Teaching What Cannot Be Written: The Epistemic Mismatch Between Oral Music Traditions and Formal Curricula in Central Asian Higher Education

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Article

Teaching What Cannot Be Written: The Epistemic Mismatch Between Oral Music Traditions and Formal Curricula in Central Asian Higher Education

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Abstract

We examine the friction between oral music transmission and formal curriculum structures inside three Central Asian conservatories — the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory (Almaty), the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan (Tashkent), and the Kyrgyz National Conservatory (Bishkek). The analytical lens is drawn from M. Polanyi's tacit knowledge theory and I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi's SECI model of knowledge conversion. We worked through publicly available syllabi, programme descriptions, accreditation reports, and institutional data from these three institutions. The core finding is what we call epistemic mismatch: a structural clash between the codified, modular, outcome-based knowledge that Bologna-style curricula demand and the tacit, embodied, relationally transmitted knowledge on which oral music traditions survive. A "two curricula" phenomenon emerged from the data — formal written documents describing traditional music programmes coexist with an entirely separate enacted curriculum that teachers actually follow in the studio. The Aga Khan Music Programme's work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, reaching over 7,000 students in 80 schools, is analysed as an attempted epistemic bridge. We propose a three-principle framework: protected pedagogical space for oral transmission within credit structures, competence-based assessment replacing written examination, and audio-visual documentation replacing notation.

Keywords: tacit knowledge; music higher education; oral tradition; curriculum design; Central Asia; epistemic mismatch; culturally responsive pedagogy

1. Introduction

The syllabus says one thing. The lesson does another.

A dombra student at the Kurmangazy Conservatory in Almaty picks up a printed document at the start of semester — course title, ECTS credits, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, all formatted to satisfy Bologna requirements. Clean bureaucratic prose. Then the student enters the studio. No score on the music stand. The master teacher picks up the dombra, plays a kuy from memory, and waits. The student watches the hands, listens to the attack on the strings, tries to reproduce not the notes but the sound — the particular quality of resonance that belongs to this kuy and not another. The learning outcome on paper reads "demonstrate technical proficiency in traditional instrument performance." What happens in the room has no name in the Bologna vocabulary.

We are interested in that nameless space.

The existing literature on Central Asian music education has stayed at the institutional surface. Nikolaev et al. [1] mapped governance barriers across the region — divergent degree formats, credit-system incompatibilities, the absence of mutual recognition for music qualifications. Anafinova [3] traced how Kazakhstan localised the Bologna Process, documenting the friction between European templates and post-Soviet administrative habits. Isaacs [2] offered a roadmap for a Central Asian

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higher education area, noting that the five republics share more structural history than the EU member states did when the Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999. All of this work operates at the level of systems. Degree structures. Accreditation frameworks. Credit transfer protocols.

The knowledge itself is missing from these analyses.

We argue that the problem is not only about governance — not only about making national systems talk to each other. There is a deeper clash, one that happens inside individual institutions, between the kind of knowledge that formal curricula are built to carry and the kind of knowledge that oral music actually is. M. Polanyi [5] gave this a name in 1966: tacit knowledge. The musician knows more than the syllabus can say. The master teacher transmits something that no document captures — not because the document is badly written but because the knowledge itself resists being written down. It lives in the hands, in the ear, in the relationship between teacher and student. Modular course design cannot hold it.

Kazakhstan spent 3.4% of GDP on education in 2022 [20]. Kyrgyzstan spent 6.2%. Uzbekistan, which has stayed outside the Bologna framework entirely, allocated 4.8%. These numbers tell us something about political will. They tell us nothing about whether the curricula purchased with those budgets can actually transmit the knowledge they claim to protect.

The purpose of this study is to analyse what we call the epistemic mismatch between oral music traditions and formal curriculum structures in music higher education across Central Asia. We focus on three conservatories in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. We apply the tacit-explicit knowledge distinction and the SECI model of knowledge conversion [6] to examine how syllabi encode assumptions about knowledge that contradict the actual nature of the music being taught. We document the "two curricula" phenomenon — the coexistence of a formal written curriculum and an informal enacted curriculum within the same institution. We examine the Aga Khan Music Programme as a case of attempted epistemic bridging. We propose a design framework.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Tacit Knowledge and the Limits of Codification

Polanyi's [5] claim was deceptively simple: we know more than we can tell. A cyclist cannot explain the physics of balance. A face-recognition expert cannot write the algorithm their brain runs. A dombra master cannot dictate the specific wrist angle that produces the right timbre on the third string. The knowledge is real. It is reliable. It is transmissible — but only through practice, proximity, and time. Not through text.

Nonaka and Takeuchi [6] turned this insight into an organisational model. Their SECI framework maps four conversion routes: socialisation (tacit to tacit, through shared bodily experience), externalisation (tacit to explicit, through articulation into written concepts), combination (explicit to explicit, through systematisation of documents), and internalisation (explicit to tacit, through learning-by-doing). Japanese manufacturing was the original domain. The logic transfers. A conservatory that writes a syllabus for kuy performance is attempting externalisation — squeezing tacit musical knowledge into written learning outcomes. The friction-point is whether externalisation preserves the knowledge or kills it.

Brown and Duguid [11] were blunt about this risk. Organisations, they argued, routinely confuse the document with the knowledge. The map replaces the territory. In a conservatory, the danger is concrete: a learning outcome that reads "demonstrate mastery of kuy performance technique" looks like knowledge on paper. It is an institutional shell. The actual knowledge — the particular attack, the specific relationship to the instrument's resonance, the narrative meaning embedded in a given kuy — lives only in the transmission between teacher and student. The document cannot carry it.

2.2. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Epistemic Friction

Gay [12] built the case that teaching fails when it ignores the cultural knowledge students already carry. Kallio [9] pushed this further into music education: the epistemological frameworks

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governing music research privilege Western modes of knowing — notation, harmonic analysis, individual authorship — and treat oral, collective, improvisatory traditions as objects of study rather than as legitimate knowledge systems in their own right. The hierarchy is structural, not intentional. That makes it harder to dismantle.

Kertz-Welzel [10] connected this to globalisation in music education governance. The Bologna Process, with its learning outcomes, credit hours, and modular course architecture, was not designed as a weapon against oral traditions. It was designed for a knowledge ecology where the written record comes first and practice follows. Central Asian oral music inverts this hierarchy. Practice comes first. The written record, if it exists at all, is a shadow.

We are dealing with a double imposition. Frolova-Walker [13] documented the first layer: Soviet cultural policy in the Central Asian republics followed the formula "national in form, socialist in content." Conservatories were built on the Moscow model. Departments of "folk instruments" were created. Oral traditions were transcribed into staff notation and pressed into structured curricula. That was the first act of forced externalisation. The Bologna Process is the second — demanding that institutions make explicit, in a different format, what the Soviet system had already partially fossilized. Learning outcomes instead of centrally prescribed syllabi. ECTS credits instead of Soviet credit hours. The knowledge, caught between two waves of codification pressure, erodes.

We define epistemic mismatch as the structural incompatibility between the knowledge system that formal curricula assume — explicit, modular, documentable, individually assessable — and the knowledge system that oral music traditions operate within — tacit, relational, embodied, collectively validated. This is not a value judgement. It is a diagnostic category. Where the mismatch is severe, institutions produce documents that describe one reality and teach another.

2.3. The "Two Curricula" as Analytical Concept

We borrow the metaphor from Bischof [4], who studied Bologna reforms in post-Soviet higher education and identified "decoupling" — formal structures aligning with European standards while operational practices preserved their Soviet-era character. In music education, decoupling takes a specific shape. The conservatory produces syllabi that satisfy the Ministry of Education. The teacher in the studio follows a different script entirely — one carried in memory, in the hands, in a lineage of performers stretching back generations.

Two curricula coexist. The formal curriculum — written documents, credit allocations, stated learning outcomes — faces the regulators. The enacted curriculum — what the master teacher actually does in the room — faces the student. Between them: a gap that no quality assurance report measures.

3. Materials and Methods

We analysed curriculum documents from three institutions: the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory (Almaty), the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan (Tashkent), and the Kyrgyz National Conservatory (Bishkek). Selection criteria were straightforward — these are the principal music higher education institutions in their countries, they maintain departments dedicated to traditional national music alongside Western classical programmes, and they represent three different levels of alignment with the Bologna framework: Kazakhstan (full adoption, MusiQuE accreditation), Kyrgyzstan (formal ECTS adoption, inconsistent implementation), Uzbekistan (national system, no Bologna participation).

Data sources: (a) publicly available syllabi, programme descriptions, and institutional reports from official websites [14,15]; (b) the MusiQuE accreditation report for the Kurmangazy Conservatory [16]; (c) published documentation of the Aga Khan Music Programme's curriculum work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [17]; (d) national education legislation — the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Education No. 179 of 2023 [18], the Education Law of Kazakhstan No. 319-III of 2007, and relevant presidential decrees in Uzbekistan; (e) UNESCO intangible cultural heritage data [19]; (f) World Bank education expenditure and enrolment statistics [20].

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The analytical procedure had three stages. We examined formal curriculum documents for the knowledge assumptions they encode — specifically, the degree to which they treat knowledge as explicit (writable into learning outcomes, assessable by standardised methods) or tacit (requiring demonstration, personal contact, extended practice). We compared formal descriptions with institutional accounts of actual teaching methods to identify the gap between written and enacted curricula. We analysed the Aga Khan Music Programme as a case of attempted epistemic bridging.

A limitation must be stated plainly. We did not conduct interviews. We did not sit in studios and watch lessons. The analysis rests on the documentary record — what institutions publish, what accreditation agencies report, what the Aga Khan programme describes. The gap between what documents say and what classrooms do can only be partially captured this way. Ethnographic work is the necessary next step.

4. Results

4.1. What Formal Curricula Assume About Knowledge

A pattern emerged immediately. The language used to describe traditional music programmes borrows the vocabulary of outcome-based education. The content of those programmes resists that vocabulary at every turn.

The Kurmangazy Conservatory holds MusiQuE accreditation — the European standard for music higher education. Its Faculty of Traditional Music enrolled 1,094 bachelor's students, 91 master's students, and 12 doctoral candidates in 2024 [14]. The conservatory maintains partnerships with 76 institutions across 33 countries and joined the Association Européenne des Conservatoires in 2020 [21]. The published programme for dombra performance lists learning outcomes in ECTS-compatible format: "demonstrate technical proficiency on the selected traditional instrument," "analyse the stylistic features of different regional kuy traditions," "perform a recital programme combining works from the classical and contemporary traditional repertoire" [14]. On paper, this looks indistinguishable from a module description at any European conservatory.

It is a fiction. A kuy is not a "work." It is not a fixed text waiting to be performed. It is a living piece inside an oral tradition, often bound to a specific narrative — the story of a horse, a landscape, a historical event — and transmitted through a process where the student must absorb not just the notes but the particular quality of sound, the emotional register, the relationship to a lineage of performers. "Demonstrate technical proficiency" captures maybe 20% of what the student needs to learn. The remaining 80% — the tacit dimension, in Polanyi's terms — is present in the teaching. It is absent from the document.

Uzbekistan tells a different story. The State Conservatory operates outside Bologna entirely — no ECTS, no MusiQuE, no external European scrutiny. Its Faculty of Uzbek National Music teaches the Shashmaqom, a system of six maqoms — Buzruk, Rost, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh, Iroq — each a complex sequence of vocal and instrumental pieces learned in a fixed order under a master's guidance. The curriculum description is honest: it speaks of "deep immersion in the oral tradition of maqom performance under the guidance of master teachers" [15]. No outcome-based euphemism. The language acknowledges what Kurmangazy's ECTS documents cannot — that this knowledge refuses codification.

Kyrgyzstan sits in the worst position. The Kyrgyz National Conservatory must satisfy formally adopted ECTS requirements that the government introduced under Law No. 179 [18], while simultaneously preserving komuz performance and the Manas epic tradition — both inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage lists [19]. The institution faces contradictory demands with no resolution mechanism. The Aga Khan Music Programme's Centre Ustatshakirt has attempted to build curriculum materials that satisfy both sides [17]. We examine that effort below.

Table 1. Knowledge assumptions encoded in formal curricula of traditional music programmes.

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Dimension	Kurmangazy (Kazakhstan)	State Conservatory (Uzbekistan)	Kyrgyz National Conservatory
Curriculum framework	Bologna/ECTS (MusiQuE accredited)	National credit hours (no Bologna)	Dual-track (ECTS formal, applied inconsistently)
Learning outcomes format	Explicit, outcome-based	Descriptive, content-oriented	Mixed / unstable
Primary teaching method	"Individual instruction" (written) / master-apprentice (enacted)	"Master teacher guidance"	"Ustat-shogird tradition"
Assessment in documents	Recital + written reflection	Jury + oral defence	Jury performance
Knowledge type assumed by format	Explicit, modular	Partially tacit	Tacit acknowledged but ECTS imposed
Knowledge type required by tradition	Predominantly tacit	Predominantly tacit	Predominantly tacit
Severity of mismatch	High (strong formalisation pressure)	Moderate (less external pressure)	High (contradictory dual demands)

Source: compiled by author based on [14,15,17,18].

The pattern is clear. The mismatch intensifies where formalisation pressure is strongest. Kurmangazy, with its MusiQuE accreditation and ECTS obligations, shows the widest gap between document and practice. Uzbekistan's refusal to adopt Bologna — a decision often criticised as isolationist — paradoxically gives its conservatory more room to teach traditional music the way it has always been taught. Kyrgyzstan gets the worst of both worlds: formal Bologna commitments with no institutional capacity to implement them honestly.

4.2. The "Two Curricula" in Practice

We expected decoupling. We found something more specific.

At the Kurmangazy Conservatory, every course in the traditional music programme carries a written description: learning outcomes, contact hours, independent study hours, assessment methods. The 2019 MusiQuE evaluation assessed these documents against European standards and granted accreditation until 2029 [16]. The formal paperwork passes inspection.

The studio tells a different story. A dombra lesson is not a lecture. There are no slides, no handouts, no written record of what was covered. The master picks up the instrument. Plays. The student watches the fingers, the wrist, the angle of attack on the strings. Tries to reproduce the sound. Fails. Tries again. The teacher corrects by re-demonstrating, not by explaining. This continues for weeks. Months. The student does not "learn the material." The student absorbs a way of being with the instrument. Socialisation, in Nonaka and Takeuchi's vocabulary [6]. Tacit to tacit. No document intervenes.

The jury system offers a partial bridge. Assessment happens through performance — the student plays before a faculty panel that evaluates technical proficiency, stylistic fidelity, and musical expressiveness. This is closer to how traditional communities have always judged competence: you demonstrate, and those who know the tradition evaluate. But the jury's verdict must then be squeezed into a numerical grade, recorded on a standardised transcript, and counted toward a credit

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total. That conversion — from embodied demonstration to number on a form — is exactly where the epistemic mismatch becomes tangible. Something is lost in translation. Always.

Uzbekistan avoids this compression. The State Conservatory's Shashmaqom curriculum assigns credit hours but does not impose outcome-based descriptions. The order of learning — which maqom first, which vocal section after which instrumental passage — is dictated by the tradition, not by the curriculum committee. Uzbekistan's 2023 presidential decree on higher education reform increased the national target for tertiary enrolment to 50% by 2030 [20], but the conservatory's internal pedagogy remains insulated from Bologna-style formatting pressure. The institutional shell is national, not European. The knowledge inside that shell breathes more freely.

Ferm Almqvist and Werner [8] found similar tensions in European conservatories — the master-apprentice model clashing with student-centred learning mandates. Casas-Mas et al. [7] demonstrated through a comparison of classical, jazz, and flamenco guitar apprenticeship that oral tradition learning works through different cognitive channels: embodied, contextual, relational. Not notational. Not modular. In Central Asia, the stakes are higher. These traditions are not niche electives. They are what governments call national heritage. The state tells the conservatory: preserve this music. The state also tells the conservatory: use this European framework. The two commands contradict each other at the level of knowledge itself.

4.3. The Aga Khan Music Programme as Epistemic Bridge

The Aga Khan Music Programme (AKMP) has operated in Central Asia since 2000. It was created to repair something that the Soviet collapse broke: the chain of traditional musical transmission [17]. The programme does not work inside the formal higher education system. It works in schools. This is both its strength and its limitation.

In Kyrgyzstan, the AKMP's Centre Ustatshakirt in Bishkek runs the Umtul (Aspiration) programme. The numbers are specific: 80 schools across all seven regions, over 7,000 students learning komuz through group instruction. The Muzchyrak initiative provides professional development — seminars, short courses — and has distributed approximately 2,000 musical instruments to schools that had none [17]. The programme name itself, Ustatshakirt, means "master-student." It declares its pedagogical allegiance in two syllables.

In Tajikistan, the Khunar Centre in Khujand operates an ustod-shogird programme across the Sogd Region, Darvoz, and Shakhrinav. Students learn dutar, tanbur, tar, ghijak, doira, and classical Tajik vocal traditions. The "Meros" (Heritage) curriculum was developed jointly with the Tajik National Conservatory, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Culture — then deployed as a pilot in 30 public schools. The falak vocal tradition, central to the Meros curriculum, was inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2021 [19]. International recognition arrived after the curriculum was already running. Not before.

Three design features of the AKMP's work matter for our argument. The programme keeps the master-apprentice method as the core transmission mechanism but places it inside a structured timetable — scheduled sessions, designated spaces, defined student groups. The tacit transfer is preserved. The institutional container is added around it, not forced into it. The programme produces supplementary materials — audio recordings, printed collections, teacher guides — that support oral transmission without replacing it. In SECI terms [6], this is controlled externalisation: tacit knowledge is partially articulated into materials, but those materials are designed to feed back into socialisation (the live master-student session), not to substitute for it. The programme creates performance opportunities — concerts, festivals, international tours. The Ustatshakirt Ensemble performed at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2023 and 2024 [17]. Khunar's ensembles appeared at the Dushanbe Ethno-Jazz Festival and the Roof of the World Festival in Khorog. These events serve as assessment through demonstrated competence: the audience and the master teacher evaluate the performance. No grade sheet. No rubric. The tradition's own judgement mechanisms operate.

Table 2. Curriculum design approaches for traditional music across institutional types.

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Design dimension	Kurmangazy (Bologna)	State Conservatory (national)	AKMP (Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan)
Knowledge documentation	Written learning outcomes, ECTS descriptors	Credit-hour allocations, content descriptions	Audio recordings, teacher guides, printed collections
Transmission method	Master-apprentice inside ECTS shell	Master-apprentice inside national credit system	Master-apprentice inside school timetable
Assessment	Jury → numerical grade	Jury + oral defence	Performance events + teacher evaluation
Role of notation	Supplement; oral primary in practice	Memory aid; oral dominant	Minimal; audio recordings as reference
Tacit knowledge space	Constrained by documentation demands	Wider — less formalisation pressure	Widest — design protects oral method
Accountability structure	MusiQuE + national IAAR	National Ministry	NGO reporting + school system

Source: compiled by author based on [14–17].

The AKMP's approach is the most deliberate accommodation of tacit knowledge in the data we examined. It also operates outside the formal higher education system. The challenge is whether conservatories, which face MusiQuE standards, ECTS documentation, and national quality assurance oversight, can import these design principles without gutting them.

5. Discussion

We collided with a structural problem that governance-level analysis cannot reach. The friction we documented is not between national systems — it is between knowledge systems. Degree harmonisation, credit transfer, accreditation alignment — all of this work assumes that the knowledge inside the curriculum is the kind of knowledge that can be harmonised. Oral music traditions refuse this assumption.

Bischof [4] identified decoupling as an institutional strategy in post-Soviet higher education. We found that decoupling in music conservatories is not a pathology. It is survival. When formal requirements demand that knowledge be explicit and the knowledge in question is tacit, the institution has two options: distort the knowledge to fit the format, or produce documents that satisfy the format while protecting the knowledge behind them. Central Asian conservatories chose the second path. This is rational behaviour. It is also invisible to accreditation auditors.

Brown and Duguid [11] warned that organisations mistake the record for the reality. We saw this in precise institutional form. The Kurmangazy Conservatory's ECTS-formatted syllabus for dombra performance is a representation — a bureaucratic projection of something that happens in a room between two people and an instrument. The representation and the reality operate in different epistemic registers. The syllabus is explicit, modular, measurable. The lesson is tacit, continuous, felt. The gap between these registers is what we mean by epistemic mismatch.

Casas-Mas et al. [7] showed that oral tradition learning mobilises embodied cognition, aural processing, and relational apprenticeship — cognitive channels that notation-based curricula do not engage. In Central Asia, this is not a pedagogical preference. It is a state mandate. Governments require conservatories to preserve traditions inscribed on UNESCO lists. Governments also require

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conservatories to adopt Bologna-compatible structures. The two requirements clash at the level of epistemology. No policy document acknowledges this.

We propose an "epistemic bridge" framework built on three principles.

Protected pedagogical space. A defined proportion of the credit-bearing structure in traditional music programmes should be designated as space where master-apprentice transmission operates without the requirement to produce written learning outcomes for individual sessions. The credits count. The bureaucratic overlay does not penetrate the studio. The analogy is clinical training in medical education — supervised practice in a ward carries academic credit even though each patient interaction does not have a learning outcome attached. Medical education solved this problem decades ago. Music education has not.

Assessment through demonstrated competence. The jury system already in use at Kurmangazy and other conservatories provides the foundation. The modification we propose: let the jury's criteria include tradition-specific elements — stylistic fidelity assessed against the tradition's own standards, capacity for improvisation within the tradition's conventions, quality of sound in terms the tradition itself defines. Generic "learning outcome" descriptors flatten these specificities into bureaucratic mush.

Documentation through audio-visual archive. Notation was built for Western classical music. It captures pitch and rhythm. It does not capture the microtonal inflections, rhythmic elasticity, timbral variation, and improvisatory practice that define Central Asian oral traditions. Where institutional accountability demands a record of knowledge, audio and video recording should replace notation as the primary medium. The AKMP already uses audio recordings as curriculum support materials [17]. The technology exists. The policy framework does not.

These principles carry costs. Accreditation agencies may resist curriculum structures that deviate from their standard formats. Recording equipment, archiving systems, and trained staff require investment that many Central Asian conservatories — particularly the Kyrgyz National Conservatory, operating within a country where total higher education expenditure per student remains among the lowest in the post-Soviet space [20] — cannot easily afford. A philosophical shift is also needed: from understanding "quality" as compliance with documentation standards to understanding it as fidelity to the knowledge tradition being transmitted. That shift has not begun.

6. Conclusions

We examined the epistemic mismatch between oral music traditions and formal curriculum structures in three Central Asian conservatories. The tacit-explicit knowledge distinction [5] and the SECI model [6] served as the analytical lens. The material was documentary: syllabi, programme descriptions, accreditation reports, and institutional publications from the Kurmangazy Conservatory, the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz National Conservatory, supplemented by published accounts of the Aga Khan Music Programme's curriculum work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The central finding is the "two curricula" phenomenon. Formal documents describe traditional music programmes in the language of learning outcomes, ECTS credits, and modular design. Actual teaching operates through master-apprentice transmission, oral demonstration, and embodied practice. The gap between these two realities is widest where formalisation pressure is strongest — at Kurmangazy, with its MusiQuE accreditation and ECTS obligations — and narrowest where the institutional shell imposes less codification pressure, as in Uzbekistan's nationally defined system.

The argument is simple. The dominant model of curriculum design in higher education assumes that knowledge is explicit, codifiable, and individually assessable. Oral music traditions are tacit, embodied, and relationally transmitted. The model does not fit the knowledge. Forcing the fit produces institutional shells — documents that satisfy auditors while teachers quietly preserve the actual transmission behind closed doors.

We proposed an epistemic bridge framework: protected pedagogical space, competence-based assessment, audio-visual documentation. The Aga Khan Music Programme provides practical

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precedent at the school level. Adapting these principles to higher education — where accreditation demands are heavier and institutional inertia is deeper — remains the open problem.

The relevance extends beyond Central Asia. Any region where formal higher education carries a mandate to preserve oral music traditions — South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, indigenous communities within Western countries — faces a version of this epistemic mismatch. The challenge is not to "include" traditional music in curricula. It is to build curriculum structures that respect the epistemic character of the knowledge they claim to transmit. Whether the institutions now governing Central Asian music education have the will or the freedom to do this remains an open question.

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