

Teacher Education in the Arts in Ontario: An Environmental Scan of Current Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts Courses for Generalist and Specialist Teacher Candidates

Analyse contextuelle de la formation en danse, art dramatique, musique et arts visuels offerte aux futurs enseignants généralistes et spécialistes en Ontario

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Abstract: This study is an environmental scan of teacher education in the arts (dance, drama, music, and visual arts) in Ontario for generalist and specialist teacher candidates in the current four-term (i.e., two-year) degree. Data reveal high variability across institutions. The arts may be taught to generalists as standalone subjects, combined with other arts subjects, or integrated with non-arts subjects, in courses ranging from 18 to 72 hours total. Several institutions offer no or only one teachable subject option in the arts for specialists. This research holds significance as teacher education programs in Ontario imminently reconfigure to a 12-month program as mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Keywords: *teacher education in Ontario, teacher education in the arts, environmental scan*

Resumé : Cette étude propose une analyse contextuelle de la formation à l'enseignement des arts (danse, art dramatique, musique et arts visuels) donnée aux futurs enseignants généralistes et spécialistes dans le programme actuel de quatre trimestres (soit deux ans). Les données montrent de grandes disparités entre les établissements. Chaque discipline peut être enseignée seule, combinée à d'autres disciplines artistiques ou intégrée à des matières non artistiques dans une formation d'une durée de 18 à 72 heures. Plusieurs établissements n'offrent qu'une seule ou aucune matière artistique aux spécialistes. Cette recherche tombe à point étant donné que les programmes de formation à l'enseignement de l'Ontario s'apprêtent à adopter un modèle sur 12 mois prescrit par le ministère.

Mots-clés : *formation des enseignants en Ontario, formation postsecondaire en arts, analyse contextuelle*

In 2015, the Government of Ontario, Canada, mandated a four-term degree program for Initial Teacher Education (ITE). The government's rationale for making the change from a typically one-year to a two-year program was to provide "enhanced" preparation for teachers (Government of Ontario, 2013, para. 2), and to bring Ontario into alignment with most other jurisdictions, national and international, where teacher education was already two years—though a major economic motivation for the change was the "oversupply" of teachers entering the profession at that time (Government of Ontario, 2013, para. 4). Just over a decade later, on April 10, 2026, the Ontario Ministry of Education announced sweeping proposed changes to the Education Act, including reverting to a one-year program of accelerated teacher training—three consecutive terms over twelve months, instead of the previous four terms (usually over two years). This imminent change, due to take effect in May 2027, is again largely being driven by an economic rationale: the purported current teacher shortage (Jones, 2026).

As we consider the theme posed by this *Canadian Music Educator/Musicien éducateur au Canada* special issue—"exploring new approaches to music teaching and learning"—Ontario teacher education is about to undergo a seismic change. The long-term programmatic effects on teacher education in the arts (dance, drama, music, and visual arts) as a result of the 2015 reconfiguring of Initial Teacher Education has yet to be researched substantively (see Berg, 2024; Kitchen & Petrarca, 2017, 2022; Sefton & Sirek, 2026). This study provides a detailed account of the various ways in which each publicly funded Ontario English-language ITE program is providing arts education in the current four-term teacher education degree. The data for this research study were collected, collated, and analyzed over the past four years, as part of a larger SSHRC-funded research project on teacher education in the arts in Ontario. In the larger project, we explored the experiences of teacher candidates, in-service teachers, and teacher educators in the arts, gaining insight into teacher education in dance, drama, music, and visual arts in

Ontario (Sefton & Sirek, 2026; Sirek & Sefton 2023, 2024). The environmental scan in this study provides the institutional context of regulatory and structural affordances and limitations within teacher education.

Initial Teacher Education in Ontario

In Ontario, ITE is completed in addition to an undergraduate degree. Teacher education students, often referred to as teacher candidates, usually take between 8 and 12 courses per semester in both foundational courses and subject-area courses. Upon completion, graduates may register to be certified by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) to teach in publicly funded schools. Teacher candidates are prepared to teach as *generalist* and/or as *specialist* teachers. They enroll in one of three divisions: Primary/Junior, Junior/Intermediate, or Intermediate/Senior. Primary/Junior (P/J) prepares teacher candidates to teach grades K–6 as *generalist* teachers (i.e., responsible for teaching some or all subjects to elementary grade levels); Junior/Intermediate (J/I) prepares teacher candidates to teach grades 4–6 as *generalists* and grades 7–10 as *specialists* with one teachable subject; and Intermediate/Senior (I/S) prepares teacher candidates to teach grades 7–12 as *specialists* with two teachable subjects.

English-language ITE in Ontario is offered at 13 publicly funded universities. ITE programs are professional programs that are accredited by the OCT, a regulatory body of the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ontario College of Teachers, 2022). The OCT exerts oversight and supervision of ITE programs, including course offerings and graduate expectations, as determined by provincial legislation (Government of Ontario, 1996); however, programs across the 13 universities are not standardized. Each ITE program is different in its composition of courses and content based on local priorities and contexts. As universities in Ontario are governed by the principle of academic freedom, professors determine instructional materials and pedagogical approaches in order to fulfill senate-approved course objectives and program requirements. Program requirements may change over time for a number of reasons: to fulfill obligations for OCT re-accreditation; to respond to directives from the Government of Ontario (such as the mandate to return to the one-year program); to implement anti-oppression education and mental health initiatives; to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action and address intergenerational harms to Indigenous Peoples caused by residential schools (TRC, 2015); to respond to perceived student needs (Government of Ontario, 2024); to increase the focus on literacy and numeracy (Chi, 2026; Correa, 2020); or to add components such as experiential learning, service learning, or research capstone projects.

In addition to the above variables, there are political, institutional, social, and economic challenges facing teacher education in Ontario and across Canada, impacting how content and pedagogy is enacted in the arts in teacher education (Sefton, 2022). Multiple Canadian researchers have pointed to gaps in the general content knowledge of teacher candidates; a lack of teaching skills,

training, and observation; insufficient time; a lack of confidence and performance anxiety; and limited access to professional development in the arts (Ball et al., 2022; Lawton, 2023; MacAfee & Comeau, 2023; Sefton & Sirek, 2020; Sirek & Sefton, 2023, 2024). Finding practicum placements in the arts for teacher candidates has also posed a challenge, as many in-service teachers are not willing to oversee teacher candidates for practicum placements (Sirek & Sefton, 2024; Van Nuland et al., 2020), and the number of arts specialists in schools continues to be reduced in Ontario due to multiple factors including hiring practices and teacher shortages (Denley, 2020; McIntyre, 2021; Ontario College of Teachers, 2021; People for Education, 2018, 2024).

Research Purpose and Questions

Our research purpose is to identify how the arts are included at each of the 13 publicly funded English-language ITE programs in Ontario for generalist and specialist teacher candidates (e.g., course requirements, credit hours, program structure, course typology). Research questions include:

1. What courses are currently being taught (course name)?
2. To whom are the courses offered (division)?
3. Which arts courses are required, and which, if any, are elective?
4. How many contact hours are there (comparison across institutions)?
5. What are the typologies of courses within the program (e.g., standalone, combined with other arts courses, integrated with non-arts courses)?

Methodological Approach

To answer the above research questions, we drew from a positivist, empirical theoretical framework that assumes knowledge as objectively observable and measurable, and conducted an environmental scan. Environmental scan is a research method that was developed in the late 1960s. It has been widely used in business (e.g., Albright, 2004; Choo, 2001) and health care (e.g., Aslakson et al., 2014; Devlin, 2020; Rowel et al., 2005). It functions as a process and a tool to gather and catalogue information in the public domain, and provides an overview of current practices, cultures, and protocols of different work environments (Aguilar, 1967; Choo, 2001; Shahid & Turin, 2018). In this sense, it functions not only as a data collection strategy but also as a form of knowledge production that captures real-time, practice-based configurations. Environmental scan allows researchers to better contextualize and narrow their research, as it can be used to analyze an organization's data from both an internal and an external standpoint (Shahid & Turin, 2018).

One of the ways that environmental scan has proven to be effective is in highlighting gaps within academic policies and practices in education (e.g., Battiste & Wilson, 2011; Saldana & Waxman, 2006). The objective of our environmental scan was to create a province-wide, inter-institutional comparison of teacher education in the arts for generalist and specialist teacher

candidates in Ontario, including program structure, course requirements, and requisite hours. The process required multiple phases of online research, followed by verification of the publicly accessible information with administrative staff, and, if needed, subsequent verification with instructors to clarify what the publicly accessible information means in practice. Ethical approval was granted by our respective institutions for the broader research study on teacher education in the arts, which included interviews at various stages with teacher candidates, in-service teachers, and arts education instructors at multiple universities, as well as the environmental scan (see Sefton & Sirek, 2020, 2026; Sirek & Sefton, 2023, 2024).

In phase one of the environmental scan, we identified 13 English-language ITE programs in Ontario and reviewed the teacher education program websites for their course offerings in dance, drama, music, and visual arts. In phase two we reviewed the official program guidelines (i.e., academic calendars) to verify the information that we collected in phase one. We collected course titles, course number identifiers, and course descriptions. Where questions remained, in phase three, we contacted university administrative staff for verification by phone and/or email, and, if necessary, confirmed data with teacher educators (full-time or part-time professors). As a final check, we consulted 2024–2025 program guidelines and 2025 viewbooks (recruitment publications disseminated by universities) to ensure that no changes in course offerings or requirements had taken place prior to publication. The following section provides a summary overview of each of the English-language ITE programs in Ontario. We undertake an analysis of each program, to describe how each of the arts subjects is covered through course design; provide typologies of courses and contact hours; indicate compulsory courses and electives; and subsequently chart each program's required courses for generalist and specialist teacher education in the arts.

Overview of the Arts in Initial Teacher Education Programs in Ontario

Our environmental scan includes data from all 13 English-language ITE programs in public universities in Ontario: Brock University, Lakehead University, Laurentian University, Nipissing University, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at University of Toronto (both Master of Teaching [MT] and Master of Arts [MA] programs), Ontario Tech University (University of Ontario Institute for Technology), Queen's University, Trent University, University of Ottawa, University of Windsor, Western University (The University of Western Ontario), Wilfrid Laurier University, and York University. Niagara University, Redeemer University, and Tyndale University, all private religiously affiliated universities, were excluded, as their programs are designed with religious principles infusing all subject areas, making a comparison difficult. French-language ITE programs were also excluded, due to the inclusion criteria of English-language ITE programs. Given the high variability in course offerings and number of credits for each course, we have identified courses by their full titles and have indicated course contact hours for each.

Brock University. Brock University requires a course in each of the four arts strands for generalist P/J and J/I teacher candidates, of 18 hours each: *The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Dance*, *The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Drama*, *The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Music*, and *The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Visual Arts*. J/I teacher candidates may choose drama, music (vocal), or visual arts as their specialist teachable subject. Brock University's ITE program does not offer specialist-specific J/I arts courses; rather, it is expected that J/I teacher candidates will take the generalist arts courses, and that specialty coursework would have been undertaken during their undergraduate degree (e.g., J/I drama specialist teacher candidates will take the generalist J/I drama course, *The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Drama*, but they do not take a teachable course that is separate from the generalist course). I/S students may choose drama and/or visual arts as one of their teachable subjects (i.e., teacher candidates may combine drama and visual arts as first teachable and second teachable, or vice versa; or may combine one of these teachable subjects with a non-arts teachable subject, such as drama and English). I/S drama specialist teacher candidates take *Teaching Drama I* (72 hours) and *Teaching Drama II* (36 hours). I/S visual arts specialist teacher candidates take *Teaching Visual Arts I* (72 hours) and *Teaching Visual Arts II* (36 hours).

Lakehead University. Lakehead University offers only P/J and I/S division levels (i.e., there is no J/I program). The ITE program requires two courses in arts for P/J generalist teacher candidates: *Curriculum and Instruction in Music, Dance, and Drama* (36 hours) and *Curriculum and Instruction in Visual Arts* (18 hours). I/S students can select music (instrumental or vocal) or visual arts as one of their teachable subjects, but not both (i.e., teacher candidates may not have music as first teachable and visual arts as second teachable). All I/S students must take a Part 1 teachable course (72 hours) and a Part 2 teachable course (36 hours). While the Part 1 teachable course for I/S teacher candidates is subject-specific, the Part 2 course combines all teachable areas together (i.e., in Part 1, music teacher candidates will be grouped only with other music teacher candidates; in Part 2 music teacher candidates *focus* on music, in a mixed cohort with teacher candidates focusing on their field of specialization, such as biology, French, and so on).

Laurentian University. Laurentian University offers the P/J division solely in the French-language ITE program and is therefore excluded from this discussion. The I/S division is not offered at all. The J/I division is offered solely in the English-language ITE program, and requires teacher candidates to take 18-hour generalist courses in all four of the arts strands: *Dance (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate)*, *Drama (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate)*, *Music (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate)*, and *Visual Art (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate)*. J/I teacher candidates can select music (instrumental or vocal) as their teachable subject. They must take one 36-hour specialist course: *Intermediate Instrumental Music* or *Intermediate Vocal Music*.

Nipissing University. Nipissing University requires P/J and J/I

teacher candidates to take generalist courses in music and visual arts (36 hours each). Official course descriptions reveal that drama is integrated with language arts and social studies, and dance is integrated with health and physical education and with music. We have not included these in our summary or our later comparisons, as it is not possible to determine the weighting or course hours dedicated to the arts subjects in these integrated courses. J/I teacher candidates can select music (instrumental) or visual arts for their teachable subject and take both the generalist and relevant specialist course (e.g., J/I music teachable students take both *Music for the Junior & Intermediate Divisions* and *Music—Instrumental (Intermediate)*). I/S teacher candidates can select music (instrumental) and/or visual arts for one or both of their teachable subjects (i.e., teacher candidates may combine these teachable subjects). I/S specialists take two 36-hour courses in their teachable subject: *Music—Instrumental (Intermediate)* and *Music—Instrumental (Senior)*, or *Visual Arts (Intermediate)* and *Visual Arts (Senior)*.

OISE at University of Toronto. OISE at University of Toronto is the only ITE program in Ontario offering an MT or an MA in Child Study & Education rather than a Bachelor of Education (BEd). The MT program requires P/J teacher candidates to take three 18-hour courses in the arts, covering the four arts subject areas: *Curriculum and Teaching in Drama and Dance*, *Curriculum and Teaching in Music and Dance*, and *Curriculum and Teaching in Visual Arts*. J/I teacher candidates are required to take one 36-hour course that includes music, visual arts, and health and physical education (*Arts in Education*), with dance and drama intentionally embedded across several non-arts courses. J/I teacher candidates can select drama, music (instrumental or vocal), or visual arts as their teachable subject and take one 36-hour course in that specialist area: *Intermediate Teaching Subject—Drama (J/I)*, *Intermediate Teaching Subject—Music (Instrumental)*, *Intermediate Teaching Subject—Music (Vocal)*, or *Intermediate Teaching Subject—Visual Arts*. I/S teacher candidates can select drama, music (instrumental or vocal), and/or visual arts as one of their teachable subjects (i.e., teacher candidates may combine teachable subjects in the arts, with the exception of combining instrumental and vocal music). They must take a 72-hour specialist course for each of their teachable subjects (e.g., *Curriculum and Teaching in Dramatic Arts (I/S)*). While the MT program offers P/J, J/I, and I/S divisions, the MA program at OISE offers only the P/J division. Teacher candidates in the MA program are required to take *Arts Curriculum and Critical Pedagogies for Cross-Curricular Teaching* (36 hours). In addition to the required courses, OISE offers several electives in the arts that are available for teacher candidates to take through the department, and/or teacher candidates may focus their final research project on arts.

Ontario Tech University. Ontario Tech University offers only P/J and I/S division levels. The ITE program requires one 36-hour arts course for P/J teacher candidates: *The Arts—Primary/Junior*. No arts teachable subjects are offered at the I/S division.

Queen's University. Queen's University requires P/J teacher

candidates to take 18-hour courses in each of the four arts subjects: dance, drama, music, and visual arts. I/S teacher candidates can select drama, music (instrumental or vocal), and/or visual arts as a teachable subject (i.e., teacher candidates may combine teachable subjects in the arts, with the exception of combining music (instrumental) and music (vocal)). They take two courses in their subject area (e.g., *Intro to Teaching Choral Music* (36 hours) and *Music Teaching Theory and Practice* (36 hours)). Additionally, teacher candidates at the P/J or I/S levels can opt to take an arts-focus track with a total of 72 contact hours (*Artist in Community Education* or *Arts and Learning*). *Artist in Community Education* (ACE) includes the courses *Artist in Community Education* and *The Artist in Society*. *Arts and Learning* includes the courses *Arts & Experiential Learning Institutions* and *Arts and Learning*.

Trent University. Trent University requires the course *Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom* (36 hours) for P/J teacher candidates, as well as the course *Health, Physical Education, and Dance* (36 hours). The Indigenous P/J cohort has the same requirements. I/S students can select drama or visual arts as a teachable subject, and take one 72-hour course (e.g., *Visual Arts—Theory and Practice*). P/J and I/S teacher candidates take one elective from a list of rotating courses, two of which are arts-related: *The Role of STEAM Education* and *Teaching through Drama*. The ITE program at Trent also offers a 75-hour Alternative Settings Placement elective, *Instrumental Music Pedagogy*, which focuses on teaching band for grades 5–8.

University of Ottawa. University of Ottawa requires P/J teacher candidates to take two 36-hour courses that combine arts with a non-arts subject area: *Primary—Math and the Arts* and *Junior—Language Arts and the Arts*. J/I teacher candidates only take the course *Junior—Language Arts and the Arts*. J/I teacher candidates can select drama, music (instrumental), or visual arts as a teachable subject, and take one 36-hour course in that subject (e.g., *Teaching Drama at the Intermediate Division*). I/S teacher candidates can select drama, music (instrumental), or visual arts as a teachable subject, and may combine music with either drama or visual arts, but may not combine drama and visual arts. They take two 36-hour courses in their specialty area (e.g., *Teaching Drama at the Intermediate/Senior Division—Part A* and *Teaching Drama at the Intermediate/Senior Division—Part B*).

University of Windsor. University of Windsor requires P/J teacher candidates to take 18-hour courses in all four arts subject areas: *Dance Methodology*, *Drama Methodology*, *Music Methodology*, and *Visual Arts Methodology*. There is no J/I program. I/S teacher candidates can take drama, music (instrumental or vocal), or visual arts as a teachable subject (72 hours each). I/S students also take the required course *Pedagogy of the Arts* (36 hours). I/S teacher candidates (non-music) may take the elective course *Advanced Music Pedagogy*.

Western University. Western University requires P/J and J/I teacher candidates to take three 18-hour courses in the arts: *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Elementary Music*, *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Elementary Dance & Drama*, and *Curriculum and*

Pedagogy in Elementary Art. The exception to this requirement is J/I specialist music teacher candidates, who take only the generalist courses *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Elementary Dance & Drama* and *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Elementary Art*, and take two specialist courses in music (rather than the generalist music course). J/I and I/S teacher candidates may select music (instrumental or vocal) as a teachable subject. Regardless of whether their teachable is instrumental or vocal, J/I teacher candidates must take both *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Instrumental Music* (36 hours) and *Elementary Music for Specialists* (36 hours). I/S teacher candidates must take both *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Instrumental Music* (36 hours) and *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Vocal Music* (36 hours). P/J and J/I teacher candidates may take the elective research specialty area *Mathematics Through the Arts*, which includes two courses (36 hours each) with a required research capstone project. J/I and I/S teacher candidates may take the elective research specialty area *Creativity and Arts Integration*, which includes two courses (36 hours each) with a required research capstone project.

Wilfrid Laurier University. Wilfrid Laurier University offers P/J and J/I division levels. The ITE program requires one 18-hour course, *Integrating Through the Arts*, for P/J and J/I teacher candidates. J/I teacher candidates can select music as their teachable subject, and take the 36-hour course *Vocal and Instrumental Music Teaching Methods*.

York University. York University requires P/J and J/I teacher candidates to take one course, *Integration Through the Arts* (36 hours). J/I and I/S teacher candidates can select dance, drama, music (instrumental), or visual arts as a teachable subject. The J/I specialist course and I/S Part A specialist course are taught together (i.e., *Teaching Dance in the Intermediate Division* (J/I) and *Teaching Dance in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part A* (I/S) are the same course (36 hours)). I/S teacher candidates additionally take the Part B course (36 hours). I/S teacher candidates may combine teachable subjects in the arts.

Generalist Teacher Education in the Arts

As evidenced by the overview of publicly funded English-language ITE programs in Ontario, approaches to arts programming vary widely. Some institutions offer robust methodology courses in each of the four arts strands (dance, drama, music, visual arts), while others offer one course meant to cover all the arts subjects, or integrated models of arts education. A few ITE programs offer electives in arts pedagogy or arts education research in addition to their required courses. In the sections that follow, we provide findings on required contact hours and typologies of courses (standalone, combined, integrated) for generalist teacher candidates at the P/J and J/I levels, and provide data to make comparisons between institutions. Subsequently, we provide data on required courses for specialist teacher candidates in the arts.

Contact Hours

Brock University, Laurentian University, Nipissing University, Queen's University, and University of Windsor each offer 72

instructional hours in the arts. Lakehead University, OISE (MT P/J), and Western University each offer 54 instructional hours in the arts. OISE (MA P/J and MT J/I), Ontario Tech University, and York University each offer 36 instructional hours in a single integrated arts course. Trent University offers 36 instructional hours in an integrated arts course and 36 hours in a course that integrates an arts course with a non-arts subject area. The University of Ottawa offers two 36-hour courses in which the arts are integrated with another non-arts subject area for P/J teacher candidates, whereas J/I teacher candidates take only one of these courses (i.e., one 36-hour course). Wilfrid Laurier University provides the fewest instructional hours, offering one 18-hour arts course. Table 1 provides total contact hours in the arts for P/J and J/I generalist teacher candidates in Ontario in the current four-term program.

Table 1

Arts Programming Instructional Hours for P/J and J/I Generalist Teacher Candidates in ITE Programs in Ontario in the Four-Term ITE Program

Brock University 72	Lakehead University 54	Laurentian University 72	Nipissing University 72	OISE (MT) 54 (P/J) 36 (J/I) OISE (MA) 36 (P/J)
Ontario Tech University 36	Queen's University 72	Trent University 72* *36 hours combined with non-arts	University of Ottawa 72 (P/J)* 36 (J/I)* *combined with non-arts	University of Windsor 72
	Western University 54	Wilfrid Laurier University 18	York University 36	

Course Typologies

Arts programming for generalist P/J and J/I teacher candidates may include arts integrated with non-arts subject(s) (e.g., dance with health and physical education), combined arts courses (e.g., dance and drama), or standalone courses in each of the four arts strands (dance, drama, music, visual arts). Tables 2–5 provide the names and typologies of required courses at different universities. Most ITE programs require that P/J and J/I students take the same compulsory arts courses (including J/I teacher candidates with an arts teachable). However, OISE (MT) and University of Ottawa have different arts requirements for teacher candidates in the P/J versus J/I divisions, and Western University does not require J/I music specialist teacher candidates to take the generalist music course (requiring instead two specialist J/I music courses).

Integrated. The following institutions each offer only one course to cover all four of the arts subject areas, focusing explicitly on integration: OISE (MA) (*Arts Curriculum and Critical Pedagogies for Cross-Curricular Teaching*), Ontario Tech University (*The Arts*), Wilfrid Laurier University (*Integrating Through the Arts*), and

York University (*Integration Through Arts*). Trent University offers one integrated arts course (*Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom*) and one integrated arts/non-arts course (*Health, Physical Education, and Dance in the Elementary Classroom*). Similarly, University of Ottawa focuses on integration, across two courses that integrate math and arts at the primary level (*Primary—Math & the Arts*) and language arts and arts at the junior level (*Junior—Language Arts & the Arts*). OISE (MT) offers J/I teacher candidates one course to cover music, visual arts, and health and physical education (*Arts in Education*) and embeds dance and drama across the curriculum. Nipissing University embeds drama in social studies and language arts; and dance in health and physical education, and in music.

Combined. Lakehead University combines music, dance, and drama into a 36-hour course titled *Curriculum and Instruction in Music, Dance and Drama*, while having a standalone course for visual arts. OISE (MT) combines arts subjects in two courses at the P/J level, *Curriculum & Teaching in Music & Dance* and *Curriculum & Teaching in Drama & Dance*, while offering a standalone course for visual arts for P/J, *Curriculum & Teaching in Visual Art*. Western University combines dance and drama in *Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Dance & Drama* while offering standalone courses in both music and visual arts.

Standalone. Brock University, Laurentian University, Queen's University, and University of Windsor are the only ITE programs that offer standalone courses in each of the four arts strands, with separate courses for dance, drama, music, and visual arts. The remaining ITE programs differ in their approach to which arts subjects are combined or integrated and which subjects remain as standalone courses. Eight institutions offer visual arts as a standalone course for generalist teacher candidates: Brock, Lakehead, Laurentian, Nipissing, OISE (MT, P/J), Queen's, Windsor, and Western (Table 2). Six institutions offer music as a standalone course: Brock, Laurentian, Nipissing, Queen's, Windsor, and Western (Table 3). Four institutions offer dance and drama as standalone courses: Brock, Laurentian, Queen's, and Windsor (Tables 4 and 5).

We have omitted Nipissing University and OISE (MT)'s J/I program from Table 4 (drama) and Table 5 (dance), as information on the inclusion of these subject areas is only captured in course descriptions or via instructors, and not in official course titles. Nipissing course descriptions indicate that dance is embedded in the courses *Music for the Primary & Junior Divisions* and *Health & Physical Education for the Primary & Junior Divisions*, and drama is embedded in *Language & Literacies for the Primary & Junior Divisions* and *Social Studies for the Primary & Junior Divisions*. At OISE (MT), dance and drama are embedded across the curriculum for J/I teacher candidates.

Table 2

Visual Arts Standalone Courses Versus Combined/Integrated Courses in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs

Required Visual Arts Standalone Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Visual Arts (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Brock University
Curriculum and Instruction in Visual Arts (18 hours)	P/J	Lakehead University
Visual Art (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate) (18 hours)	J/I	Laurentian University
Visual Arts for the Primary & Junior Divisions (36 hours) Visual Arts for the Junior & Intermediate Divisions (36 hours)	P/J J/I	Nipissing University
Curriculum and Teaching in Visual Arts (18 hours)	P/J	OISE (MT)
Art (18 hours)	P/J	Queen's University
Visual Arts Methodology (18 hours)	P/J	University of Windsor
Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Art (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Western University

Required Visual Arts Combined/Integrated Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
Arts Curriculum and Critical Pedagogies for Cross-Curricular Teaching (36 hours)	P/J	OISE (MA)
Arts in Education (36 hours)	J/I	OISE (MT)
The Arts—Primary/Junior (36 hours)	P/J	Ontario Tech University
Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom (36 hours)	P/J	Trent University
Primary—Math and the Arts (36 hours) Junior—Language Arts and the Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I J/I	University of Ottawa
Integrating Through the Arts (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Wilfrid Laurier University
Integration Through Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I	York University

Table 3

Music Standalone Courses Versus Combined/Integrated Courses in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs

Required Music Standalone Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Music (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Brock University
Music (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate) (18 hours)	J/I	Laurentian University
Music for the Primary & Junior Divisions (36 hours) Music for the Junior & Intermediate Divisions (36 hours)	P/J J/I	Nipissing University
Music (18 hours)	P/J	Queen's University
Music Methodology (18 hours)	P/J	University of Windsor
Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Music (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Western University

Required Music Combined/Integrated Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
Curriculum and Instruction in Music, Dance & Drama (36 hours)	P/J	Lakehead
Arts Curriculum and Critical Pedagogies for Cross-Curricular Teaching (36 hours)	P/J	OISE (MA)
Curriculum and Teaching in Music & Dance (18 hours) Arts in Education (36 hours)	P/J J/I	OISE (MT)
The Arts—Primary/Junior (36 hours)	P/J	Ontario Tech University
Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom (36 hours)	P/J	Trent University
Primary—Math and the Arts (36 hours) Junior—Language Arts and the Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I J/I	University of Ottawa
Integrating Through the Arts (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Wilfrid Laurier University
Integration Through Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I	York University

Table 4

Drama Standalone Courses Versus Combined/Integrated Courses in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs

Required Drama Standalone Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Drama (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Brock University
Drama (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate) (18 hours)	J/I	Laurentian University
Drama (18 hours)	P/J	Queen's University
Drama Methodology (18 hours)	P/J	University of Windsor

Required Drama Combined/Integrated Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
Curriculum and Instruction in Music, Dance & Drama (36 hours)	P/J	Lakehead
Arts Curriculum and Critical Pedagogies for Cross-Curricular Teaching (36 hours)	P/J	OISE (MA)
Curriculum and Teaching in Drama & Dance (18 hours) Arts in Education (36 hours)	P/J J/I	OISE (MT)
The Arts—Primary/Junior (36 hours)	P/J	Ontario Tech University
Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom (36 hours)	P/J	Trent University
Primary—Math and the Arts (36 hours) Junior—Language Arts and the Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I J/I	University of Ottawa
Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Dance & Drama (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Western University
Integrating Through the Arts (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Wilfrid Laurier University
Integration Through Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I	York University

Table 5

Dance Standalone Courses Versus Combined/Integrated Courses in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs

Required Dance Standalone Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
The Arts in and Across the Curriculum: Dance (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Brock University
Dance (The Arts—Junior/Intermediate) (18 hours)	J/I	Laurentian University
Dance (18 hours)	P/J	Queen's University
Dance Methodology (18 hours)	P/J	University of Windsor

Required Dance Combined/Integrated Courses for Generalist Teacher Candidates		
Curriculum and Instruction in Music, Dance & Drama (36 hours)	P/J	Lakehead
Arts Curriculum and Critical Pedagogies for Cross-Curricular Teaching (36 hours)	P/J	OISE (MA)
Curriculum and Teaching in Music & Dance (18 hours) Curriculum and Teaching in Drama & Dance (18 hours) Arts in Education (36 hours)	P/J P/J J/I	OISE (MT)
The Arts—Primary/Junior (36 hours)	P/J	Ontario Tech University
Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom (36 hours) Health, Physical Education, and Dance in the Elementary Classroom (36 hours)	P/J P/J	Trent University
Primary—Math and the Arts (36 hours) Junior—Language Arts and the Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I J/I	University of Ottawa
Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Dance & Drama (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Western University
Integrating Through the Arts (18 hours)	P/J & J/I	Wilfrid Laurier University
Integration Through Arts (36 hours)	P/J & J/I	York University

As the data reveal, generalist P/J and J/I courses in the arts may be offered only as integrated arts courses with less specialized instruction, or are not offered at all as an arts-specific course.

Specialist Teacher Education in the Arts

In the section that follows, we provide findings on contact hours required in arts teachable subjects for specialist teachers at the J/I and I/S levels. Below is an overview of specialist courses and contact hours by institution (Table 6).

Table 6

Specialist Teachable Courses for J/I and I/S Teacher Candidates in Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs

Institution	Course	Hours	Subject
Brock University	Drama *J/I specialists take the generalist course only	N/A (J/I)	Drama
	Teaching Drama I Teaching Drama II	72 (I/S) 36 (I/S)	
	Music *J/I specialists take the generalist course only	N/A (J/I)	Music (Vocal)
	Visual Art *J/I specialists take the generalist course only	N/A (J/I)	Visual Arts
	Teaching Visual Arts I Teaching Visual Arts II	72 (I/S) 36 (I/S)	
Lakehead University	Curriculum and Instruction in Music (Vocal or Instrumental), Part 1	72 (I/S)	Music (Vocal or Instrumental)
	Curriculum and Instruction in Music (Vocal or Instrumental), Part 2 *Part 2 is combined with all other teachable areas	36 (I/S)	
	Curriculum and Instruction in Visual Arts, Part 1	72 (I/S)	Visual Arts
	Curriculum and Instruction in Visual Arts, Part 2 *Part 2 is combined with all other teachable areas	36 (I/S)	
Laurentian University	Intermediate Vocal Music	36 (J/I)	Music (Vocal)
	Intermediate Instrumental Music	36 (J/I)	Music (Instrumental)
Nipissing University	Music—Instrumental (Intermediate)	36 (J/I & I/S)	Music (Instrumental)
	Music—Instrumental (Senior)	36 (I/S)	
	Visual Arts (Intermediate)	36 (J/I & I/S)	Visual Arts
	Visual Arts (Senior)	36 (I/S)	
OISE	Intermediate Teaching Subject—Drama Curriculum and Teaching in Dramatic Arts	36 (J/I) 72 (I/S)	Drama
	Intermediate Teaching Subject—Music (Instrumental) Curriculum and Teaching in Music—Instrumental	36 (J/I) 72 (I/S)	Music (Instrumental)
	Intermediate Teaching Subject—Music (Vocal) Curriculum and Teaching in Music—Vocal	36 (J/I) 72 (I/S)	
	Intermediate Teaching Subject—Visual Arts Curriculum and Teaching in Visual Arts	36 (J/I) 72 (I/S)	Visual Arts
	No arts teachable subjects	N/A	
Ontario Tech University			N/A
Queen's University	Dramatic Arts, Fall Dramatic Arts, Winter	36 (I/S) 36 (I/S)	Drama
	Intro to Teaching Choral Music Music Teaching Theory & Practice	36 (I/S) 36 (I/S)	
	Intro to Teaching Instrumental Music Music Teaching Theory & Practice	36 (I/S) 36 (I/S)	Music (Instrumental)

	Visual Arts, Fall Visual Arts, Winter	36 (I/S) 36 (I/S)	Visual Arts
Trent University	Dramatic Arts (I/S)	72 (I/S)	Drama
	Visual Arts—Theory and Practice	72 (I/S)	Visual Arts
University of Ottawa	Teaching Drama at the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I & I/S)	Drama
	Teaching Drama at the Senior Division	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Fine Arts—Instrumental Music at the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I & I/S)	Music (Instrumental)
	Teaching Fine Arts—Instrumental Music at the Senior Division	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Visual Arts at the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I & I/S)	Visual Arts
	Teaching Visual Arts at the Senior Division	36 (I/S)	
University of Windsor	Drama	72 (I/S)	Drama
	Music—Instrumental	72 (I/S)	Music (Instrumental)
	Music—Vocal	72 (I/S)	Music (Vocal)
	Visual Arts	72 (I/S)	Visual Arts
Western University	Curriculum & Pedagogy in Instrumental Music	36 (J/I & I/S)	Music (Instrumental and Vocal)
	Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Music for Specialists	36 (J/I)	
	Curriculum & Pedagogy in Vocal Music	36 (I/S)	
Wilfrid Laurier University	Vocal and Instrumental Music Teaching Methods	36 (J/I)	Music (Instrumental and Vocal)
York University	Teaching Dance in the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I)	Dance
	Teaching Dance in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part A	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Dance in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part B	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Dramatic Arts in the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I)	Drama
	Teaching Dramatic Arts in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part A	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Dramatic Arts in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part B	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Music in the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I)	Music
	Teaching Music in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part A	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Music in the Intermediate-Senior Divisions—Part B	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Visual Arts in the Intermediate Division	36 (J/I)	Visual Arts
	Teaching Visual Arts in the Intermediate-Senior Division—Part A	36 (I/S)	
	Teaching Visual Arts in the Intermediate-Senior Division—Part B	36 (I/S)	

Contact Hours

As with generalist P/J and J/I program offerings, contact hours in arts teachable courses for specialist J/I and I/S teacher candidates vary across institutions (Table 7). Brock, Laurentian,

Nipissing, OISE (MT), Ottawa, Western, Wilfrid Laurier, and York offer J/I programs. Of these J/I programs, Laurentian, Nipissing, OISE (MT), Ottawa, and York require 36 hours in the teachable subject for J/I specialists. Laurentian University and Nipissing University also require J/I specialists to take the generalist standalone course in their teachable subject area (e.g., music specialists would take both the specialist J/I music course and the generalist J/I music course). OISE, Ottawa, Wilfrid Laurier, and York require J/I specialist teacher candidates to take the generalist integrated arts course offered at these institutions in addition to their specialist course (e.g., music specialists would take both the specialist J/I music course and the generalist integrated arts course). Western requires 72 hours in the teachable subject for J/I specialists across two specialist courses, but no generalist course. Brock requires J/I specialists take only the 18-hour generalist course in their teachable subject.

Table 7

Instructional Hours in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs for J/I Teacher Candidates Whose Teachable Subject Is Dance, Drama, Music (Instrumental), Music (Vocal), or Visual Arts

Total Contact Hours—J/I Specialist Teachable Arts Courses				
Brock University Drama - N/A Music (V) - N/A Art - N/A	Lakehead University (excluded)	Laurentian University Music (I) - 36 Music (V) - 36	Nipissing University Music (I) - 36 Art - 36	OISE (MT) Drama - 36 Music (I) - 36 Music (V) - 36 Art - 36
Ontario Tech University (excluded)	Queen's University (excluded)	Trent University (excluded)	University of Ottawa Drama - 36 Music (I) - 36 Art - 36	University of Windsor (excluded)
	Western University Music (I) - 72 Music (V) - 72	Wilfrid Laurier University Music - 36	York University Drama - 36 Dance - 36 Music (I) - 36 Art - 36	

Note. "Excluded" indicates ITE programs that do not offer J/I.

I/S programs are offered at Brock University, Lakehead University, Nipissing University, OISE (MT), Ontario Tech University, Queen's University, Trent University, University of Ottawa, University of Windsor, Western University, and York University (Table 8). All but Ontario Tech University offer at least one teachable in an arts subject at the I/S level. Nipissing University, OISE (MT), Queen's University, Trent University, University of Ottawa, University of Windsor, Western University, and York University each require 72 hours in the teachable subject. Lakehead University requires 72 hours in the teachable subject in a standalone course and 36 hours in a course that combines all I/S teachable subjects together. Brock University requires 108 hours in the teachable subject.

Table 8

Instructional Hours in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs for I/S Teacher Candidates Who Have One or Two Teachable Subject(s) in Dance, Drama, Music (Instrumental), Music (Vocal), or Visual Arts

Total Contact Hours—I/S Specialist Teachable Arts Courses				
Brock University Drama - 108 Art - 108	Lakehead University Music (I) - 72 Art - 72	Laurentian University (excluded)	Nipissing University Music (I) - 72 Art - 72	OISE (MT) Drama - 72 Music (I) - 72 Music (V) - 72 Art - 72
Ontario Tech University No arts teachable subjects.	Queen's University Drama - 72 Music (I) - 72 Music (V) - 72 Art - 72	Trent University Drama - 72 Art - 72	University of Ottawa Drama - 72 Music (I) - 72 Art - 72	University of Windsor Drama - 72 Music (I) - 72 Music (V) - 72 Art - 72
	Western University Music (I) - 72 Music (V) - 72	Wilfrid Laurier University (excluded)	York University Drama - 72 Dance - 72 Music (I) - 72 Art - 72	

Note. "Excluded" indicates ITE programs that do not offer I/S.

Teachable Subject Areas

Teachable Subject Areas for J/I. At the J/I level, six ITE programs offer music (instrumental), four ITE programs offer music (vocal), and one program offers music (instrumental/vocal). Five ITE programs offer visual arts. Four ITE programs offer drama, and only one ITE program offers dance (Table 9).

Table 9

Arts Teachable Subject Areas in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs for J/I Teacher Candidates

J/I Arts Teachable Subjects				
Dance	Drama	Music (Inst.)	Music (Vocal)	Visual Arts
York	Brock	Laurentian	Brock	Brock
	OISE (MT)	Nipissing	Laurentian	Nipissing
	Ottawa	OISE (MT)	OISE (MT)	OISE (MT)
	York	Ottawa	Western	Ottawa
		Western		York
		Wilfrid Laurier* *does not distinguish between instrumental and vocal		
		York		

Teachable Subject Areas for I/S. At the I/S level, nine ITE programs offer visual arts. Eight ITE programs offer music (instrumental), and five ITE programs offer music (vocal). Seven ITE programs offer drama, and only one ITE program offers dance (Table 10).

Table 10
Arts Teachable Subject Areas in Ontario Four-Term ITE Programs for I/S Teacher Candidates

I/S Arts Teachable Subjects				
Dance	Drama	Music (Inst.)	Music (Vocal)	Visual Arts
York	Brock	Lakehead	Lakehead	Brock
	OISE (MT)	Nipissing	OISE (MT)	Lakehead
	Ottawa	OISE (MT)	Queen's	Nipissing
	Queen's	Ottawa	Western	OISE (MT)
	Trent	Queen's	Windsor	Ottawa
	Windsor	Western		Queen's
	York	Windsor		Trent
		York		Windsor
				York

Over half of ITE programs in our environmental scan offer drama, visual arts, and music as teachable subjects at the I/S level. Fewer than half of ITE programs offer teachable subjects in the arts at the J/I level, in large part due to six ITE programs not offering a J/I division (i.e., Lakehead, Ontario Tech, Queen's, Trent, Windsor). Only one ITE program offers dance at the J/I or I/S levels (York University).

Summary, Limitations, Future Research, and Concluding Remarks

Summary: Generalist Teacher Education in the Arts

In Ontario, generalist P/J and J/I teachers are regularly responsible for delivering arts curricula as required by provincial regulation (People for Education, 2018, 2024). Our previous research has revealed that most generalist teacher candidates do not feel competent to fully teach the music curriculum, particularly in the junior elementary grade levels (grades 4–6) (Sirek & Sefton, 2023, 2024). As with the music curriculum, dance, drama, and visual arts curricula also require extended exposure and experience to teach with competence and confidence (Clark, 2010; Hennessy et al., 2001; McCammon et al., 2010). As ITE programs attempt to fit and balance all required elements within a generalist ITE program, the arts may find themselves identified as “extra”—not core curriculum—and therefore less deserving of course credits or course hours (People for Education, 2018, 2024; Pollock & Mindzak, 2015; Sefton, 2022; Sefton & Sirek, 2026). Additional budgetary challenges may also be a concern, as arts courses often require specialized equipment, resources, and facilities (e.g., musical instruments, visual arts supplies, protected teaching spaces such as a music room, dance studio, stage, or visual arts room) (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, 2025). While the requirement of specialized equipment, resources, and facilities may also be true for other subject areas, such as science, health and physical education, and geography, the arts may come into competition for limited resources as programs are revised and may lack advocacy at the local or trans-local level

if there are limited or no full-time faculty members in the arts. Presently, only Brock, Nipissing, OISE, Queen's, Trent, Western, and Windsor have full-time, permanent faculty in arts who teach in ITE programs.

Through this environmental scan, it is evident that arts education for generalist teacher candidates in the current four-term program is often integrated with other curriculum subjects rather than taught as standalone subject areas, or arts subjects are combined together in courses. These findings may contribute to understanding the status of arts subjects in ITE for P/J and J/I generalist teachers in Ontario, and the opportunities, or lack thereof, for generalist teachers to build confidence and competence to teach in these subject areas (People for Education, 2018, 2024).

Summary: Specialist Teacher Education in the Arts

Data reveal that several ITE programs offer significantly fewer contact hours in teachable courses for specialist teacher candidates at the J/I level than for those at the I/S level (e.g., J/I music specialists at Nipissing, OISE (MT), University of Ottawa, and York receive 36 instructional hours in music teachable courses, while I/S music specialists at the same institutions receive 72 instructional hours in music teachable courses). Brock University does not offer any teachable courses in the arts for J/I specialist teacher candidates; rather, J/I teacher candidates are required to take the generalist course to satisfy their teachable credit. There are also limits in some ITE programs on combining arts teachable subjects (e.g., Lakehead University). York University is the only ITE program to offer dance at the J/I and I/S levels. Data also revealed that non-arts I/S teacher candidates (those specializing in biology, English, geography, etc.) have limited or no opportunities to take required or elective courses in the arts, which may restrict their ability to effectively teach the arts curriculum to grades 7 and 8, or to use arts integration or cross-curricular learning with the arts in intermediate or senior classrooms.

Limitations and Future Research

This environmental scan provides empirical data that can be used as a basis for comparison across different institutions or geographic areas, or to contextualize qualitative data. What an environmental scan cannot do is provide the qualitative narratives of lived lives that work within institutional systems, which we are addressing in another phase of this research project. An additional limitation is that courses were identified by their inclusion in university course calendars and program descriptions. While this reflects the institutional offerings and program design, it may not always reflect how courses are actually delivered. For example, vocal music and instrumental music, though listed as separate courses, may be taught together due to minimum enrollment requirements; or, an instructor for a non-arts subject area may integrate the arts throughout the course, though this is not reflected in the course title or description. A further limitation to this study is the lack of comparison data of arts to non-arts courses in ITE programs. As we do not have data on the total

credit hours in each ITE program, it is not possible to know the percentage of hours devoted to the arts in each program, nor how these percentages compare with other subject areas. Finally, ITE programs at private universities, French ITE programs, and Indigenous ITE programs are not included in this study, and deserve to be the focus of future research.

Teacher education in the arts in the new three-term ITE programs, expected to take effect in 2027, will be an important area of future research. As programs contract to fewer instructional hours, what will be cut? How many programs that currently offer standalone methodology courses will migrate to integrated or combined course structures? How will teacher candidates respond to the revised and abbreviated ITE programs? How will teacher educators in the arts adapt to potentially fewer hours or to enforced integration with other subject areas? These may be questions that reveal innovative answers to pedagogy, collaboration with other disciplines, and reimagining what counts as knowledge within the arts.

Concluding Remarks for Teaching Music in the 21st Century

As each of the ITE programs in Ontario reevaluates and revises their course offerings to reconfigure to a three-term, 12-month program, the position and status of music will be up for discussion, including teachable pathway options, required courses/credit hours, elective possibilities, and hiring of full-time faculty members. What is visible from this information is how ITE programs at different universities compare, in number of hours of instruction and in course structure. Difference in course structure is significant. In standalone subject-area courses or combined arts courses, generalist teacher candidates are more likely to receive hands-on experience learning the music curriculum content (e.g., performing, creating, listening, analyzing (Government of Ontario, 2009)) and pedagogical strategies, whereas in integrated courses, teacher candidates are more likely learn *about* music (e.g., learning strategies for teaching math concepts through music, or learning language arts skills by writing about music).

Currently, most J/I specialists are receiving 36 hours, and most I/S specialists are receiving 72 hours in their subject areas—nearly double the time. What may happen in the reconfiguring of programs is a change in offerings of teachable subjects (i.e., reducing or eliminating certain teachable subjects or subject combinations) or in the requisite number of hours. Ontario has already been reducing the hiring of music specialists in elementary schools (People for Education, 2024). Any reduction in music specialist courses in the arts will create a scarcity of available job candidates in elementary and secondary schools, potentially creating additional contraction of credit offerings in music at the secondary level. Every contraction, at the elementary, secondary, or tertiary level, affects every other level, backwards and forwards. While other authors in this special issue will be considering innovative teaching pedagogies and approaches in the classrooms at all levels in music, no innovative music education pedagogy is possible where there is no music education course offered.

Every level of education—primary, secondary, and post-secondary—is impacted by the professional learning opportunities and values embedded in ITE. Sustaining each of the arts in teacher education therefore has implications at all levels of schooling. Making visible the current place of music in ITE programs is an important step in protecting and maintaining music education in classrooms in Ontario and across Canada. The forthcoming compression of Ontario ITE programs from four terms to three may pose significant challenges for music teacher educators, including how to prepare generalist and specialist teacher candidates with potentially less contact time, without simply offering a more condensed version of what already exists. The temptation is to read the possible contraction as loss, as fewer hours and fewer opportunities for hands-on engagement with instruments, voice, repertoire, and pedagogy. We share that concern. However, contact hours alone do not determine the quality of teacher preparation; rather, it is determined by what is taught, how it is taught, and how it connects to the realities teacher candidates will encounter in K–12 classrooms.

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Footnotes

¹As of 2024, there were more than 76,000 OCT-certified teachers in good standing not currently teaching in Ontario schools (Ontario College of Teachers, 2024; Ontario Teachers' Federation, 2026).

²SSHRC stands for Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and is a federal research funding agency in Canada.

³*Foundational* courses may include educational law, educational history, assessment, educational psychology, etc.; *subject* methodology courses may include mathematics, language arts, history, science, etc.

⁴We did not include media arts as it is only included in the Ontario curriculum for grades 10, 11, and 12).

⁵From 2015 to 2025, University of Windsor offered 108 instructional hours in the arts. As of September 2025, program restructuring resulted in a 50% reduction in instructional hours in arts for P/J teacher candidates. I/S teacher candidates no longer take methodology courses in the arts subject areas, though they do take the lecture course *Pedagogy of the Arts*, which increased from 18 hours to 36 hours.

⁶In Ontario (K–12), language arts, mathematics, and science and technology are considered “core” subjects (Government of Ontario, 2024; Sefton & Bayley, 2010). Although dance, drama, music, and visual arts are required curriculum in the elementary grades (Government of Ontario, 2009), arts requirements at the secondary level are minimal and often considered “extra” (Sefton, 2022).

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