaborations between collegiate faculty and field experience partners can increase the likelihood of integrating improvisation into the curriculum (Bernhard, 2013). Regular study and performance of improvisation lead to higher levels of confidence and performance awareness (Palmer, 2014), potentially encouraging undergraduate music education majors to incorporate improvisation pedagogy and activities into their teaching (Bernhard, 2013).

Enhancing Musicianship Through Improvisation: Empowering Students and Teachers in the Music-Making Process

Utilizing improvisation as a music learning tool offers a compelling motivation due to its capacity to immerse both teachers and students in the transformative process of music-making (Baker, 1980). This immersive experience enables participants to engage actively and personally with the creative aspects of music, leading to profound musical growth and development.

In a study conducted by Snell & Azzara (2015), collegiate students with limited improvisation experience underwent a seven-week improvisation course, resulting in significant improvements in their personal musicianship. These participants reported that improvisation not only strengthened their existing musical skills but also provided a platform for continuous improvement. By engaging in improvisation, they honed their performance abilities, expanded their listening skills, and deepened their overall musicianship, encompassing both notated and non-notated musical contexts (Snell & Azzara, 2015).

Furthermore, Della Pietra and Campbell (1995) conducted a study in which improvisation was successfully integrated into a secondary school music methods course. Through a combination of model-based instructional strategies, active listening, collaborative activities, performance opportunities, and thoughtful evaluation, students effectively learned the art of improvisation. This

comprehensive approach allowed them to develop their improvisational skills while enhancing their overall understanding of music.

The incorporation of improvisation in music education provides a dynamic and transformative experience for both students and teachers. It allows for a deeper connection with the expressive and creative aspects of music, fostering a sense of ownership and agency in the learning process. As students engage in improvisation, they develop a heightened sense of musicality, expand their technical abilities, and refine their listening skills, leading to a more holistic and enriched musicianship (Volz, 2005).

By embracing improvisation as a core component of music instruction, educators have the opportunity to empower their students to become expressive and confident musicians. Through active participation in improvisatory activities, students can explore and develop their unique musical voice, cultivating a deeper connection with their art form. Moreover, teachers themselves can benefit from incorporating improvisation into their pedagogical practices, experiencing firsthand the transformative power of musical spontaneity and creative collaboration.

In summary, the integration of improvisation as a music learning tool offers invaluable benefits to both students and teachers. It immerses them in the music-making process, enhances existing musical skills, and nurtures a deeper understanding and appreciation of music. Embracing improvisation in music education not only enriches students' musicianship but also empowers them to become lifelong learners and expressive artists.

Unlocking the Power of Improvisation in Music Education

The absence of specific guidelines from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) regarding the integration of improvisation in music curricula leaves each institution with the responsibility of charting their own path (Palmer, 2014). However, despite the challenges posed by the demands of modern music degree programs, successful integration of improvisation has been achieved in certain music education courses. One notable example is the "Integral Basic Musicianship" (IBM) course at the University of Michigan, which offers a hands-on, second-year alternative theory course for undergraduate music majors (Palmer, 2014). In addition to

improvisation, the IBM course incorporates composition, performance, keyboard realization, analysis, rhythmic training, and various approaches to aural skills, providing students with a comprehensive and immersive learning experience.

Students themselves express a strong desire for innovative approaches to learning improvisation that allow them to develop their skills in an integrative and holistic manner (Palmer, 2014). They emphasize the importance of opportunities to perform and apply conceptual learning through improvisation activities, as it creates a deeper and more meaningful learning experience. By engaging in improvisation, students constantly put their learning into practice, reinforcing theoretical concepts and fostering a deeper understanding of music (Palmer, 2014). This active and experiential approach accelerates and enhances the music learning process, allowing students to bridge the gap between musical analysis, performance, and creation.

Moreover, improvisation serves as an effective means of developing musicianship and enhancing overall musical skills. Research by Baker (1980) demonstrates that by creating situations where students can experience and utilize new information through improvisation, their musicianship is enriched. Improvisation not only improves performance and listening skills but also enhances musicianship both with and without notation (Snell & Azzara, 2015). It cultivates autonomy, mastery, and relatedness, essential factors for intrinsic motivation, musical self-expression, and creative collaboration (Snell & Azzara, 2015). Thus, improvisation offers a powerful tool to enhance the overall musical development of students.

To fully realize the potential of improvisation in music education, it is crucial to address the challenges faced by educators. Many music teachers feel ill-prepared to teach improvisation, as limited exposure and practice during pre-service training contribute to a lack of familiarity with improvisation as a concept. Collaborations between collegiate faculty and field experience partners can play a vital role in increasing the likelihood of integrating improvisation into the curriculum. By providing opportunities for regular study and performance of improvisation, undergraduate music education majors can gain higher levels of confidence and performance awareness, encouraging them to incorporate improvisation pedagogy and activities into their future teaching.

In conclusion, integrating improvisation into music education is a transformative step that can unlock the full potential of students' musical development. The absence of specific guidelines should not deter institutions from exploring innovative approaches, as demonstrated by successful examples like the IBM course at the University of Michigan. By embracing improvisation, students can deepen their understanding of music, enhance their musicianship, and foster intrinsic motivation and creative collaboration. It is essential for educators and institutions to prioritize the incorporation of improvisation into the curriculum, equipping future music professionals with the necessary skills for successful careers in the 21st century.

Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating Improvisation in Collegiate Music Education Curricula

Current research highlights a significant gap between the recognized importance of improvisation in music education and its limited presence in curricula outside the jazz genre. This study aims to investigate the challenges associated with incorporating improvisational experiences into collegiate-level performance and academic courses for undergraduate music education students. The research questions addressed are:

- How do collegiate professors perceive the role of improvisation in music education?
- What are the challenges encountered in providing and integrating improvisational experiences in collegiate music curricula?
- How is improvisation currently integrated into existing music curricula?
- What additional strategies can be implemented to enhance the integration of improvisation in music education?

By exploring these questions, this study seeks to shed light on the current state of improvisation in collegiate music education and identify potential avenues for its further integration and enhancement.

Methodology

The participants for this study were selected using maximum variation sampling to ensure a diverse range of perspectives (Mertler, 2021). Five participants were chosen from an R1 university with a four-year music program. We contacted the participants via email, and all of them currently teach music at the collegiate level. The participants were selected based on their specialization in one of the following areas: music education, music performance, or music entrepreneurship. To avoid potential bias, three participants specialized in music education, while one specialized in music performance and the other in music entrepreneurship. Additionally, all participants held a rank of assistant professor or higher.

A case study research design was employed to gain in-depth knowledge about the challenges of providing and integrating improvisational experiences for undergraduate music education students (Mertler, 2021). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect narrative data, allowing for specific research questions to be addressed and follow-up questions to be asked based on participants' responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each participant was interviewed once, and the interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews were recorded using a handheld device, and observation notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and additional details. Syllabi of the courses taught by each participant were also examined to gain insights into the current incorporation of improvisation in undergraduate music education courses.

Prior to the interviews, the interview questions were reviewed and revised based on feedback from peer-researchers. The interviews were then conducted, recorded, and transcribed verbatim (Mertler, 2021). Observation notes were transcribed as well, providing a more comprehensive account of the interview process. The interviews were completed within a four-week timeframe. To ensure trustworthiness, member checking was employed, allowing participants to review the accuracy of the research report and interpretations of the transcripts. Reflexivity was used to document and evaluate any personal interpretations, assumptions, or biases, and an external audit was conducted to review the final report, enhancing the validity of the data and findings (Mertler, 2021).

The interview transcripts, along with the observation notes, were analyzed using thematic analysis (Mertler, 2021). The analysis began with open coding to identify various interpretations of the data. Axial coding was then performed to group common ideas together, and finally, a thematic process was employed to organize quotes, phrases, and words into primary themes. Redundancies and irrelevant codes were eliminated, resulting in a refined set of themes that informed the narrative discussion and conclusions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A thorough re-reading of the data was conducted to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Findings

- Participants had varying levels of experience with improvisation.
- Lack of formal training and instruction in improvisation was common among participants.
- Participants recognized the value of improvisation but highlighted challenges in its implementation.
- Relevance and time constraints were identified as key factors in integrating improvisation into music education.
- Incorporating improvisation was seen as a natural fit in certain courses and contexts.
- The importance of student ability and the need for further development were emphasized.

After analyzing the data, we structured the findings into four key themes: (1) Confidence and Experience, (2) Value, (3) Relevance and Time Constraints, and (4) Perceived Student Ability.

Confidence & Experience

The participants had varying levels of experience with improvisation. Music education professors, like Dr. Williams, considered improvisation a weaker aspect of their musicianship. However, they felt more comfortable with basic elements of improvisation, particularly within the context of solfege. Their formal training in improvisation was limited to the jazz idiom, such as participating in high school jazz bands with minimal instruction. Dr. Smith, the only participant

who sought professional development in improvisation, received formal training in Chris Azzara's approach. While he currently teaches only the beginning level of improvisation, he recognizes the need for further learning to teach beyond that level. Most music educators conceive improvisation as mysterious and often associate it with jazz, leading to a lack of understanding and engagement. This lack of understanding translates to students having negative experiences when asked to improvise without proper support, making them hesitant to engage with improvisation. Dr. Johnson, despite being a music performance faculty member, had little experience with improvisation until college. It was after college, while playing the steel drums professionally, that he learned in an informal setting from a skilled peer musician. This informal period of learning enhanced his improvisation skills and enabled him to incorporate improvisation into his teaching. In contrast, Dr. Baker, due to his unique musical upbringing, is highly familiar with improvisation. He received informal lessons from his father, who acted more as a coach than a traditional music teacher. Through specific assignments and constant musical engagement, Dr. Baker developed his improvisational skills and considers improvisation an integral part of his musicianship. As a result, he has a high level of confidence in teaching improvisational concepts in various settings.

Value

During the interview process, participants expressed a common concern regarding the perceived value of certain aspects of music education, particularly improvisation. Dr. Williams highlighted the challenge of instilling a value for improvisation in students and ensuring its integration into their teaching practice. Dr. Johnson, on the other hand, believed that improvisation could be integrated into various aspects of courses and performances to create value without the need for separate classes. Both Dr. Miller and Dr. Baker emphasized the value of improvisation, albeit from different perspectives. Dr. Baker viewed it as an essential skill for professional musicians, enabling them to seize opportunities, while Dr. Miller saw it as a valuable tool for students to demonstrate deeper understanding and creativity. Dr. Miller further emphasized the importance of fostering creativity and ownership in the music classroom through improvisation, providing a unique and enriching musical experience. These perspectives collectively underscore the value of improvisation in music education as a means of fostering creativity, self-expression, and musical understanding.

Relevance & Time Constraints

Throughout the interviews, the participants emphasized the importance of relevance in music education. Dr. Smith highlighted the shift towards relying on printed material in the industry, which has limited the exercise of creativity and the development of a well-rounded sense of musicianship. Dr. Williams noted the lack of focus on improvisation in collegiate-level music education, which is still traditionally associated with jazz. However, perspectives are shifting, and Dr. Johnson acknowledged the relevance of improvisation beyond jazz musicians.

A specific finding that hinders the relevance of improvisation is the isolated context in which specific musical skills are taught, leading students to perceive them as unrelated to the real world. Efforts to incorporate improvisation in such contexts can be seen as token and undermine its relevance to students.

The participants recognized that incorporating improvisation into existing classes would be a more natural fit in some cases. Dr. Smith suggested that beginning instrumental instruction could be a potential starting point due to the low-level expertise required. Dr. Miller identified courses like elementary methods, secondary method classes, or woodwind skills classes as more suitable for tackling improvisation because they involve transferable skills applicable to K-12 classrooms. These classes provide students with initial tools and awareness of the possibilities of improvisation.

The relevance of improvisation seemed more prevalent in classes focused on creativity or performance. Dr. Baker and Dr. Johnson both discussed incorporating improvisation into their respective classes. Dr. Baker utilized improvisation in digital musicianship and production courses to explore other musical cultures and develop original material. Dr. Johnson emphasized the importance of becoming a "true world musician" by incorporating improvisation into his curriculum and exposing students to diverse musical contexts.

The participants, particularly the music education participants, recognized the challenges of integrating improvisation into curricula and providing improvisational experiences. They acknowledged the need for change but also highlighted the difficulty of determining where to start

and what existing components to modify or eliminate. Time constraints and the pressure to streamline music programs further complicate the inclusion of improvisation and other essential skills. The participants acknowledged the impossibility of covering everything within the limited timeframe of undergraduate programs.

Overall, the discussions centered around the importance of relevance in integrating improvisation into music education, addressing challenges related to curriculum structure, time constraints, and the need for pedagogical adaptability.

Perceived Student Ability

There was a consensus among the participants that the perceived ability of students to improvise was generally low. Dr. Smith expressed the opinion most directly, stating that "ninety-nine percent of them have no idea how to do it at all," while others were more tactful in their wording. Dr. Johnson acknowledged that students have made some initial attempts at improvisation but stated that they are not fully prepared. All participants agreed that students would need to actively pursue further development to acquire the necessary pedagogical understanding to teach improvisation. According to Dr. Williams, students receive some introductions to improvisation, but the development of these skills would be an ongoing process. Dr. Miller noted that the level of development required would depend on the level at which students are teaching. It is relatively easier for students teaching at the elementary level because they start with the basics, but as one progresses to the secondary level and beyond, the level of skill and expertise needed increases.

Discussion

Despite the participants' limited formal instruction in improvisation, they recognized its value in demonstrating greater understanding (Azzara, 1999) and advocated for its inclusion in music curricula at both K-12 and collegiate levels. However, the interviews revealed that the participants lacked sequential and comprehensive improvisation techniques that could be confidently integrated into existing curricula (Bernhard, 2013; Hickey et al., 2016). Within their university positions, improvisation was implemented as a peripheral skill dependent on individual

professors and course contexts. This aligns with the participants' musical backgrounds, which had limited or no improvisation experience. Integrating an unfamiliar musical process without clear pedagogical approaches proves challenging, despite calls for creating music opportunities in curricula (Bernhard, 2013; Hickey et al., 2016).

Based on the interviews, the primary challenges in providing and integrating improvisational opportunities lie in the lack of experience and confidence in improvisation pedagogy. At a deeper level, these challenges stem from educators' perceptions of valuable and relevant musical skills in music education, alongside time constraints in higher education. With the exception of Dr. Baker, the participants shared similar musical backgrounds with limited improvisation exposure, both prior to and during their undergraduate studies. This creates a "chicken or the egg situation," as described by Dr. Williams and Dr. Smith. If students lack improvisational experience upon entering a music education program and are not exposed to meaningful improvisation during their undergraduate education, they may struggle to effectively implement improvisation activities in K-12 classrooms. This cyclical effect perpetuates a lack of confidence and experience among music educators in integrating improvisation into curricula.

Gains of the Study on Improvisation in Music Education

- In-Depth Insights: The study provides in-depth insights into the perspectives of music educators regarding the integration of improvisation in their curricula. It offers a comprehensive understanding of their experiences, challenges, and motivations related to improvisation instruction.

- Identification of Challenges: The study highlights the challenges faced by music educators in integrating improvisation into their curricula, such as limited experience and confidence in teaching improvisation, lack of clear pedagogical approaches, and the cyclical effect of students entering music education programs without prior improvisational experience.

- Recognition of Value: The study emphasizes the recognition and acknowledgment of the value of improvisation by music educators. Despite the challenges, the participants expressed the

importance of incorporating improvisation into music curricula and its potential for enhancing students' musical understanding and skills.

- Call for Pedagogical Approaches: The study underscores the need for pedagogical approaches and techniques that can support music educators in confidently integrating improvisation into their curricula. It highlights the importance of sequential and comprehensive improvisation instruction to empower educators in implementing improvisation activities effectively.

- Motivation for Future Research: The study serves as a motivation for future research on improvisation in music education. It identifies areas for further investigation, such as documenting successful approaches of collegiate music programs that have integrated improvisation or exploring the perspectives of students and other stakeholders in music education.

- Contribution to the Field: The study contributes to the existing body of literature on improvisation in music education by adding new insights and perspectives. It provides a foundation for dialogue and discussion among music educators, researchers, and policymakers on the significance and potential strategies for incorporating improvisation in music curricula.

Overall, the study offers valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of music educators regarding improvisation in music education, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and informing future efforts to promote improvisation instruction in music curricula.

Pedagogical Implications of Improvisation in Music Education: Fostering Creativity, Musical Fluency, and Self-Expression

Based on the discussions throughout this text, there are several pedagogical implications for music education professionals in relation to improvisation.

- Recognize the value of improvisation: Music education professionals should understand and acknowledge the importance of improvisation as a valuable musical skill and a means for developing greater understanding and musicianship.

- Advocate for the inclusion of improvisation: Music education professionals should advocate for the integration of improvisation within music curricula at all levels, including K-12 and collegiate settings. Emphasize the benefits of improvisation in fostering creativity, expression, and musical exploration.

- Develop improvisation pedagogical approaches: It is essential for music education professionals to develop and incorporate sequential, comprehensive improvisation techniques into their teaching. This requires gaining knowledge and confidence in improvisation pedagogy and seeking professional development opportunities to enhance their own improvisational skills.

- Provide meaningful improvisation experiences: Create opportunities for students to engage in improvisation in a meaningful and structured way. Design activities and exercises that allow students to explore and develop their improvisational skills, fostering creativity, self-expression, and musical fluency.

- Integrate improvisation across the curriculum: Incorporate improvisation not only in dedicated improvisation courses but also across various music subjects and ensembles. Embed improvisation within music theory, composition, ensemble rehearsals, and performance settings to promote a holistic approach to musical learning.

- Address the challenges: Recognize and address the challenges associated with integrating improvisation within music curricula. This includes providing support and resources for music educators to develop their improvisation skills, overcoming personal barriers or limited experience, and finding ways to overcome time constraints and curriculum demands.

- Foster a supportive learning environment: Create a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel encouraged to take risks, explore, and experiment with improvisation. Encourage collaboration and peer feedback, allowing students to learn from and inspire each other in their improvisational journeys.

By considering these pedagogical implications, music education professionals can contribute to a more comprehensive and well-rounded music education that incorporates improvisation as an integral part of students' musical development.

Limitations of the Study on Improvisation in Music Education

- Small Sample Size: The study was based on interviews with only five participants. The findings may not be generalizable to a larger population of music educators or music education programs.

- Lack of Diversity: The participants in the study shared similar musical backgrounds, which may limit the range of perspectives and experiences represented. The findings may not fully capture the perspectives of educators with different musical training or cultural backgrounds.

- Self-Reported Data: The study relied on self-reported data from the participants, which may be subject to biases or inaccuracies. The participants' perceptions and experiences may not align perfectly with their actual practices or beliefs.

- Single Method of Data Collection: The study primarily used interviews as the sole method of data collection. This approach may have limitations in capturing the full complexity of improvisation in music education. Supplementing interviews with other methods, such as observations or document analysis, could provide a more comprehensive understanding.

- Limited Scope of Investigation: The study focused specifically on the views and experiences of music educators regarding improvisation in their curricula. It did not explore the perspectives of students or other stakeholders in music education. A broader examination including multiple perspectives could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

- Time Constraints: The study did not explore the time constraints faced by music educators in integrating improvisation into their curricula. Considering the challenges of limited instructional time in educational settings could provide further insights into the feasibility and implementation of improvisation activities.

It is important to acknowledge these limitations to ensure a nuanced interpretation of the findings and to identify areas for future research to address these gaps.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research is recommended to delve deeper into how collegiate professors perceive improvisation and how it is implemented within music curricula at the collegiate level. Conducting similar studies with participants from different collegiate music education programs would provide a broader understanding of the topic. It would be valuable to explore the experiences and perspectives of professors who have successfully integrated improvisation into their curricula.

Additionally, future research could focus on documenting the approaches of a collegiate music program that has effectively integrated improvisation. This case study approach would provide valuable insights into the strategies, pedagogical approaches, and challenges faced by the program in incorporating improvisation. It could serve as a model for other institutions seeking to integrate improvisation into their music curricula.

By expanding the scope of research to include multiple programs and examining successful implementation cases, a more comprehensive understanding of improvisation in collegiate music education can be gained. This would contribute to the development of best practices and pedagogical approaches for integrating improvisation into music curricula, ultimately benefiting both students and educators in their musical growth and understanding.

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