

Being together in music: Promoting digital well-being in schools

Simon Gilbertson, Dr. rer. medic.

The Grieg Academy – Department of Music

Faculty of Fine Arts, Music and Design

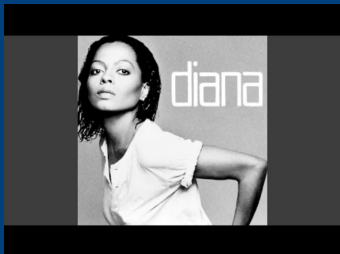
University of Bergen

Norway



Being together in music: Promoting digital well-being in schools

Audio example: Diana Ross "I'm coming out"



Simon Gilbertson, Dr. rer. medic.

The Grieg Academy – Department of Music

Faculty of Fine Arts, Music and Design

University of Bergen

Norway



Being together in music: Promoting digital well-being in schools

Simon Gilbertson, Dr. rer. medic.

The Grieg Academy – Department of Music

Faculty of Fine Arts, Music and Design

University of Bergen

Norway



The topic “Being together in music”
is cool because it is complex



Being together:

Some values for *Authentic Relational Growth* for students and teachers and the promotion of collective well-being through music

- *A commitment to the “in/audible”* – a commitment to explore the obvious and the hidden
- The spectrum of *autonomic choice* versus the *impression of choice* within a group
- The spectrum of the *inescapability of exclusion* and the need to examine *repertoires of inclusion*
- Collective well-being involves an *evaluation of relative injustices due to concurrent needs and demands, limited resources and political priorities versus individual needs*
- The teacher’s and students’ bodies are sites of *sensorial witnessing*



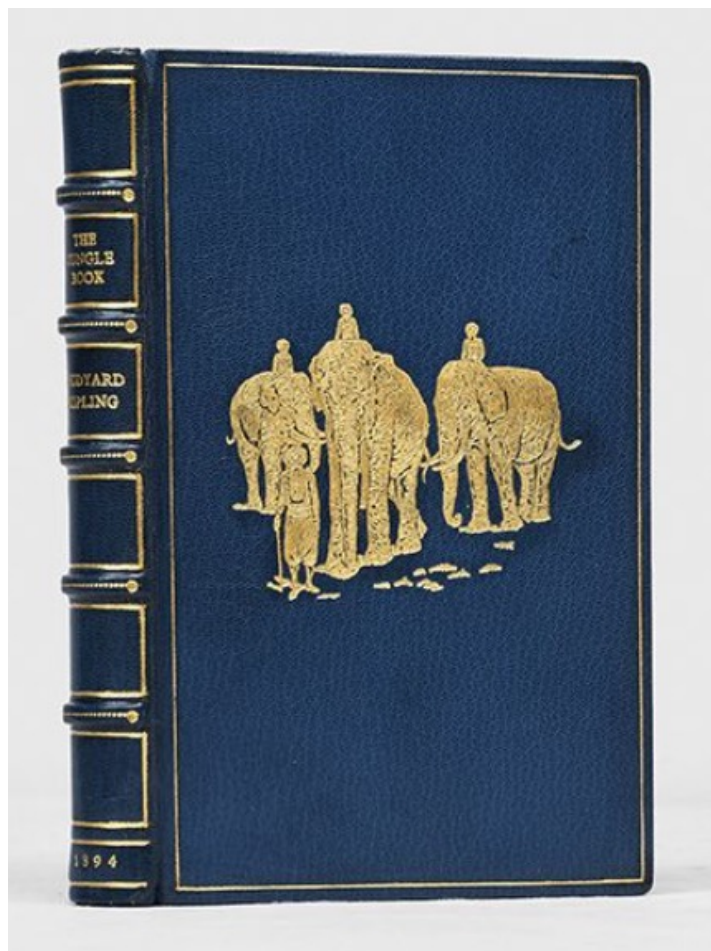
We will move through 4 steps to get a little closer to this complexity



Step 1

Places of education can be understood as material ecologies in which central, peripheral, and social nervous systems develop and change.





Rudyard Kipling: The Jungle book
First published in 1894



<https://www.peterharrington.co.uk>

“He grew up with the cubs, though they, of course, were grown wolves almost before he was a child, and Father Wolf taught him his business, and the meaning of things in the Jungle, till every rustle in the grass, every breath of the warm night air, every note of the owls above his head, every scratch of a bat’s claws as it roosted for a while in a tree, and every splash of every little fish jumping in a pool, meant just as much to him as the work of his office means to a business man.”

(R. Kipling, 1894, p.20).

Extract from Kipling’s description of Mowgli's pedagogic context



“He grew up with the cubs, though they, of course, were grown wolves almost before he was a child, and Father Wolf taught him his business, and **the meaning of things** in the Jungle, till every **rustle** in the grass, every **breath** of the warm night air, every **note** of the owls above his head, every **scratch** of a bat’s claws as it roosted for a while in a tree, and every **splash** of every little fish jumping in a pool, meant just as much to him as the work of his office means to a business man.”

(R. Kipling, 1894, p.20).

Mowgli’s pedagogic context highlights the musical and sound elements in his ecology



“He grew up with the cubs, though they, of course, were grown wolves almost before he was a child, and Father Wolf taught him his business, and **the meaning of things** in the Jungle, till **every** rustle in the grass, **every** breath of the warm night air, **every** note of the owls above his head, **every** scratch of a bat’s claws as it roosted for a while in a tree, and **every** splash of every little fish jumping in a pool, meant just as much to him as the work of his office means to a business man.”

(R. Kipling, 1894, p.20).

Mowgli’s pedagogic context highlights the importance of acknowledging the entire range (or **diversity**) of the musical and sound elements in his ecology

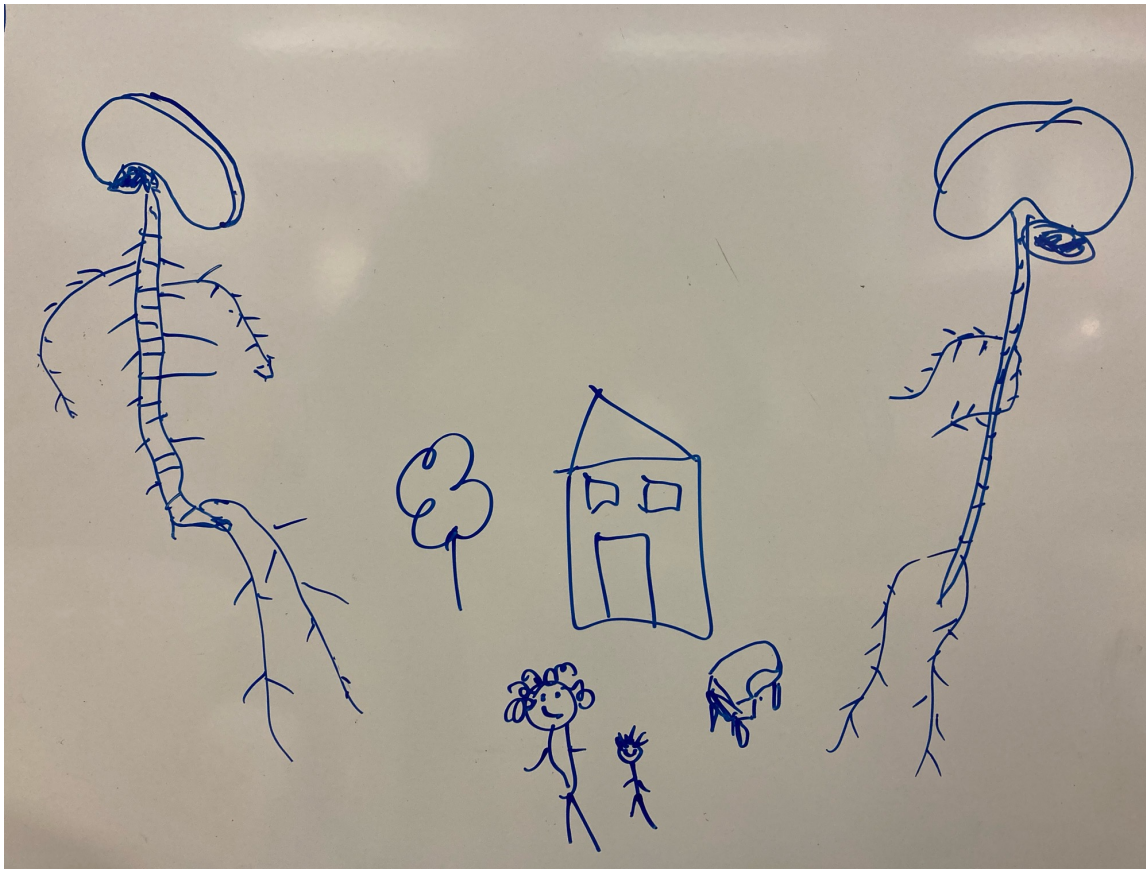


Let's draw together in groups of 4 or 5

“Places of education can be understood as material ecologies in which central, peripheral, and social nervous systems develop and change.”



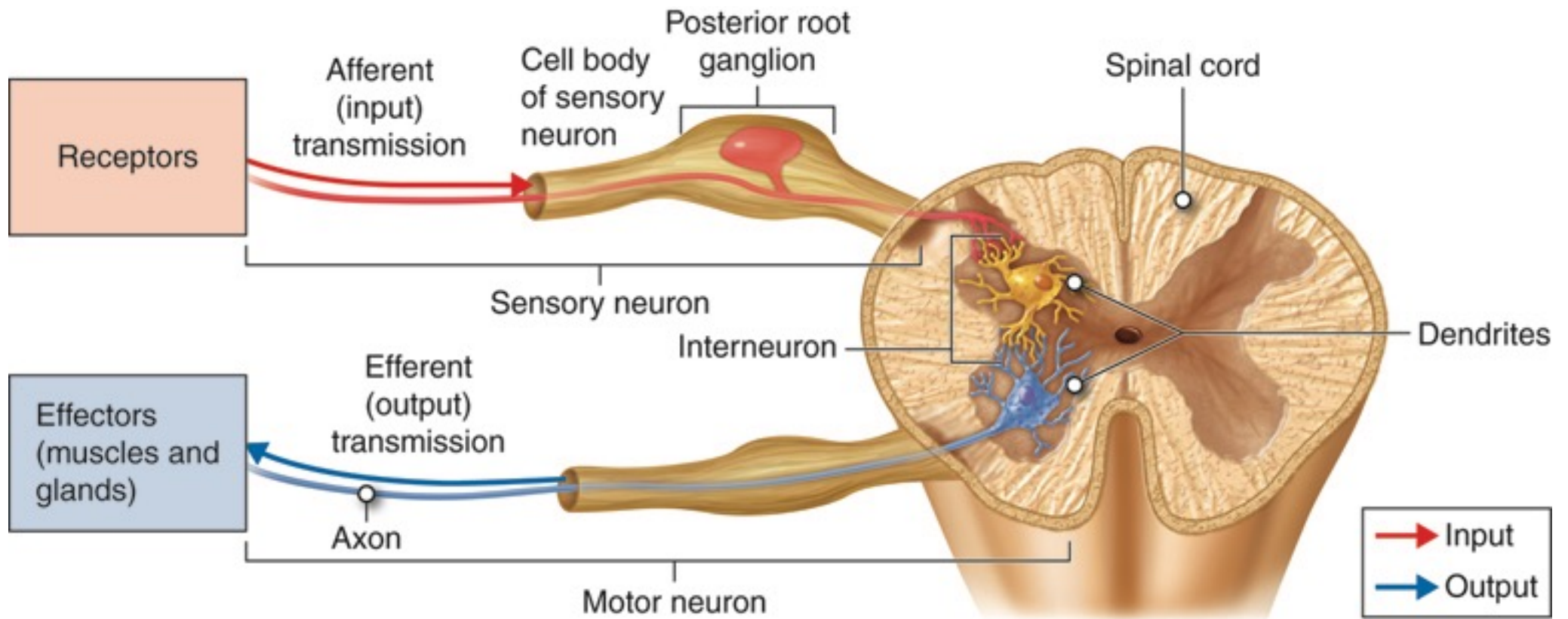
A learning ecology that acknowledges the central, peripheral and social nervous systems and the objects and infrastructures

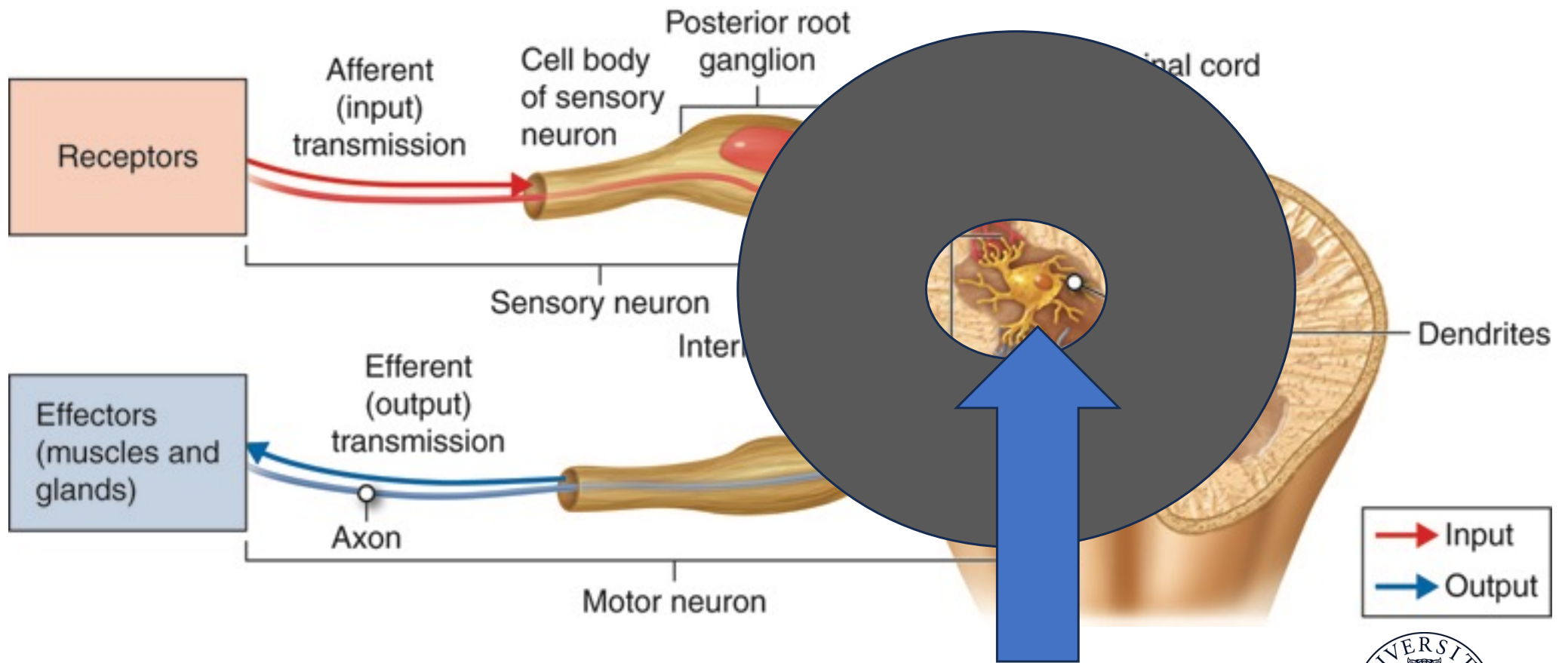


An example of how the physical nervous system is interlink with the social nervous system

- There are physical peripheral nervous system elements that provide models for the digital world of music making
- The central nervous system is not involved
- Sensory input is led directly to output nerves in the motor system







Zooming in on one element of this figure



This cell is like an analogue-digital music interface



INTERNEURON



When considering a digital system that includes well-being it is essential to become clear about the relationship between the analogue (human) system and the digital (technology) system, or in less words:



The Digital needs something Sensible



For digital well-being we all need to experience coherent alignments...

... between the physics and physicality of an analogue sound and its digital “twin”

- material properties
- dynamic forms of vitality (Daniel Stern, 2010)
- what does my body have to do to create a sound like that?
- What has somebody else’s body done to create that sound?

... between trans-modal “twinning”

- these can be between senses (like in synesthesia)
- or between audible sounds and inaudible ideas



Experiencing incoherence

- A major part of music-related digital well-being is the capacity for creatively coping and improvising with uncertainty and irregularity, prediction and re-description (Andy Clark, 2023 “The Experience Machine”)
- We should design surprising and uncommon music-based experiences
- Chaos theory is very useful in understanding the spectrum of prediction and non-linear processes and psychological well-being (Susan Ayres, 1997)



Step 2

Personal music biographies combine diverse music heritages within shared multi-sensory environments.



An example of dancing to the audio example we heard at the beginning of the session by Diana Ross



There are many different contexts in which music has cross-modal counterparts and diverse music heritages

Some people claim there are 47 senses including:

- Equilibrioception (sense of balance)
 - Proprioception (knowing about body position)
 - Kinaesthesia (sense of movement)
 - Thermoception (sense of temperature)
 - Nociception (ability to feel pain)
 - Chronoception (sense the passing of time)?
-
- And these senses can be explored when creating designing digital well-being with music in the classroom



Students' and teachers' music: Take care

Personal music “possessions” that transverse the physical and digital domains

Serious importance of the storage of artistic and emotionally valuable possessions

Need to learn about rights and legal aspects of sharing and social media within European law and National law for all age groups



Let's add some more *stickies*

In which ways can students share and curate (look after and present) their music heritage and what is important to think about in...:

- 1) a physical classroom
- 2) a hybrid classroom (a single classroom that has physical and digital resources)
- 3) digitally-twinning classrooms between schools at distance?



Step 3

Analogue and digital music practices that can promote well-being for students and their teachers within educational settings



A radical and not ubiquitously applicable statement:

“the music you consume is entirely within your control”

<https://www.susanngatia.africa/p/the-power-of-music-in-a-digital-age>



Music industry

Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon

Bluetooth, headphones and speakers, music apps

Sports accessories: Fitbit, Garmin

Healthcare industry: Music as a non-pharmacological treatment

Mental health, stress, isolation, depression, anxiety, lower blood pressure, reduce brain fog, affect cognitive function, improve rest and sleep

Personalized music and health technologies

Performance research, AI and sensor-to-experience possibilities, generative music and biometrics, responsive soundscapes



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/frankfitzpatrick/2021/08/25/could-music-be-a-game-changer-for-the-future-of-digital-health/>

Local co-creation, add some more stickies

Within your **local** setting:

Which digital music practices are you involved in/know about/could imagine, that aim to promote well-being for 1) students and 2) teachers?



Step 4: *Resources that offer co-creative possibilities between schools*

(Whether they are just down the road or in countries that are far away and distant from each other. Or even to use in the same classroom)

Example: Soundtrap



Add more stickies:

Tell each other if you use resources that offer co-creative possibilities between schools

- Which co-creative between-school opportunities do you use?
- Which co-creative between-school opportunities would you like to access?



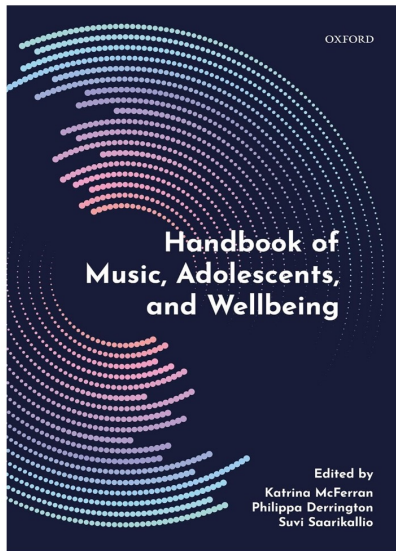
An important example of distance co-creative music software: <https://www.soundtrap.com/edu/>

- A cloud-based online co-creative music creation platform
- Web-based multi-track recording with multiple concurrent users
- Use of pre-recorded loops
- Live video call or live messaging all in the platform
- Safe-classroom technology
- Class administration for exercises and curricula activities
- Lesson plans available
- GDPR compliant within Europe
- See link for further information regarding Privacy policies:
<https://www.soundtrap.com/legal/trust-center>

N.B. I am not sponsored by Soundtrap in any way, but the software was invaluable for our educational work at the University of Bergen and continues to be relevant for our study program in subjects that require all of the properties mentioned above. The platform is also an excellent example of software that can support eTwinning.

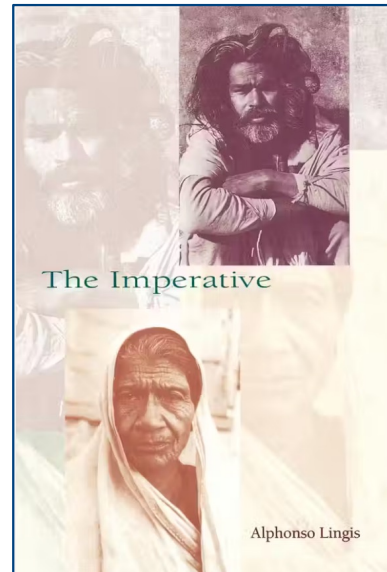


Further reading



“The *Handbook of Music, Adolescents, and Wellbeing* explores how young people use music to work with emotions, identity construction, and connectedness, drawing on perspectives from music therapy, music psychology, music education, and music sociology.”

<https://academic.oup.com/book/34960>



“In this provocative book, Alphonso Lingis argues that not only our thought is governed by an imperative, as Kant had maintained, but, rather, our sensual, sensing, perceiving, and emotional life is continually regulated by imperatives that come to us from the world around us. Through a series of phenomenological sketches drawn from life experiences, Lingis shows that there are directives in the natural world and in our interactions with others that govern our thought and behavior.”

<https://iupress.org/9780253212313/the-imperative/>





simon.gilbertson@uib.no