

Teaching Students to be Bold: Unlocking Creativity through Playful Learning in the Music Classroom

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Declaration

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Summary

Creative thinking is widely considered to be a necessary skill enabling us to keep pace with the rapid technological and societal changes in our world today.

Research has shown that the cultivation of creative thinking is influenced by several factors (Craft, 2005; Fryer, 2000; Amabile, 1998). In education two such factors are the role of the teacher and the influence of the environment (Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013; Craft, 2005; Jeffrey & Woods, 2003) This study aims to explore how teachers can develop creative thinking in the conservatoire musicianship class, and to investigate the impact of this on student engagement and independent learning.

The research questions governing this study are:

1. What pedagogical strategies can be employed to unlock and develop creative thinking in the music education classroom?
2. What is the impact of these pedagogical strategies on student engagement and the development of autonomous learning in the music education classroom?

To facilitate the gathering of rich data a mixed method approach was used. A questionnaire was distributed at the start of the study and was repeated on completion of the five-week study. During the five-week study various pedagogical strategies were employed to promote creative thinking. These included the setting of a free composition task, working collaboratively on tasks during class, exploring the teacher's use of language, both verbal and physical and the manipulation of the physical environment. To supplement this data two focus groups were held. Thematic analysis of the data was undertaken.

The results indicate that the pedagogical strategies employed during this study had a positive effect on the development of students' creative thinking abilities.

Experimenting with the room configuration promoted collaboration and facilitated a dialogic style of teaching. It also had a significant impact on students' emotional environment. The modelling of creative behaviour encouraged ideation and flexible thinking. Finally, there were observable positive outcomes in terms of student engagement and independent learning.

Following on from these findings a number of recommendations are suggested.

These include: making classroom design more flexible, allowing for fluidity of movement and thought; implementing training for teachers on the most effective use of language, both physical and verbal; exploring assessment practices that promote creative thinking and reduce external pressure.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Creative thinking is nowadays commonly considered to be a skill necessary for human flourishing in this rapidly changing conceptual and technological age (Goldberg, 2018; Richards, 2007). Its significance and value are reflected in the five-fold increase in the literature surrounding this topic in the last twenty years (Runco & Albert, 2010; Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004). Today creativity is a term frequently cited in modern educational debate (All our futures, 1999; Odam & Bannan, 2005; QCA, 2005a). Within music education there is a duality in the way creativity is understood: it is an activity such as composition and improvisation and it is a thinking style (Odena & Welch, 2016). This study focuses on the development of creativity as a thinking style in the conservatoire musicianship classroom. It explores several strategies, including teacher behaviour and the manipulation of the physical environment, to unlock and develop creative thinking and behaviour in musicianship students in a Dublin conservatoire.

1.2 Rationale

In 2015 TUDublin (then DIT) established IDEA Camp (www.ideacamp.ie), a summer camp for children aged from eight to twelve years. This camp was designed to unlock children's creativity in the areas of music, media, digital, food, and design. Underpinning the IDEA Camp was the holistic and constructivist approach of the Reggio Emilia (Edwards et al., 2012). The ethos of the camp was one of learning through play; children constructed their own learning in a joyful, meaningful,

experimental, and social way (Zosh et al., 2017). The concept of learning through play is gaining significant traction in education circles (Resnick, 2017). While the approach of IDEA Camp resonated with the researcher's own open philosophy regarding music education, it highlighted the contrast that exists between this playful approach and the traditional pedagogy of the music conservatoire. Studies surrounding the fostering of creativity in music education are primarily focused on the general music classroom. Literature surrounding the conservatoire is plentiful, but its focus is primarily connected to the three pillars of composition, improvisation, and performance at third level. There is considerably less research into the cultivation of creative thinking among young primary and secondary level musicians in the conservatoire musicianship class. This study was designed to explore how the IDEA Camp principles might be integrated into the conservatoire musicianship class and examine the impact, if any, on student creative thinking.

1.3 The research questions

The aim of this study is to investigate pedagogical strategies that can be employed to unlock and develop student creative thinking in the musicianship classroom and to investigate the impact, if any, on student engagement.

The research questions guiding this study are:

- 1 What pedagogical strategies can be employed to unlock and develop creative thinking in the music education classroom?
- 2 What is the impact of these pedagogical strategies on student engagement and the development of autonomous learning in the music education classroom?

1.4 Methods

This study took place in a conservatoire in Dublin. Forty-seven students were invited to participate. These students were in Grades 2, 5 and 7 musicianship classes. These grades were chosen as they represent the junior, intermediate and senior cycles of the musicianship curriculum in the Conservatoire.

A mixed methods approach was employed for this study. A questionnaire was administered in the first week of April and this was repeated on completion of the study in May. In addition, two focus groups were held in May. One focus group was for students in Grade 2 classes, the other for students in Grades 5 and 7 respectively. It was decided to separate the focus groups based on age in order to prevent the older students from dominating the conversation (Scott, 1997).

Ethical approval was granted for the study, and throughout the research ethical considerations were carefully adhered to in order to ensure that the study is as thorough, reliable and valid as possible.

1.5 The researcher

With nearly thirty years' experience teaching piano and musicianship at the conservatoire, the researcher established this study in order to integrate her own personal philosophy with current understandings in creativity research in the musicianship classroom. The intention was to encourage students to explore their own creativity in a playful way and to add depth and breadth to their learning experiences.

1.6 Structure of thesis

This thesis has six chapters. Following the Introduction, Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of the literature, outlining current understandings in creativity research. It explores pedagogical strategies that can be employed to foster and develop creativity and discusses possible areas where tensions may arise. Chapter Three outlines the methodologies employed in this study and details the research instruments used. Ethical concerns and issues surrounding reliability and validity are addressed. Chapter Four presents the findings of this study in two parts. Part one presents and compares the findings from the two questionnaires while part two presents a thematic analysis of data collected over two focus groups. Chapter Five critically engages with the findings noting where the data converges with the literature and where there are discrepancies. It highlights findings that were unforeseen and observes the impact that the findings might have on future practice. Chapter Six presents a synthesis of the study and outlines directions for possible future research.

1.7 Conclusion

Having outlined the What, Why, Who and Where of this research study, the following chapter will present a review of the literature organised under several headings: History of creativity research and the dilemma of definition, Pedagogical strategies underpinning creative thinking, and Creativity and music education.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review attempts to condense the vast amount of literature about creativity into several major headings that are of relevance in addressing the research questions underpinning this study. It opens with a brief history of creativity research and this is followed by a discussion of the issues faced in defining creativity in all its conceptualisations. Personality traits associated with creativity are described followed by an examination of the place of creativity in education. Pedagogical strategies that help foster creative thinking are discussed. Literature detailing the place of creativity in music education is outlined before a discussion of creativity in the conservatoire. Finally, tensions surrounding creativity and assessment are detailed before the conclusion section.

2.2 History of creativity research and the dilemma of definition

The last twenty years have seen an explosion of interest in the study of creativity with a five-fold increase in the number of articles exploring this topic (Runco & Albert, 2010; Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004). While the problems we face in our world today require creative solutions, the need for creativity is not a new phenomenon as Ghiselin (1954) observed:

Today, when widespread, deep, and rapid changes are taking place in the very structure of our lives, whether we desire it or not, and when still other changes seem necessary to preserve us from disaster, understanding of the creative process is particularly important because it can assist in the control of these difficult developments. (p.2).

Modern study of creativity is often traced back to Guilford's address to the American Psychological Association in 1950. Here Guilford explored convergent and divergent thinking, a concept he later expanded on to include ideational fluency and fluidity. Since that address, research into creativity has increased exponentially. In the 1970s Torrance wrote of creativity in terms of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (Lucas & Spencer, 2018). In his tests of creative thinking (TTCT) Torrance developed figural and verbal tests to score these aspects of creativity (Plucker & Makel, 2010). In the 1990s Amabile (1996; 1998) researched the motivational aspects of creativity, while Csikszentmihalyi (1997) explored the system of creative activity. Today two themes distinguish current creativity research from that begun halfway through the last century. The first theme is the increasing recognition that everybody has the potential to be creative (Richards, 2007; All our futures, 1999). The second theme is that creativity belongs in all areas of our lives and is not confined to the arts (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007; Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004; Edwards et al., 2012).

Research into creativity today extends far beyond its initial scope in the field of psychology. Creativity is currently a buzzword in education and economics, leadership and literature, brain science and business (Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007). Its value is recognised not only in economic terms but increasingly in terms of human wellbeing (Richards, 2007). In this conceptual age knowledge alone will not suffice. What is important is how we can apply this knowledge to improve our wellbeing and our world (Lucas & Spencer, 2018; QCA, 2005a; Goldberg, 2018).

In Ireland today creativity is becoming increasingly evident in both education and business sectors. Universities are developing studies in creativity and innovation.

These include the Innovation Academy based in University College Dublin (UCD) and the Tangent ideas workspace at Trinity College Dublin (TCD). Many of these university programmes focus on the need for creativity in business and in the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. TUDublin (formerly DIT) established a unique programme designed to explore creativity from a different perspective. Founded in 2015 their IDEA Camp was Ireland's first academy of creative play and was established with the aim of nurturing lifelong creativity. The concept is a holistic one with creativity seen as a keystone of personal flourishing. The importance of creativity to personal wellbeing also features prominently in the Irish government's Creative Ireland programme. This is an ambitious five-year programme that aims to enable every citizen to realise their full creative potential.

In order to address any research questions surrounding creativity, every effort must be made to clearly define what it means. Having a clear, common and testable definition of creativity is vital if research is to remain focused and purposeful (Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004). Lack of 'definitional congruence' (Patston, 2017, p. 18) is problematic. On examination of the literature creativity is frequently defined as that which is new and is appropriate to the task in hand (Beghetto, 2005; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007; Runco & Albert, 2010; Lubart, 2010). Both characteristics must be present if something is to be regarded as creative according to Plucker, Beghetto and Dow (2004). Kaufman and Sternberg (2007) also add the element of quality into their definition. While most authors agree on these characteristics, creativity is not limited to just these three traits. Ideational fluency, making remote connections, openness, divergent thinking and problem solving all find their way into mainstream definitions (Smith & Smith 2010; Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco, 2010). The All Our Futures (1999) report also includes imagination, purpose and value, with Piirto

(2017) contributing tolerance of ambiguity, a willingness to take risks and self-discipline. There are simultaneously too many definitions and no common definition (Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004).

It is important to note that theories and definitions of creativity are not the same the world over. Much of the research on creativity has a Western bias (Lubart, 2010; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007; Zosh et al., 2017). From a Western perspective, creativity is primarily viewed as a linear process resulting in a new and adaptable product. Perhaps, this is responsible for what Smit refers to, in his foreword to Craft (2005), as the muddling of creativity with consumerism. A more Eastern approach, however, views creativity as a reiterative process focused on adapting and reinventing old traditions (Lubart, 2010). Another cultural distinction is the interpretation of creativity as an individual or as a collective venture. Increasingly Western creativity is focused on collaboration. Gardner (2011) considers it highly improbable that creativity can continue to be an isolated affair in a world made smaller by advances in technology, while Sawyer (2010) outlines the increasing importance of collaboration in his research. Piirto (2011) is one of the few thinkers in the field who considers solitude to be a requirement of the creative process, perhaps, because she herself is an artist as well as an academic.

Having discussed the various elements that contribute to the defining of creativity, it is Plucker, Beghetto and Dow (2004) who, in their research highlighting the problems of definitional congruency, propose the following definition: 'Creativity is the interaction among *aptitude, process, and environment* by which an individual or group produces a *perceptible product* that is both *novel and useful* as defined within a *social context*' (p. 90). This definition requires some modification in education circles (Smith & Smith, 2010). Teachers should bear in mind that within the

classroom the concept of new is more realistically interpreted for students as 'new to them'. Concepts of relevance and high quality also require reconsideration in the classroom. While it is hoped that students will produce high quality work, the purpose of creative thinking, echoed in this research, is to see the value in things that may not be of high quality. There is significant learning to be experienced in understanding why something does not work and how we can make it better. While there are distinctions between definitions, most approach creativity from one of four perspectives: product, process, place and person. Throughout the literature these four perspectives are known collectively as the four 'P's' (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco, 2010; Plucker & Makel, 2010; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007; Richards, 2007).

2.2.1 The four 'P's

The four 'P's' underpin many definitions of creativity. The creative product is the most tangible factor in the measurement of creativity (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco, 2010). An exploration of creative products across various domains illustrates they are clearly domain specific: a novel; a symphony or a new design for a mobile phone. While the products are unique, the creative process, whether in music (Kozbelt, 2017) or science (Meyer, 2012), is often remarkably similar, following Wallas' four stage theory of creativity.

Wallas, writing in 1926, identified four stages in the creative process which are still relevant today (Baer & Kaufman, 2017). The first stage is preparation; this is the fundamental stage where information is gathered, and knowledge attained. Deep knowledge is a vital component in the creative process as without it it is not possible to determine whether an idea or a product is original and has value (Amabile, 1996). This is the stage of problem finding and idea generation (Bonnardel & Bouchard, 2017). The second stage is incubation, where the creative dilemma is allowed the

vital space to incubate and for possible solutions to bubble to the surface — often inspired by elements outside the domain in question (Amabile, 1998; Bonnardel & Bouchard, 2017; Craft, 2005 and Sawyer, 2010). The third stage is illumination; the famous lightbulb moment that characterises the sparking of creative insight. This is the stage of inspiration, of connection making and problem solving. This stage is by no means linear but is often recursive (Kozbelt, 2017), accompanied by further discussion and often compromise (Horng & Lin, 2017). Webster (2002), writing of creativity in music, advances on Wallas' model proposing that illumination is not a stage in itself but rather a 'qualitative event' (p.30) that occurs at many points throughout the creative process. The fourth stage, according to Wallas, is that of verification. Here the creative product is tested and approved by an audience. This is where the audience need to be persuaded by your findings.

The third 'P' is that of environment. The influence of place is crucial, as without a supportive environment creativity cannot flourish (Amabile, 1996; Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013). A supportive environment encourages and rewards risk taking; here failure is an opportunity for deeper learning, not a thing to be punished (Beghetto, 2005; Resnick, 2017). The provision of enough resources and autonomy are additional components of an environment that encourages creativity. Environment also has a crucial role in developing 'Potential', another 'P' cited in some definitions of creativity (Kozbelt, Beghetto and Runco, 2010).

The fourth 'P' is that of the creative person. Curiosity surrounds the personality traits of those who create remarkable works of art (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco, 2010). Besançon, Lubart and Barbot (2013) explore those personality traits associated with creativity in their exploration of creative giftedness. Conation, motivation and personality (Besançon, Lubart and Barbot, 2013) are all important facets of the

creative thinker. In order to foster and develop creative thinking in the classroom, which is one of the guiding questions of this thesis, there needs to be a deep understanding of these personality traits. These traits will now be examined in further detail.

2.2.2 The creative personality

‘Creative people may be nonconformist, but they certainly have a lot in common’.

(Davis, 1992, p.64).

Knowledge and understanding of those personality traits and cognitive abilities associated with creativity are essential to enable us to foster and enhance creative thinking and behaviour in individuals, schools, and organisations at both macro and micro levels. Many researchers have searched for commonalities in the personality traits, experiences, and cognitive abilities of highly creative people (Gardner, 2011; Davis, 1992). Teachers need to be familiar with these personality traits in order to foster students’ creativity.

In line with the definition of creativity one such personality trait is originality. Originality incorporates being full of ideas and imagination (Lucas & Spencer, 2018; CLASP, 2002; Lubart, 2010); imagination which, the QCA (2005a) states, must also be purposeful. Creative people are flexible with their ideas (Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013), bored by routine, and frequently challenge perceptions and assumptions (Davis, 1992). For this reason, they are sometimes viewed as outliers in society (Gardner, 2011; Gladwell, 2008).

Creative individuals are frequently risk takers (CLASP, 2002; Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013). These individuals are not afraid to try something new, to question and reject limits imposed by others, and to improvise new pathways and solutions (Pirto,

2017; Sawyer, 2010). Failure is seen as an opportunity to learn (Gardner, 2011), to experiment, to build and to tinker (CLASP, 2002; Resnick, 2017). Creative people are attracted to complexity (Davis, 1992). Often complex individuals themselves (Gardner, 2011) they can tolerate disorder, incongruity and ambiguity (Piirto, 2017; Besançon, Lubart and Barbot, 2013).

Creative thinkers are independent (Lubart, 2010). They are also self-confident (Fryer, 2000), self-aware and self-accepting (Davis, 1992). Their work is inner directed (Lucas & Spencer, 2018; Piirto, 2017). Alongside independence often comes a need for privacy and the need for reflection (Davis, 1992; Fryer, 2000). However, this is often not possible in this increasingly connected age where creative work frequently requires collaboration (Piirto, 2017; Lucas & Spencer, 2018; Resnick, 2017). Creative individuals possess an ability to see things with fresh eyes and a childlike naivete (Piirto, 2017; Richards, 2007). They play with ideas (Mendelssohn, 2017). This concept of playful experimentation is gaining traction among business and educational institutions, with Lego's Serious Play® at MIT (Resnick, 2017), Harvard's Project Zero, and the IDEA Camp at TUDublin.

In teaching for and with creativity teachers should, according to Lucas and Spencer (2018), foster five creative thinking habits: inquisitiveness; persistence; collaboration; discipline and imagination. Piirto (2017) also includes discipline in her list to which she adds openness, risk taking, a tolerance for ambiguity and group trust. Others have explored thinking styles, mental flexibility, and the ability to make diverse connections, as further personality traits that support creative thinking and behaviour (Kaufman, 2016; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995).

While there is consensus in the literature about many of the indicators of creative behaviour, there are, nevertheless, some contradictions. Some researchers highlight the extrovert and collaborative high energy of the creative person (Baer & Kaufman, 2017; Piirto, 2017; Lucas & Spencer, 2018). Others like Davis (1992) and Fryer (2000) highlight the introspective, reflective, and sensitive nature of the creative personality. It has also been observed that traits associated with creativity do not always transfer across cultures. Characteristics that mark someone out as creative in Western societies, such as non-conformity or humour, are, in certain regions around the globe, viewed as being difficult, headstrong and opinionated (Lubart, 2010). These personality traits are neither fixed nor limited and can be developed in a variety of contexts (Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013) and across a lifespan (Simonton, 2012).

2.3 Pedagogical strategies underpinning creative thinking

‘I can tell you how to get a Nobel prize... have great teachers’ (Paul Samuelson (1972) cited in Amabile, 1996, p. 185).

In February 1998, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) was established in the UK to examine the creative and cultural development of young children through formal and informal education. The resulting All Our Futures report, published in May 1999, recognised the challenges facing education and called for ‘new priorities in education’ (p. 5), that put creativity at the heart of teaching and the curriculum. The importance of creative thinking has also been recognised by PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) who in 2021, alongside English, Maths and Science will include ‘creative thinking’ as an assessment domain (Lucas and Spencer, 2018). In Ireland recent reforms of the Junior Certificate (NCCA, 2017) have placed creativity at the heart of its eight key

skills, while at national level the Creative Ireland programme, as mentioned, has an ambitious five-year programme to foster creativity in every citizen. Although there has been a marked increase in creativity research in the last decade, there are still areas where further exploration is possible. In education there is a need for increasing research in classroom-based practices (Beghetto, 2017) thereby enabling the practical application of research (Smith & Smith, 2010).

Consideration of the role of education in the development of creative thinking reveals the juxtaposition of traditional and alternative pedagogies (Besançon & Lubart, 2013). In the former, the classroom is traditionally laid out with desks in rows, and the focus is directed on the teacher at the front. This highlights the teacher as master, and there is an emphasis on what (Beghetto, 2005) terms a Performance Goal Model. Here the goals are to avoid mistakes, to achieve the highest grades, and to be better than others. This is a model very familiar to those learning the craft of music performance in the conservatoire environment. In contrast, the alternative pedagogies, underpinned by constructivist theories, allow students to build their own knowledge over time in a Mastery Goal Model. Here the focus is on self-improvement, creativity, and the development of skills and understanding (Beghetto, 2005). Achieving this in education requires an open philosophy underpinned by constructivist theories. Here the focus is on partnership and collaboration, on integration rather than separation (Beghetto and Kaufman, 2017), in a space of playful experimentation.

2.3.1 Constructivism

Constructivism in education is focused on the creation of knowledge and not merely its transmission (Plucker, Beghetto and Dow, 2004). Teaching in a constructivist classroom involves disciplined improvisation and flexibility with an emphasis on

group work (DeZutter, 2011). The result is an egalitarian and improvisatory experience in which the teacher's role is to adopt strategies that welcome unpredictability and allow students determine the direction of the work in any given moment (Sawyer, 2010). This approach is not without its critics however, who feel that it diminishes the role of the teacher (Baines & Stanley, 2000; Plucker, Beghetto and Dow, 2004). Biesta (2013) is critical of the way in which a constructivist approach does not honour the unique contribution that the teacher, as expert, can provide, arguing that the approach 'give[s] up on the very idea of education' (p. 46). Criticisms aside, the strategies associated with a constructivist approach include encouraging students when they take risks, developing students' intrinsic motivation, allowing time and space for ideas to incubate, and modelling creative behaviours (Craft, 2005); all strategies that support the development of creative thinking in students.

The Reggio Emilia approach, which was the inspiration for the IDEA Camp, provides an excellent example of constructivist theories in action. In this approach children are encouraged to express themselves in a myriad of ways ('The Hundred Languages'): through movement, painting, sculpture, music, and even computer animations (Edwards et al., 2012). Its circular, collective and open-ended approach is conducive to the development of creative thinking. The founder of the Reggio approach, Lois Malaguzzi, has spoken of creativity as integral to our way of thinking and knowing, as collaborative, and as the coming together of intellect, emotion and imagination to arrive at unexpected solutions (Edwards et al., 2012). Malaguzzi, like Odena and Welch (2016), acknowledges the importance of teachers' perceptions of creativity in promoting creative behaviour among students and, like Amabile (1996), he recognizes the importance of knowledge and creativity as complimentary rather than

competing processes. In this constructivist approach the teacher observes and facilitates. It is a dialogical rather than a didactic approach. Unlike critics of constructivism, Malaguzzi notes that when the teacher steps back 'Creativity seems to find its power' (Edwards et al., 2012, p.52).

Pervading the Reggio approach is the concept of learning through play — a concept that is becoming increasingly popular in education circles through the work of the LEGO foundation (Resnick, 2017). Advocates claim that learning through play facilitates deep learning in which experimentation and tinkering are used to synthesise knowledge and experience (Lucas & Spencer, 2018; Resnick, 2017). To achieve this, students must be motivated, willing to take risks and be persistent (Zosh et al., 2017) all of which are personality traits associated with creative thinkers (Amabile, 1996; Davis, 1992). In addition, the characteristics of learning through play (joyful, meaningful, experimental, and social) are closely aligned with those of creative thinking (Zosh et al., 2017). As with the constructivist approach, learning through play gives students a voice in decisions that concern them, thereby giving them increased agency in their learning which is important in terms of the research questions in this study. Play experiences create the supportive emotional environment for students to develop and express themselves creatively. Creating the right emotional environment is but one element in the cultivation of creativity; the physical environment also has a significant part to play in the unlocking of creative thinking and behaviour.

2.3.2 Physical environment

Context plays an important role in learning (Jeffrey & Woods, 2003). The physical layout of a classroom can invite students to express their creative potential, or it can inhibit creativity (Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013). Traditionally the classroom

layout has the teacher at the front, sometimes on a raised platform, with students sitting behind desks in neat rows. This layout reinforces the master-apprentice approach to teaching, highlighting an unequal teacher-student relationship where the teacher is the expert and the focus of all the attention (Jeffrey & Woods, 2003). Students sitting at desks are expected to be compliant and controlled (Allsup, 2016). In this technological age, when students have instant access to vast amounts of information at their fingertips, this master-apprentice scenario is simply unsustainable. Jeffrey and Woods (2003) note that there appears to be more variety of layout at primary level compared to secondary level. The impact this difference might have on student creativity is a topic that emerged during this study and will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Classroom layout can do much to support equality and collaboration. It can encourage students to find their own questions and increase motivation. Recently, the CLASP (2002) project showed that a creative practise was much enhanced by the manipulation of the physical space. In designing the Active Learning Centre at Purdue University, architects and teachers observed how the layout of a room compelled teachers to teach in a certain way — something not every teacher was comfortable with (Fitsimmons, 2019). The design of Purdue, and that of the new TUDublin campus at Grangegorman, reflects a blurring of lines between spaces, where learning is understood to take place both inside and outside the classroom. On a lighter note, Patston (2017) wonders if classrooms might take on the appearance of a teenage bedroom in order to foster and manifest creative behaviour in teenage students. Humour aside, the environments that foster creative learning are ones that allow both teachers and students to have ownership and control over

their learning while recognising that the learning must be relevant to the students' interests outside the classroom.

2.3.3 Teacher behaviour

One of the most impactful and influential factors in the development of student creativity is the classroom teacher. Behaviour modelled by the teacher is vital in developing a successful creative learning experience (Craft, 2005; Kinsella & Fautley, 2017). The CLASP (2002) report details some of these behaviours. First among these is the enjoyment communicated by the teacher. This is not only enjoyment in their subject, but also in teaching, and in the teaching of their subject. A deep knowledge of their subject domain was cited as an important factor in igniting students' own curiosity in the subject.

The teacher's demeanour is also an influential pedagogical strategy in encouraging creative thinking. Both body and verbal language are significant in supporting risk taking, sparking imagination and in the cultivation of the student-teacher relationship (Craft, 2005). Feeling acknowledged and cared for by a teacher assists in the creation of a successful learning experience (CLASP, 2002; Craft, 2005).

One of the ways in which language can be used to develop creative thinking is in the asking of open-ended questions (QCA, 2005a). 'What if', 'How might we', and 'I wonder' are all good places to start, but the journey to creative thinking can go deeper. Expansive questions challenge existing assumptions and philosophies. A question like 'What part is most difficult for you?', 'How can I explain this better?' and 'What was the greatest risk you took here?' are questions with no right or wrong answer. These expansive questions enable students to recognise and reflect on their abilities, to grow and learn, and to spark students' inquisitive skills (Lucas & Spencer,

2018). In addition, the use of problem-based learning by teachers encourages inquisitive learners, problem solvers, and enables students develop their confidence in and capacity for creative thinking (Lucas & Spencer, 2018; Meyer, 2012).

Teachers model creative behaviour when they show a willingness to be the learner (CLASP, 2002). Teachers must have the courage to go 'off road' at times allowing students to explore a topic, in depth, that is of interest to them, and in so doing cultivate a playground rather than a playpen environment (Beghetto and Kaufman, 2017; Craft, 2005; Resnick, 2017). Here, in line with constructivist theories, students are free to generate their own ideas, to direct their own learning and have agency over how their ideas might be implemented. Risk taking, motivation and the ability to critically reflect not only on their own ideas but on the ideas of others are encouraged and enhanced.

There is one final strategy that teachers can consider in the cultivation of creative thinking in their classrooms, namely space. Students need time and space to allow their ideas to percolate and incubate (Piirto, 2017; Craft, 2005). Creative thinking takes practice, and practice takes time. While there is some evidence to suggest that a deadline can improve focus and assist in the generation of creative ideas (Amabile, 1998; QCA, 2005a), most evidence points to the need for time to allow for the germination of ideas (Craft, 2005).

Creativity research in education is a vast and constantly evolving field in which researchers must strive to keep pace with constant and rapid changes (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2017; Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004). Research that informs pedagogical practice is vital in order that educators can enable and encourage students to think creatively while balancing curriculum and assessment demands (Sawyer, 2011;

Resnick, 2017). It should also be considered that the pursuit of creativity in education must not merely be for social reproduction and economic success (Biesta, 2013; Craft, 2005), but rather to pursue a society of fulfilled, self-actualised individuals (Davis, 1992; Maslow, 1968). The role of creativity in the expanding arena of music education will now be explored.

2.4 Creativity and music education

Since the late twentieth century, music education has undergone multiple reinventions. Ideas that have emerged during this time include the recognition that improvisation and composition are vital to the development of musical creativity and that education should 'focus on developing creativity and musicianship skills' (Jones, 2005, p.5). There is an acknowledgement too of the need for students to be able to fulfil a variety of roles. These go beyond the traditional roles of performer and composer, to include roles such as director, critic and sound engineer (Jones, 2005; Gregory, 2005). The ability of contemporary music to promote creativity (Green, 2002) contributes to the current concept of musical creativity as being broad, open and inclusive (Burnard, 2012). It is at once both an activity (composition and improvisation) and a thinking style (risk taking, originality, ideation) (Odena & Welch, 2016).

Today we are at a critical point in music education. Musical creativity in all its forms must be at the heart of the curriculum. This is recognised in the new Junior Certificate Music Programme (NCCA, 2017) which contains aspects of creativity in each of the eight key skills of the curriculum. While there is a dedicated 'Being Creative' skill, other facets of creativity are found underpinning the other categories. It is, for example, in the skills of 'Managing Myself' (knowing of oneself), 'Staying Well' (being spiritual) and in 'Managing Information' (being curious and thinking

critically and creatively). In considering the cultivation of creativity in music education, Burnard (2012) observes that 'the presence of music is not a necessary condition for having creativity, but having creativity is a necessary condition for having music' (p.8).

Davidson (1990) illustrates how the music classroom differs from other classrooms in its natural propensity to foster creative thinking. Learning to perform a piece of music takes a long time, allowing students time for reflection and to develop a depth and breadth to their understanding of a piece. Music regularly requires collaboration and open-ended learning. Unlike other classes where teachers may seek one correct answer, the music classroom encourages different answers. To do this requires judgement: students are constantly refining their judgement in the music classroom to produce the sound and quality they desire in their music. The result is students who are engaged in their work and intrinsically motivated. While schools and governments continue to evolve curricula, there is one area that is often seen as conservative and slow to embrace change. Accused of fetishizing the works of the great composers (Burnard, 2012), the modern conservatoire is having to venture into uncharted territory; to review its rationale, to open its doors and its thinking to new ideas.

2.4.1 Creativity and the conservatoire

From its origins in sixteenth century Italy, the original role of the *conservatorio* was the conservation, protection and training of children. As it evolved throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the conservatoire's focus shifted 'from those who are taught to that which is taught' (Odam & Bannan, 2005, p.16). Today, the conservatoire is frequently associated with conservative attitudes. Dependence on the Western classical canon is a strong criticism of the conservatoire, one which

demands a broadening conception of musical creativities (Burnard 2005 & 2012). In today's rapidly changing and increasingly diverse societies, conservatoires are being called to reflect upon their rationale. While continuing to be centres of excellence in performance, modern conservatoires are becoming pioneers in developing new courses and are beginning to look at ways to connect and integrate their skills into the wider community (Odam & Bannan, 2005). The importance of informal learning practices in developing musical creativity is increasingly being acknowledged in the formal conservatoire (Green, 2002 & 2016; Jenkins, 2011). Reflecting and responding to these demands, conservatoires must strive to develop more rounded musicians who can move seamlessly between the roles of teacher, performer and composer (Gregory, 2005), musicians who are fluent in what Allsup (2016) terms 'multimodal literacies' (p. 68). While it is acknowledged that the traditional demands are an essential element in the technical mastery of an instrument, clinging to traditional practices, coupled with a bias towards Western classical music, risks alienating students from their own creativity (Gregory, 2005).

Conservatoires have traditionally focused on a 'Performance Goal Structure' (Beghetto, 2005) through graded examinations, competitions and masterclasses. Here the goal is to achieve the highest mark, to be better than others and, at all costs, to avoid making mistakes. The impact of this on student esteem can be detrimental as Burt-Perkins and Mills (2009) found in their research describing a student 'struggling to maintain her confidence as a musician in the conservatoire environment' (p. 829). This heightening of competition and constant striving for perfection are not conditions in which creativity can flourish. However, things are changing: composition and improvisation together with the exploration of other genres such as jazz and folk have become increasingly common. Conservatoires

today are becoming centres of excellence not just in performance but also in research and are evolving to become centres of intergenerational and multicultural learning and collaboration.

Teaching for creativity in the conservatoire places demands and challenges on both teachers and students. Odam and Bannan (2005) ask is it possible to 'create, perform and conserve at the same time?' (p.29). To achieve this, teaching in the conservatoire must move beyond the pillars of composition and improvisation and their reliance on Western classical music (Burnard, 2012). Children's natural positive belief in themselves as music makers must be encouraged by teachers (Burnard, 2012). Students also need to be given agency in their learning. Citing Wynton Marsalis, Allsup (2016) notes that 'When you don't consider the song of yourself, you become lost. And when you're lost, you do lost things' (p.78). Pedagogical strategies that foster an unsupportive environment risk segregating musical creativity into something for the talented few, an increasingly damaging position that sees music education, and its funding, fighting for equality with other disciplines (Shehan-Campbell, 2010). Collaboration and risk taking are essential to enable incipient musicians of all genres 'to embrace new ideas and to live with cultural paradox' (Gregory, 2005, p. 23). Unpredictability, divergent thinking and risk taking all take great cognitive and affective effort while 'threatening to dislocate the ordered mechanisms of our lives' (Gregory, 2005, p. 21). This disruptive nature of the creative process challenges the conservative image of the conservatoire with Davidson (1990) observing that 'in music class...the best work is not necessarily that of the best behaved, most serious student' (p.50). Creativity requires freedom and structure, daring and boldness which explains the title of this thesis.

For the teacher in both the conservatoire and general music classroom, finding the balance between structure and freedom requires a great deal of experience and expertise (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2011). It is here that the art of a great teacher comes into its own, resolving the tension between the curriculum as planned and the curriculum as lived. Get the balance wrong and any creative potential might be extinguished. Creativity in education involves a delicate balance between knowledge, skills and innovation (All Our Futures, 1999). This is echoed by Smit in his observation that ‘every good teacher is a catalyst to creativity, a liberator. Every bad teacher creates cages’ (Craft, 2005, p. xiv).

As society changes, and education responds, conservatoires are adapting and expanding their traditional conservative approaches. This is evident in the range of courses offered, more practitioners becoming researchers, and in their desire to establish connections with worlds beyond the conservatoire. One shining example is the partnership between the Royal College of Music and Imperial College to create the Centre for Performance Science in London. Creativity within the conservatoire is an area ripe for further research. When researching creativity in the conservatoire the researcher found little research into the cultivation of creative thinking among young primary and secondary level musicians. Much of the existing research focuses primarily on composition, performance and improvisation at the tertiary level (Gregory, 2005; Davidson, 1990). With hundreds of years’ experience educating young people in musical creativity it is time for the conservatoires to step forward and have their voices heard.

2.4.2 Creativity and assessment

Creativity is both a promising and problematic construct full of tensions and dilemmas both in the conservatoire and in the general music classroom. As a result

of the promotion of creativity through constructivist pedagogical strategies, tensions arise concerning the balance of freedom and structure (Sassi, 2011) and the impact of assessment on creativity (Baer, 2016; Beghetto, 2005). This dynamic tension is particularly evident in the classroom where standards and accountability compete with innovation and creativity (Craft, 2005; Resnick, 2017), with the latter often getting pushed down the list of priorities (Starko, 2018).

Regarding the impact of assessment on creativity two questions need consideration. The first of these is why we still place so much value on assessments, and secondly, what is the impact of assessment on creativity. The issue with the first question is that policy makers like things to be precisely measured and there can sometimes be a reluctance to try something new for fear of failure. Consequently, most general tests require specific answers and do not encourage creative or divergent thinking (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). Yet if we measure only analytical abilities, we miss capturing evidence of both creative and practical abilities.

In considering the impact that assessment has on creativity, research is divided. Baer (2016) ascertains that assessment is not a barrier to creativity, while Beghetto (2005) cautions that the 'large footprint of assessment may be stamping out student creativity along the way' (p. 254). Amabile (n.d.) also warns of the detrimental effect of assessment on creativity. The pressure of assessment is often blamed for a lack of creativity in the classroom with teachers spending considerable amounts of time preparing for exams, setting them, correcting them and finally giving feedback on them (Beghetto, 2005). The resulting problem is a lack of time to allow for the improvisation and incubation of new ideas (Piirto, 2017; Craft, 2005; Sassi, 2011).

Low scores in traditional tests may lead to students, and their teachers, having low expectations which in turn can become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Beghetto, 2005; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). Assessments that support and encourage creativity, however, are focussed on self-improvement, on understanding and on the development of skills and creativity. Pressure is minimised and intrinsic motivation is fostered. Assessing in this way encourages students to be more engaged in their learning, to persevere through problems, to seek help and to take risks.

The importance of relevant and appropriate feedback can impact the effect of assessment on creativity. To encourage creativity, feedback should minimise comparison and pressure while acknowledging risk taking and examples of creative expression (Beghetto, 2005). Fautley (2010) writes that constructive feedback with its focus on future improvement could, more accurately, be called feedforward. Finally, it is Richards (2007) who gets to the heart of the matter when she asks: 'Why is it, after all, that in so many schools students are trying to get one hundred per cent on someone else's test and not making up more questions of their own?' (p.26).

2.5 Conclusion

This review of the literature reveals the complexities that creativity presents. Multiple conceptualisations of creativity make definition problematic. Within education, both nationally and internationally, there is increasing recognition of the need to place creativity at the heart of the curriculum. Central to this is the implementation of pedagogical strategies that unlock and develop student creativity. These strategies include the adoption of constructivist methodologies, exploration of the interaction between space and practice, and examination of the impact of teacher behaviour, specifically body and verbal language. There is increased need to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of these strategies on student creativity and this

requires increased classroom-based research which is the focus of this study.

Chapter Three of this thesis will outline the methodologies employed in addressing the questions posed by this research project. The tools used will be detailed and concerns of ethics, reliability and validity will be addressed.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Creativity is a term frequently cited in modern educational debate (All our futures, 1999; Odam & Bannan, 2005; QCA, 2005a). In addition, creativity is recognised as vital to human flourishing and self-actualisation (Davis, 1992). Traditional methods of teaching music are often criticised for not being creative and for not inviting students to express their own musical creativity (Green, 2016; Gregory, 2005).

The aim of this research project is to investigate pedagogical strategies that can facilitate the fostering, development and promotion of student creativity in the musicianship classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research methodology underpinning the planning, implementation and evaluation of a five-week study with four musicianship classes in a Dublin conservatoire. This chapter begins with an exploration of the triumvirate of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods that underpin educational research. This is followed by a detailed account of the intervention that took place. The methods employed are discussed from the initial literature review through to the questionnaires and focus groups. These methods are detailed initially from a general perspective and then from the specific context of this study. Concerns of ethics, reliability, validity and bias are outlined. Finally, the data analysis methods are outlined in detail.

3.2 Educational research

Newby (2014) outlines three reasons why educational research is important — it helps identify and explore issues, it shapes policy and it improves practice. When

planning a study Creswell (2009) describes three types of design that can be employed: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. This study employs a mixed method approach using a combination of questionnaire and focus groups.

Qualitative research design is concerned with meaning rather than numbers (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It explores in depth the experiences and beliefs of a small sample of participants (Dawson, 2009). The context of the data collection is important (Braun & Clarke, 2013), with the data frequently collected in the participants' own setting (Creswell, 2009). The researcher identifies and interprets themes from the collected data. Consequently, this analysis is subjective (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The reporting of the data is flexible, theory generating and inductive (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2009). The methods used include interviews and focus groups. The disadvantages of a qualitative approach include the risk of researcher bias. The research can be complicated and time consuming and with a small sample size the results are not generalisable (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Bell & Waters, 2018).

Quantitative research uses numbers rather than words to generate data. These numbers are analysed using statistical techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The analysis is, therefore, objective and unbiased. The methods used are questionnaires and structured interviews (Dawson, 2009). Large sample sizes that are statistically robust, combined with methods that can be quick to carry out are advantages of this method. Disadvantages include data that lack depth and insight (Braun & Clarke, 2013). There are also things that cannot be measured in numbers such as human behaviour and feelings (Bell & Waters, 2018). A further concern is that the focus of the research cannot be changed midway through the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Bell & Waters, 2018).

Mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data, thereby giving a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Bell & Waters, 2018; Creswell, 2009; Thomas, 2017). This study was conducted within a social constructivist paradigm. A mixed method approach was employed. Qualitative data were gathered from two focus groups. One group was for students from two Grade 2 classes. The second focus group was for students from a Grade 5 class and a Grade 7 class respectively. The age groups were deliberately separated in order to prevent older students dominating the discussion (Scott, 1997). Quantitative data were gathered from a questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered at the start of the study and again on completion of the five-week intervention. The researcher also kept a reflective journal to record highlights from each class.

3.3 Research questions

This study asks two questions in its investigation of the cultivation of creative thinking:

1. What pedagogical strategies can be employed to unlock and develop creative thinking in the music education classroom?
2. What is the impact of these pedagogical strategies on student engagement and the development of autonomous learning in the music education classroom?

3.4 The intervention

This study took place over five weeks. During this time pedagogical strategies associated with the fostering of creative thinking were explored. These included: the setting of a free composition task, working collaboratively on tasks during class, keeping class plans fluid and improvisational to allow students greater agency in

their learning, and the manipulation of the physical environment. For five consecutive weeks the researcher rearranged the desks in a completely haphazard arrangement: some desks were grouped together, others were on their own, and desks were placed facing many different directions and posters were added to aid students and add colour (Appendix A). This manipulation of space, like those cited in the CLASP (2002) report, was designed to discover whether a non-traditional layout would encourage students' creative expression (Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013).

3.5 Context

The research took place in a conservatoire in Dublin. The conservatoire has 569 students studying musicianship. The researcher, who has been teaching at the conservatoire for twenty- seven years, teaches seventy-four musicianship students. For the purposes of this study students in Grades 2, 5 and 7 were invited to take part (forty-seven students in total). These grades were chosen as they represent the junior, intermediate and senior cycles of the musicianship curriculum. Students in the Grade 2 classes range in age from 9 to 12. In Grade 5 students age from 14 to 16 while in Grade 7 ages range from 15 up to mature students.

3.6 Methods

3.6.1 Literature review

The purpose of a literature review is to provide a background and a context to the research. It evaluates previous research and identifies gaps in the knowledge.

In this study the literature review began by examining the problems encountered when defining creativity. It explored the four Ps (Product, Process, Person, Place) that underpin much of creativity research. The review explored the personality traits associated with the creative personality. It investigated creativity in education and

detailed pedagogical strategies associated with the development of creative thinking, namely constructivism, manipulation of the physical environment, and the role of teacher behaviour. It concluded with an examination of creativity in music education with a focus on the conservatoire.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

‘the best people to provide information on the child’s perspective, actions, and attitudes are children themselves.’ (Scott, 1997, p. 332).

Research with children presents several challenges. Firstly, there are concerns surrounding confidentiality and ethics. Secondly, there are concerns over reliability and validity of responses when taking children’s cognitive development into account (Scott, 1997). Increasingly, however, the importance of conducting research with children is widely acknowledged (Bell, 2007) with children now viewed as active social participants whose voices need to be heard (Clark, 2011). It is possible to get reliable answers from research with children, but it is the quality of the question that will determine the quality of the response (Bell, 2007).

All these factors were borne in mind when designing the questionnaire for this study. A unique code was given to each participant to ensure confidentiality. Each code has three elements: the research tool (Q1 for questionnaire 1, Q2 for questionnaire 2, FG for Focus Group), the musicianship grade (2, 5 or 7), and the student's own unique number. The language used was simple and straightforward to reduce the likelihood of having questions with no responses (Bell, 2007). Clear introductory text was included (Bell & Waters, 2018), and the layout clearly structured. A process of continuous revision took place during the piloting phase. Underpinning the process was the establishment of a good relationship with potential respondents to increase

their willingness to participate wholeheartedly in the research project (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988 and Scott, 1997).

There were twenty questions overall (see Appendix B). These were structured under seven headings. These headings were chosen considering information gathered from the literature review: General Questions, Your Musicianship Class, Working Collaboratively, Risk Taking, Making Connections, Your Teacher and finally Your Creativity. Questions were mostly closed in nature in order to make it as easy as possible for the younger students to be able to answer all questions. Aware that such questions do not allow for depth and detail of information, a comments section was included for eight questions, inviting and allowing space for students to contribute further to the topic. The intention here was to offer topics for potential further discussion in a focus group. Questions of a more personal nature, such as those on Risk Taking and observations on Your Teacher, were deliberately placed towards the end of the questionnaire by which stage participants were committed to completing the questionnaire (Dawson, 2009). Although not recommended (Bell & Waters, 2018), a hypothetical question was included at the end. This was done to embody the concept of creativity, namely, to be bold and take a risk. Two of the younger students asked could they draw their responses to this question demonstrating that the creative risk often pays off in ways we cannot imagine.

The importance of piloting a questionnaire cannot be overstated (Dawson, 2009; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). On a practical level it helps to establish the average length of time it will take respondents to complete the survey. It is also invaluable in identifying problematic questions, highlighting inconsistencies and bringing to light any unexpected findings.

The first pilot was with my own two children, ages 14 and 12, who are also musicianship students at the conservatoire. They completed the questionnaire very quickly and this reassured me that it would be possible to have students complete the questionnaire during their regular class time. The second pilot was with seven students in my Grade 3 class. I chose this group as they are near in age to the youngest cohort in my study. The focus here was on making sure the language was clear and that the layout was easy to follow. The third pilot was with students who were not in my classes. A colleague very kindly agreed to administer the questionnaire to six students in her Grade 3 class. For the final piloting, I invited three of my piano students to complete the questionnaire. These students are closer in age to those in the Grade 5 and Grade 7 classes and they also attend musicianship classes in the conservatoire. Feedback concerned minor issues, such as putting instructions in bold font, but there was no problem understanding the questions. Every time the questionnaire was trialled there were suggestions for improvement. Increasingly, these became more miniscule. What did emerge was that the layout was easy to follow, and the questions were clear and understandable. The questionnaire was administered during normal class time. The various pilots had shown that the questionnaire would take between seven and eleven minutes to complete, making it very feasible to complete during class. In contrast, allowing students to complete the questionnaire at home ran the risk of having parents and siblings influence their responses (Scott, 1997). Having students complete the questionnaire in class did contribute to a sense of student agency and community. This was their chance to have their say about what happens in their musicianship class.

Initially it was hoped to have another teacher administer the questionnaire in order to avoid the possibility of students giving responses they felt would make them look better, or that had the intent of trying to please the teacher (Bell, 2007). Because of time constraints this was not possible, and questionnaires were administered by the researcher. Unforeseen benefits to this included the opportunity to provide students with a clear explanation of the purpose of this study. It was also possible to reassure those students who viewed the questionnaire either as a test or a race, something not uncommon with children of this age (Scott, 1997). In addition, being with the students contributed to a sense of us 'being in this together,' a collaborative community, thus deepening the sense of relationship vital to gaining respondents cooperation in the research (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988).

3.6.3 Focus groups

Developed in the 1940s, the focus group has become an increasingly popular tool in data collection across a diverse range of fields (Braun & Clarke, 2013). What distinguishes the focus group from other methods of data collection is the element of social interaction. The aim is to have participants discuss among themselves a topic brought forward by the moderator (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

As with all methods of data collection there are advantages and disadvantages to using focus groups. For the researcher one advantage is the ability to collect many responses in a single setting (Dawson, 2009). The interaction amongst participants, including asking questions of each other, can enable unexplored material to emerge thereby lessening the impact of researcher bias (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Dawson, 2009). This interaction of participants, in terms of body language, tone of voice and even hesitations, is another potentially valuable source of data (Bell & Waters, 2018; Dawson, 2009). The group dynamic can encourage participation from students who

may be nervous or shy. The focus group can even have an empowering effect with participants feeling they are agents of change (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Finally, the focus group allows the researcher to explore in depth the 'why' behind a response; this can be a response from the discussion or a response from an earlier questionnaire.

One of the primary disadvantages of the focus group is that it can be difficult to manage. One problem that can arise is that one person can dominate the discussion making it difficult for everyone to contribute (Dawson, 2009). The focus group requires a skilled moderator to strike a balance between staying on topic and allowing the participants latitude to explore uncharted territory — an exploration that may, or may not, yield valuable data (Bell & Waters, 2018; Clark, 2011). Some participants, including researchers, may be too shy to fully participate in the discussion (Dawson, 2009). Finally, focus groups can be time consuming and logistically difficult to organise.

This study employed focus groups in order to develop and clarify questionnaire responses, to reduce researcher bias and to gather rich, thick data. Nine students from Grade 2 were invited and eleven from Grades 5 and 7 classes in line with recommendations from Braun & Clarke (2013) and Dawson (2009). Two groups were deliberately chosen to prevent older students from dominating the discussion (Scott, 1997). The final number of participants was six for the Grade 2 group and eight for the Grades 5 and 7 group. Participants were deliberately chosen at random. To embody concepts of creativity such as risk taking, while also taking inspiration from aleatory composers like John Cage, names were picked randomly from a hat. The focus group was piloted with five students from Grade 5 who kindly agreed to

stay late after class one evening. This provided invaluable experience in the facilitation of a group, setting up the room and recording the discussion.

The focus groups were held in the conservatoire on two Saturdays in May. This required students to attend the conservatoire for an extra day. As an incentive an extra class was offered on those days. This was of value to students just before their end of year examinations. Before the start of the focus group the recording equipment (a Zoom recording device and a phone) was checked, seats were arranged in a circle and snacks were provided.

Taking ethical considerations into account, the researcher took great care at the beginning of each focus group to explain fully the purpose of the research, to explain what was involved, to explain what would happen with the data and to assure participants that their contributions would be confidential.

There was no prescribed list of questions. The researcher selected several topics based around student responses to the questionnaire and allowed participants direct the flow of the discussion. Using collaboration, unpredictability, risk taking and even fun in the running of the focus groups was a deliberate decision to demonstrate the principles of creative thinking in action.

3.7 Ethics, reliability and validity

Ethical approval was granted for this study by the School of Education Ethics Committee on December 21st, 2018 (ET7259-A-Y-201819). An information sheet was provided to the head of school at the conservatoire and permission granted for the study (Appendix C). Information and consent sheets were distributed to parents and to students (Appendix D).

Reliability and Validity carry different connotations in quantitative and qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2009). In quantitative analysis, validity is concerned with determining if an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Bell & Waters, 2018). Reliability refers to the extent to which a research tool will produce similar results under the same conditions on different occasions (Thomas, 2017). Qualitative data analysis is a much more personal process however (Dawson, 2009). When dealing with human beings, conditions cannot be consistent as there are so many variables. Vigilance is nonetheless required in determining whether the work is reliable and valid. The research must still be 'thorough, balanced and fair' (Thomas, 2017, p.147).

Reliability in qualitative research is achieved through continuous checking for accuracy both in transcription and in coding (Creswell, 2009). In this study meticulous care was taken to record rich detail in both focus groups. The resulting data were coded over three cycles allowing for continuous checking. Validity in qualitative research can be achieved through triangulation of data, obtaining rich thick descriptions, and through clarification of any existing bias (Creswell, 2009). All three steps were followed for this study.

3.8 Triangulation

The term triangulation is used when both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry are used (Dawson, 2009). Methodological triangulation is used to reach a more comprehensive understanding of a topic and is the hallmark of good research (Thomas, 2017). Using different sources of data can help in the confirmation of findings (Bell & Waters, 2018). Triangulation also reduces the limitations inherent in quantitative and qualitative research. Finally, triangulation is important in the demonstration of reliability and validity in qualitative research.

Triangulation is demonstrated in this study using mixed methods: questionnaire and focus groups. In addition, the researcher kept a reflective journal to note occurrences relevant to the research questions. Classes were audio recorded to assist in the recall of these events. For ethical reasons, once notation of information was completed these audio files were deleted to ensure anonymity of participants.

3.9 Bias

Bias can be defined as the loss of accuracy resulting from a prejudiced outlook and poor critical awareness (Thomas, 2017). It can occur where there is poor practice in the collection of data, misinterpretation of the data or where there is poor sampling (Newby, 2014). Bias can occur, accidentally or deliberately, at every stage of the research process, from the literature review, through the collection of data, to the analysis of data. Throughout all stages a researcher must be vigilant, critical and open minded (Bell & Waters, 2018). In qualitative research researcher bias is unavoidable due to the subjective nature of the research.

In this study steps were taken at every stage to reduce the likelihood of bias. In the literature review different, often contradictory, viewpoints were actively sought. In the questionnaire, care was taken to simplify the wording of the questions in order to avoid influencing the response. The random selection method for focus group participants also served to minimise the possibility of selection bias. Finally, the analysis of the data was undertaken as objectively as possible with every effort made to seek answers without taking sides.

3.10 Data analysis

Results from both questionnaires were notated. Student confidentiality was ensured by allocating each student a unique code. Charts for each question were devised

allowing for ease of comparison of responses in the first questionnaire compared to the second questionnaire. These comparisons were able to highlight the impact, if any, of the pedagogical strategies employed during the study. These charts and their findings are detailed in the following chapter.

Both focus groups were transcribed verbatim. Comments from my own journal regarding students' body language, hesitations and nonverbal communication were included. Having read through the transcripts I began the process of coding. I completed two cycles of manual coding using a combination of descriptive, process, versus, emotion and In Vivo codes (Saldana, 2016). Most codes were data derived but there were also codes that were researcher derived. A third cycle was completed using the NVivo programme.

Having completed the coding process, I undertook a thematic analysis. This began by examining the codes for recurring patterns paying attention to those that addressed my research questions. From this analysis basic themes began to emerge, an example being the importance of a supportive emotional environment in the unlocking of creative thinking. Finally, in this thematic analysis I organised the themes into a narrative and designed a concept map using NVivo to illustrate this.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has explored methodologies employed in educational research. It has outlined the reasons justifying the use of a mixed method approach in this study. It has detailed the steps taken to ensure best practice in the devising and administering of the research tools and in the subsequent analysis of the findings. These findings, from the questionnaires and focus groups, will be detailed in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of this study in two parts. Part one details the results of the questionnaires. Figures are employed to allow ease of comparison between the results at the beginning of the study and those at the end. Part two presents a thematic analysis of the findings from two focus groups. Concept maps are used to present a narrative of the data.

4.2 Part one: Questionnaire

For this research project forty-seven musicianship students were invited to take part. Twenty-two students completed the first questionnaire pre intervention and of these twenty-one completed the second questionnaire post intervention five weeks later. At Grade 2 level $n=12$, Grade 5 $n=5$ and Grade 7 $n=4$. For most questions $n=21$, however for some questions this number drops where students either did not answer the question or only ticked one of several given options. The average age for Grade 2 students was 10.3, for Grade 5 students 14.6 and for Grade 7 students 16. The questionnaire (Appendix B), informed by the literature review, contained seven sections: General Questions; Your Musicianship Class; Working Collaboratively; Risk Taking; Making Connections; Your Teacher and Your Creativity.

4.2.1 Section one: General questions

Section one of the questionnaire contained three general questions which asked students for their age, musicianship grade and what instrument(s) they play.

Confidentiality was ensured by not asking students for their names. Each student

was given a unique code to enable comparison between the first and second questionnaires. Among the twenty-one contributing students, nine play more than one instrument. Sixteen students study piano, while nine students study violin, and two study saxophone. Clarinet, percussion, recorder and guitar are studied by a single student respectively.

4.2.2 Section two: Your musicianship class

In section two (Questions Four through Seven), questions were designed to assess the degree to which students enjoy musicianship class, to determine those elements of class they enjoy the most and to ascertain students' attitudes towards their classroom environment.

The results from this section are now outlined in detail. The results for Question Four (How much do you enjoy attending musicianship class?) reveal that at the start of the research project most students — fifteen out of twenty-one — enjoyed their musicianship class 'a moderate amount' while five enjoyed their class 'a great deal' with just one student saying they enjoyed attending 'a little'. On completion of the research project the number of those who enjoyed their class a great deal had more than doubled as detailed in Figure 4.1 overleaf. This was a very positive outcome.

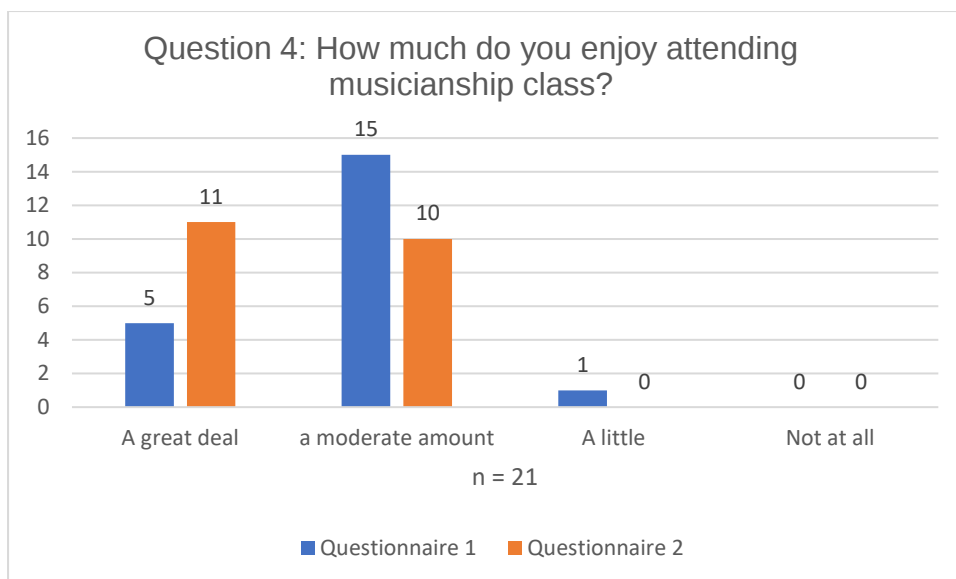


Figure 4.1: Level of enjoyment attending musicianship class

Question Five sought to discover which elements of their musicianship class students enjoy the most. Students were offered six choices, based on typical class activities, and asked to rate their preferred class activities on a scale from one to six. The results from the first questionnaire, in Figure 4.2, indicate that at the start of the research project ‘listening to music’ was the most popular part of the class with ‘singing’ and ‘meeting friends’ in second and third place respectively with ‘dictation’ by far the least popular element.

On completion of the study, ‘listening to music’ and ‘meeting friends’ both increased in popularity with ‘dictation’ continuing to be the least popular element of the class. ‘Singing’ showed a decrease in popularity, perhaps due to the approaching end of year singing examination, while the findings for ‘composing’ and ‘clapping rhythms’ were consistent across both questionnaires as shown in Figure 4.3.

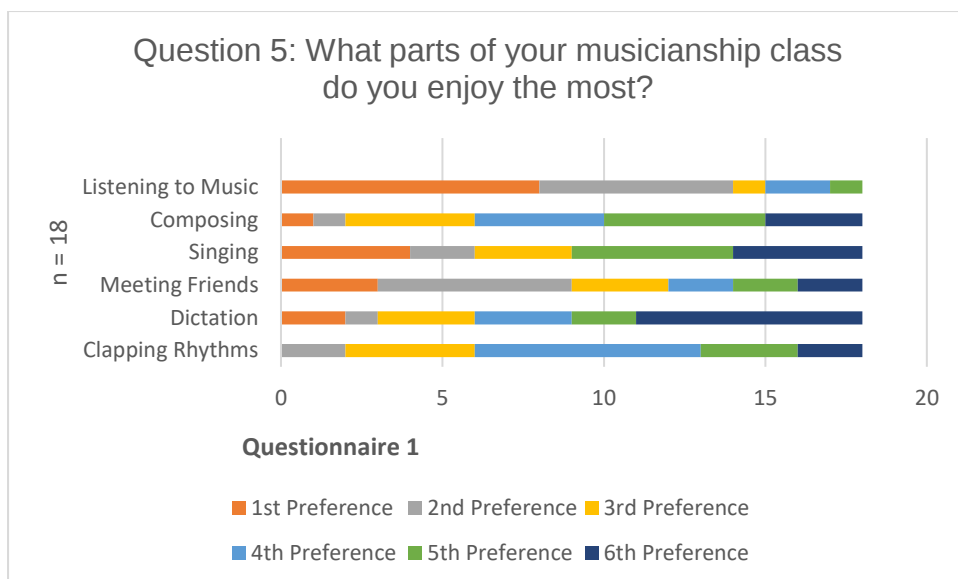


Figure 4.2: Questionnaire 1: Most enjoyable activities in musicianship class

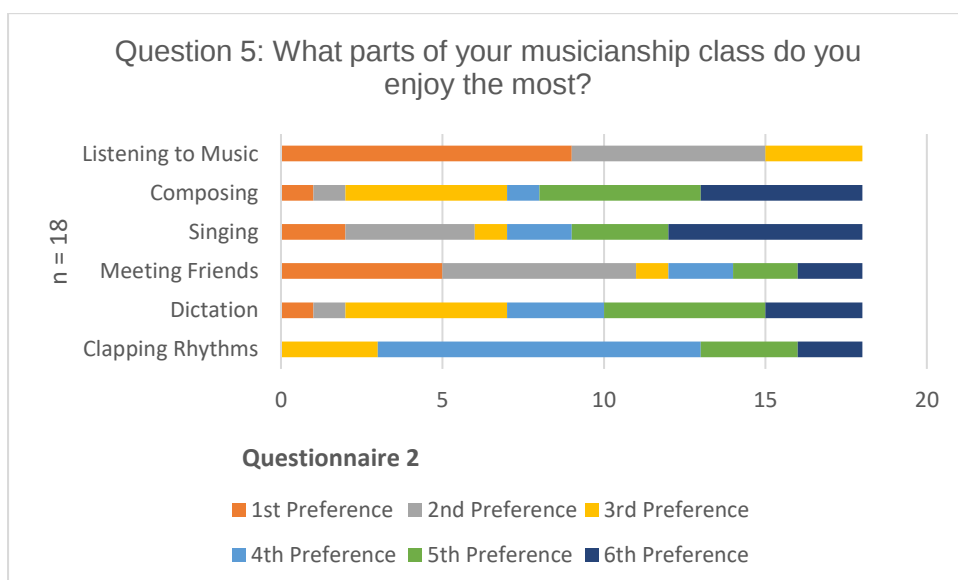


Figure 4.3: Questionnaire 2: Most enjoyable activities in musicianship class

In order to expand on the results from Question Five, Question Six then asked students to identify the elements in the musicianship class that they least enjoyed. Figure 4.4 shows that 'assessment' and 'homework' are the least favoured elements

of the class, while 'listening to music' is still clearly the most popular. These findings were consistent among all three grades.

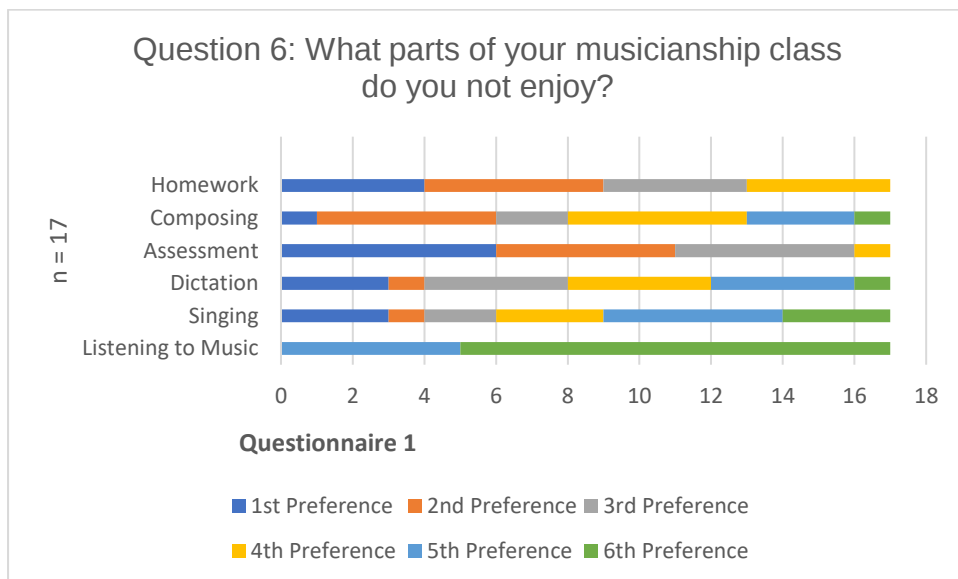


Figure 4.4: Questionnaire 1: Least enjoyable activities in musicianship class

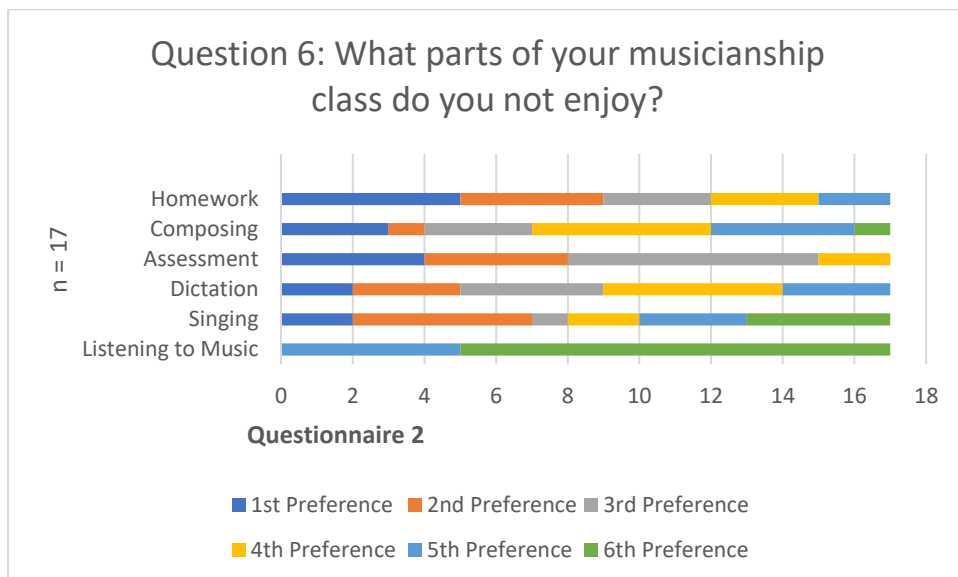


Figure 4.5: Questionnaire 2: Least enjoyable activities in musicianship class

Finally, in this section of the questionnaire, students' perceptions of their physical environment and its role in inspiring and motivating learning was explored in

Question Seven. The results are shown in Figure 4.6 below. They show an overwhelming majority of students are happy with the space in which class takes place.

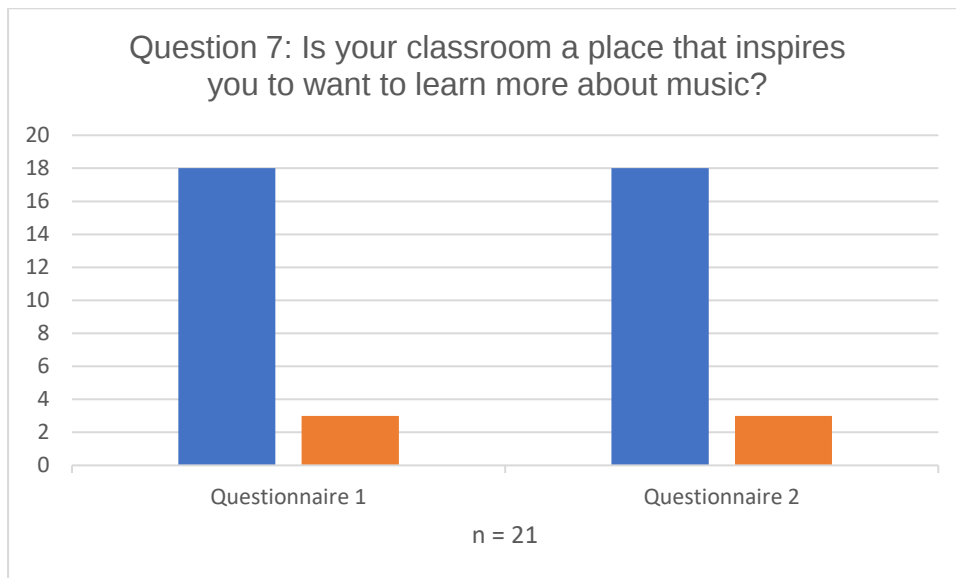


Figure 4.6: Students' impressions of the influence of the classroom on their desire to learn music

In the attached comments section, some students expressed that they would make no changes to the physical layout of the room, others expressed a desire for more space and colour:

[It would be nice] if possible we could paint the walls [Q1.2.12]

In the second questionnaire after the addition of colourful posters there were fewer comments on space and paint colour. Instead comments included:

The classroom look musical [Q2.2.6]

I think the room is perfect [Q2.5.21]

Out of eleven responses to the second questionnaire, three students suggested more posters. Interestingly, this suggestion did not appear in the first questionnaire and only emerged after posters had been placed on the walls.

4.2.3 Section three: Working collaboratively

Section three of the questionnaire focused on student attitudes to working in groups. Collaboration is frequently a requirement of creativity in this technological age (Lucas & Spencer, 2018; Piirto, 2017; Resnick, 2017). Results in Figure 4.7 below indicate an overwhelming majority of students prefer to work in groups and this finding was consistent across both questionnaires.

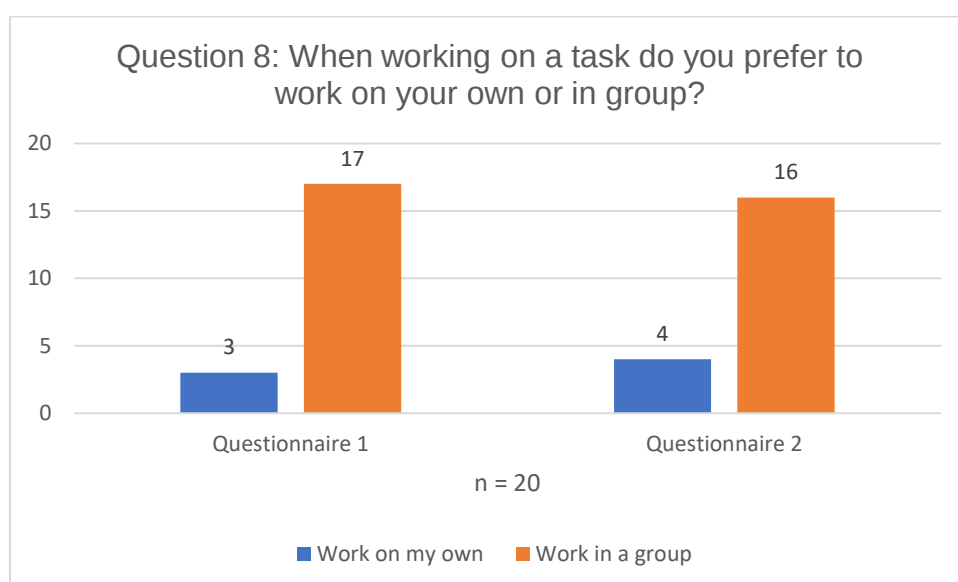


Figure 4.7: Comparative results of students' preferences for working in groups

In the Grade 2 class, group work was very clearly seen as being more fun and this aspect was cited in six out of twelve comments. Being able to get help from within the group was also important to this class level:

sometimes I get stuck on somethings [sic] that if I had people to help me then I might improve better [Q1.2.8]

In the second questionnaire the comments from the Grade 2 group contain a broader selection of themes. While fun is still clearly an important element in working together as a group, students now recognise how working in groups increases social interaction. In addition, students show an awareness of the benefits of hearing others' opinions and ideas:

working together means you can see some new points of views apart from your own [Q2.2.12]

For students in the Grade 5 class, the most notable benefit of working in a group was being exposed to new ideas and opinions. Like the younger Grade 2 class, this older group noted that working in groups allows the benefit of getting help from your peers. In the second questionnaire this concept was expanded with students recognising that the advantages and disadvantages of working in a group are often dependent on the task in hand

for some tasks e.g. dictation it is much easier to work by yourself [Q2.5.23]

This Grade 5 group did not mention fun or social interaction as a benefit of working in a group. Instead they were more concerned about getting something wrong in front of their peers and consequently feeling embarrassed:

[For] some tasks I prefer to work on my own, but at times when the task is difficult, I rather hear other people's thought instead of being afraid of being wrong. [Q2.5.20]

For students in the Grade 7 class, being exposed to different perspectives was an important aspect of group work evident in both questionnaires. One student commented on the opportunity for:

[You get to share] loads of different ideas and input from others, and they might play different instruments [Q1.7.25]

In the second questionnaire a new concern emerged. Like the Grade 5 class there was an increasing comparison between one's own knowledge and that of others in the group:

Sometimes I feel I can't really contribute to a group as my knowledge may not be as good as theirs. It depends on what the task is. [Q2.7.27]

Having determined whether students preferred working by themselves or in groups, the next question on working collaboratively sought to find out if students would like further opportunities to work in groups. In addition, it asked students to give examples of tasks where this might be accomplished, thereby giving them a choice over the material covered in class. There was minimal change in the results between the two questionnaires. What is interesting to see is the variation between the junior class (Grade 2) where there is a drop in the number of students who would like to work in groups (see Figure 4.8), and the senior classes (Grades 5 and 7) where the second questionnaire shows one hundred per cent of students would like more opportunities to work in groups (see Figure 4.9).

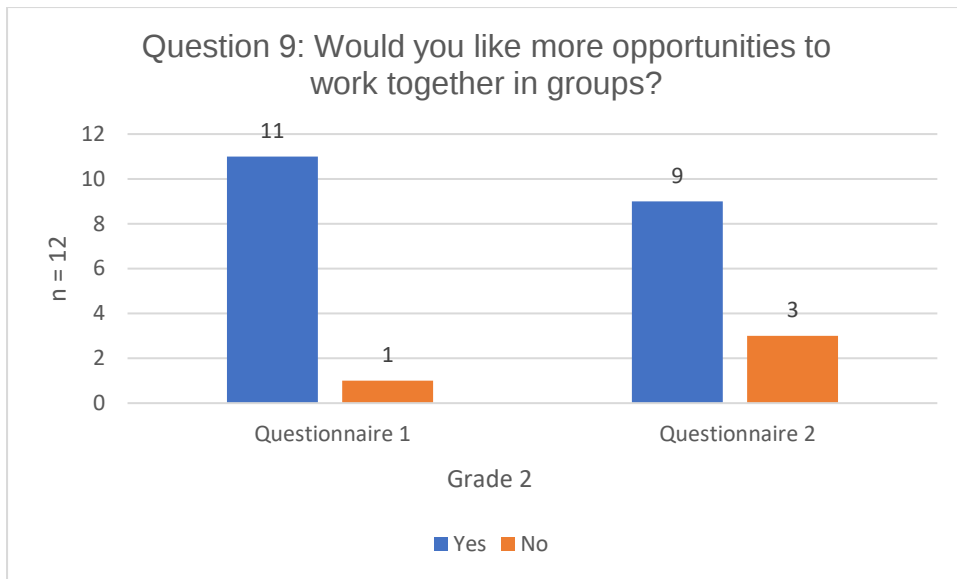


Figure 4.8: Students' desire to have increased opportunities for group work - Grade 2

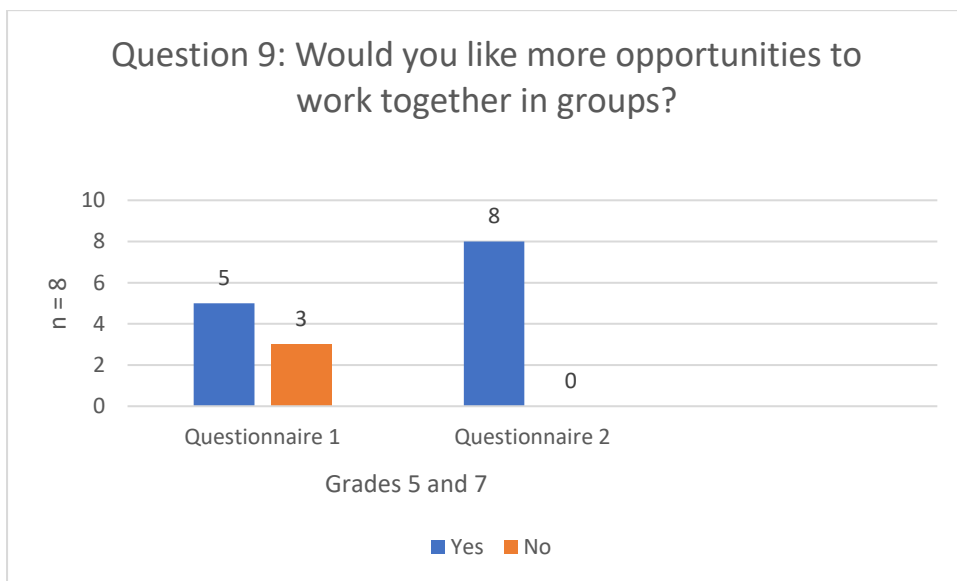


Figure 4.9: Students' desire to have increased opportunities for group work - Grades 5 & 7

Suggestions for possible group activities were offered by fourteen students in the first questionnaire and seventeen in the second. This increase in ideas perhaps indicating that students were better able to come up with ideas or were more confident in sharing their ideas. While one student expressed a strong dislike for

group composition, most students in Grades 2 and 5 expressed a desire to take part in group composition:

[I like] Pretty much anything but composing. Maybe a game to help us remember or to think more [Q.1.5.21]

[I enjoy] Making a medium sized song [Q1.2.5]

[I like when we do] Composing, advanced dictation [Q2.5.22]

Some students in Grade 2 also had difficulty in coming up with suggestions for group work but were comfortable admitting this.

Responses to the second questionnaire for Grade 2 students were like those for the first questionnaire however, one student suggested a rather novel exercise:

[We could] Create a rhythm and draw something related to the rhythm [Q2.2.8]

The suggestions for possible group activities from the older students however showed more variety and included:

[How about] when asked what something means e.g. binary form get into groups and discuss the form together [Q2.5.18]

[We could try] writing essays together [Q2.7.26]

4.2.4 Section four: Risk taking

Section four of the questionnaire contained three questions that address one of the cornerstones of creativity, namely the ability to take risks (CLASP, 2002; Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013). In Question Ten the greatest change, as seen in Figure 4.10, is the increase in students who are 'moderately comfortable' answering

questions in class. The fact that there are no students who feel ‘not at all comfortable’ answering questions in class in the second questionnaire is particularly encouraging. A similar pattern emerged in Question Eleven where students were asked how comfortable they are giving their opinions in class (Figure 4.11).

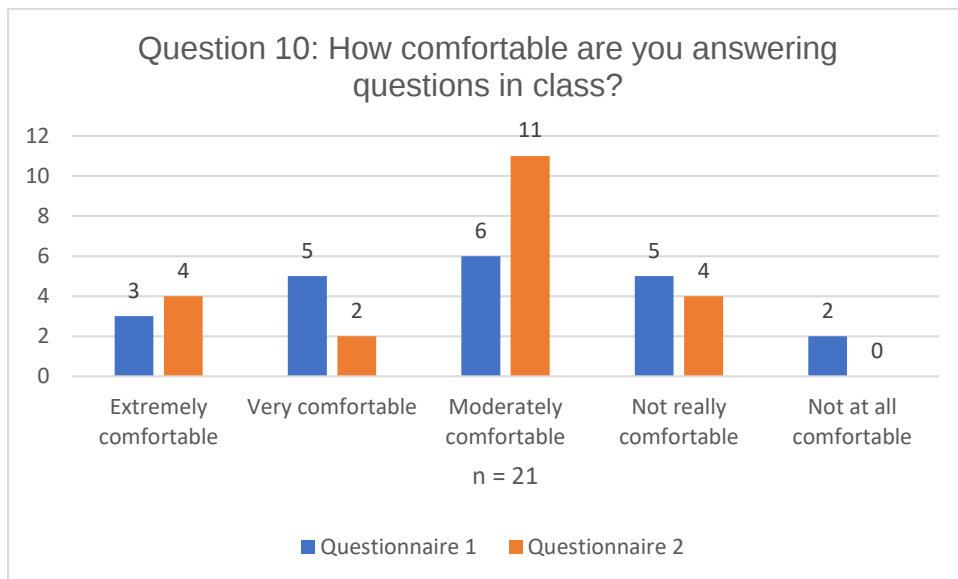


Figure 4.10: Levels of comfort answering questions in class

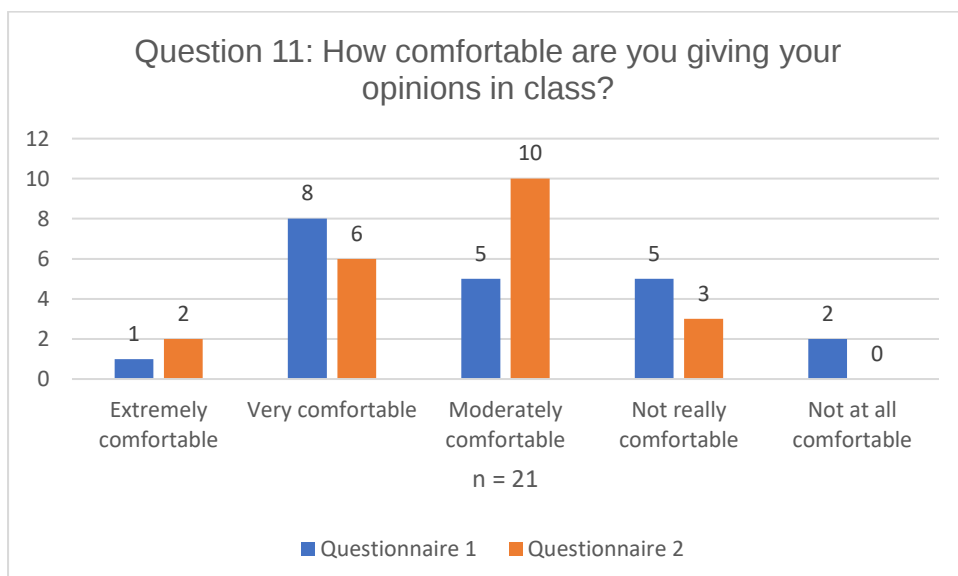


Figure 4.11: Levels of comfort giving opinions in class

Question Twelve sought to delve deeper into the reasons why students might feel uncomfortable answering questions and giving their opinions in class. The results in Figure 4.12 below clearly show that the biggest obstacle to students speaking freely is their fear of getting the answer wrong. This finding was consistent throughout all grades and indeed it was the only option selected by students in the Grade 7 class.

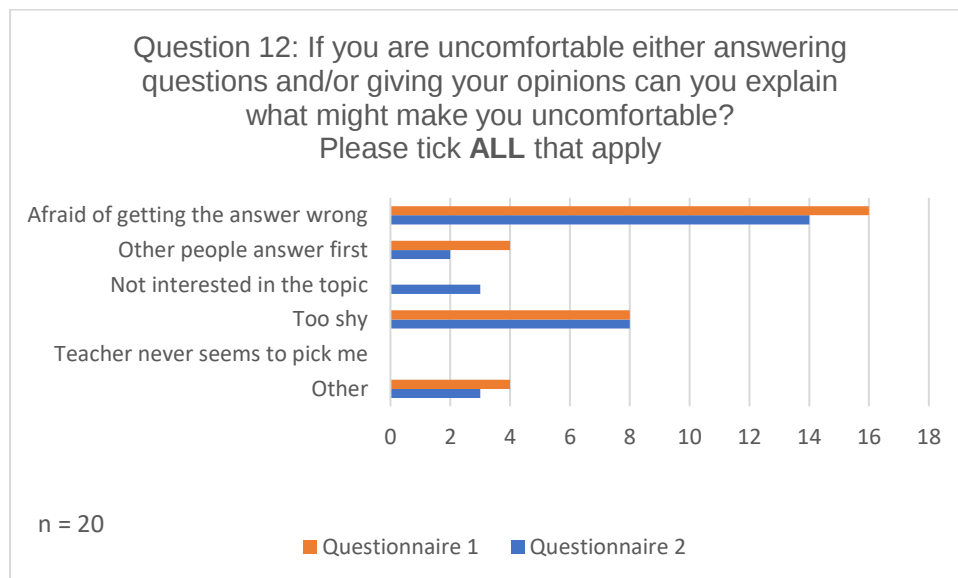


Figure 4.12: Reasons behind discomfort answering questions and/or giving opinions in class

The comments accompanying this question reflect students concern and fear around getting the answer wrong:

[I'm afraid that] maybe my opinion is really stupid [Q1.5.21]

Counterbalancing this are those students who commented that they were not reluctant to answer questions or give their opinions in class:

it doesn't apply to me I feel perfectly comfortable in this class [Q1.2.7]

4.2.5 Section five: Making connections

Divergent thinking is often cited as a marker of creative thinking (Plucker & Makel, 2010). The fifth section of the questionnaire investigated students' ability to connect the material from their musicianship classes to their instrumental lessons. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.13. There are marginal differences between the two questionnaires. There is a slight decrease in the number of students making connections between musicianship and practical lessons 'all the time'. One reason for this might be that the second questionnaire was administered two weeks after the study was complete. This was very close to students' end of year musicianship examinations when the focus of the class was sharply focused on the musicianship curriculum requirements.

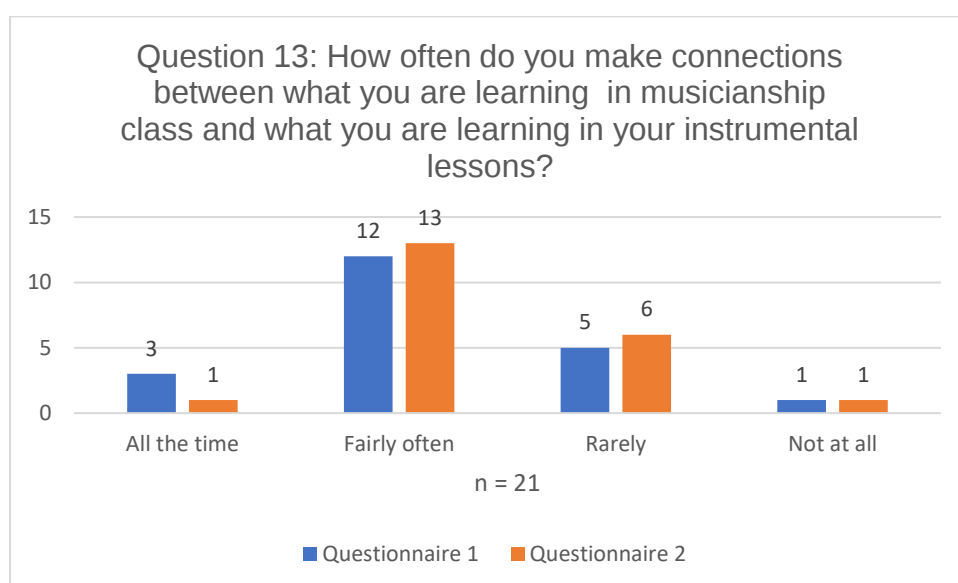


Figure 4.13: Making connections between musicianship and practical lessons

Away from the musicianship classroom, students listen to a wide variety of other music as illustrated in Figure 4.14.

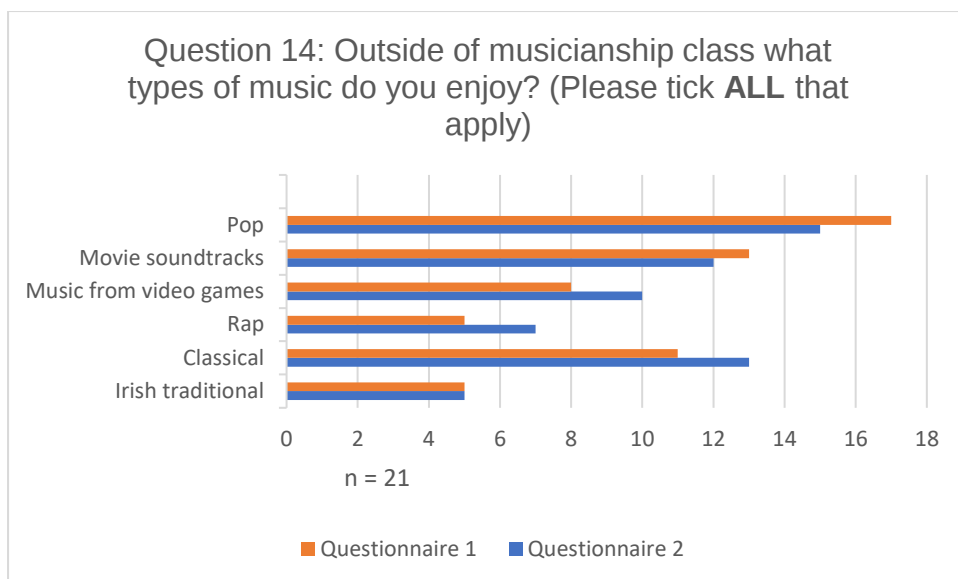


Figure 4.14: Types of music students enjoy listening to outside class

While pop music features most prominently, the numbers listening to classical music are close behind and show an increase in the second questionnaire. Students' work with the compositional process might be an explanation for this and this is detailed in Chapter Five. Alternatively, it could be a result of the increased sense of community. Other musics that students included in the comment box of this questions included: rock, funk, jazz, blues, 'RnB', favourite TV themes, electronic music and even Korean pop music.

4.2.6 Section six: Your teacher

In this part of the questionnaire three questions sought to assess the role of the teacher in fostering and developing student creativity. The first of these explored students' perceptions as to how open they thought their teacher was to hearing their opinions and ideas. Results, shown in Figure 4.15, show a marginal difference between the two questionnaires.

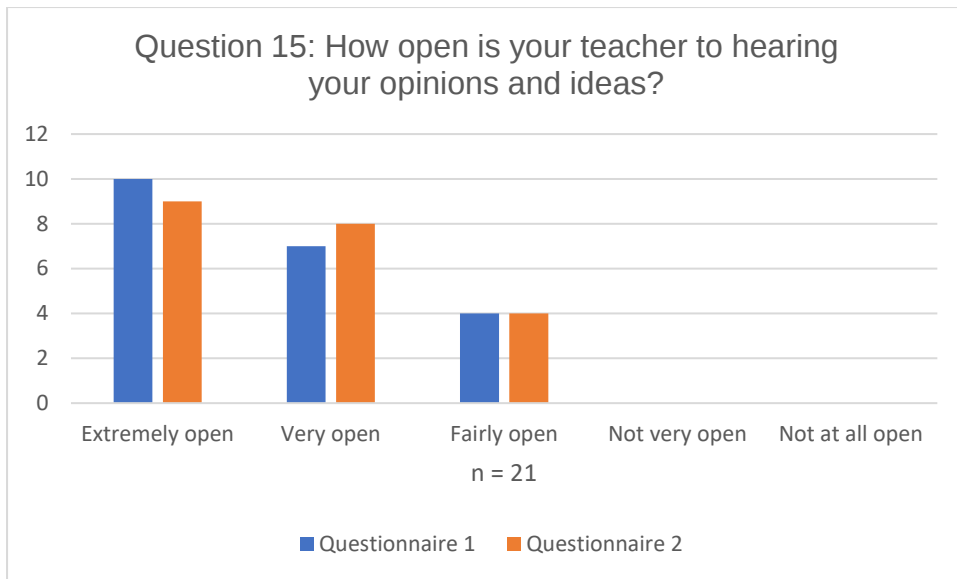


Figure 4.15: Teacher openness to hearing student opinions and ideas

Question Sixteen examined teacher behaviours that students felt made the class more fun and enjoyable. As well as the seven options given students could add their own ideas in a comment box. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.16.

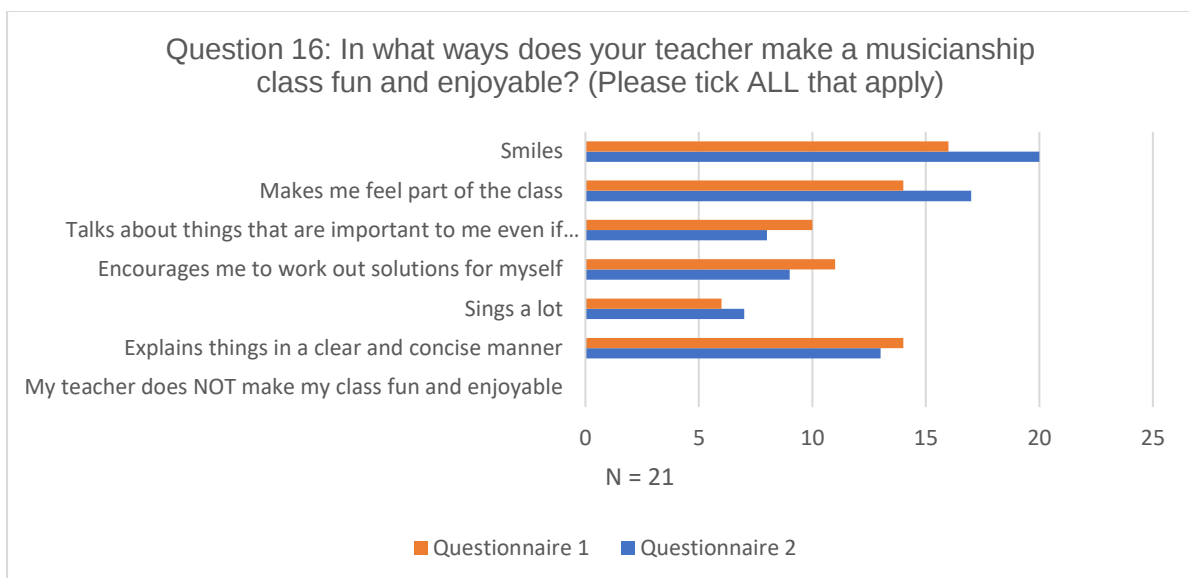


Figure 4.16: How teacher behaviour affects student enjoyment of class

In the comments made by students, younger students mention that the class is fun. For older students it was very important to their enjoyment of the class to feel included and encouraged:

[I like that] she makes me feel that I am actually able to do difficult things and if I'm not, she helps [Q2.5.23]

[I find her] really encouraging in general [Q2.7.25]

Question Seventeen asked students whether they judged a teacher based on the way the teacher dresses. Results, in Figure 4.17, indicate the overwhelming majority of students replied that they did not. More students admit to making this judgment in the second questionnaire.

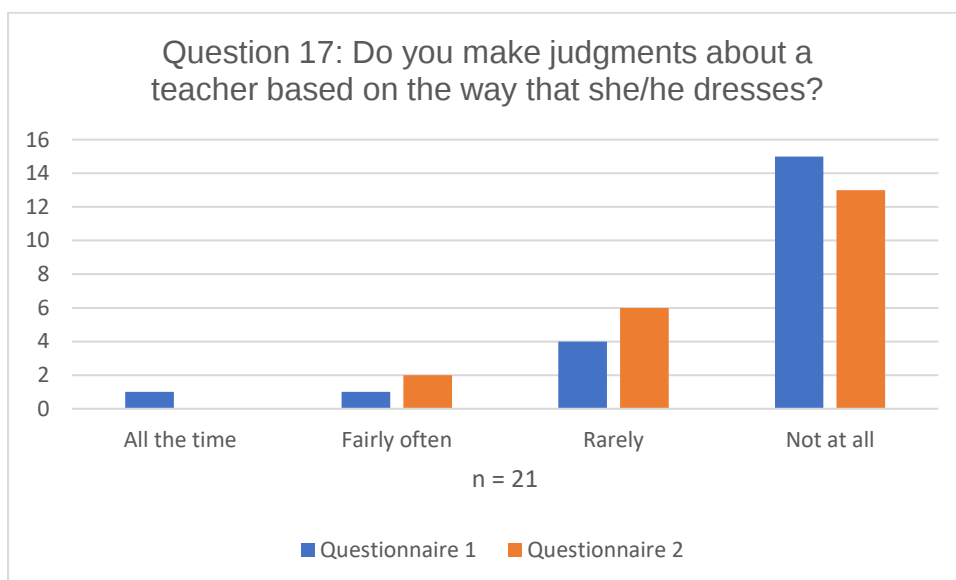


Figure 4.17: How often students judge a teacher based on clothing

4.2.7 Section seven: Your creativity

The final section of the questionnaire asked students to assess their own creativity in a series of three questions. Question Eighteen asked students whether they considered themselves to be creative and invited suggestions as to which activities,

outside of musicianship class, they took part in that they considered to be creative. Results are shown for each grade in Figure 4.18 below. The results are separated according to each grade in order to highlight those differences between students in junior, intermediate and senior grades. An interesting and significant difference is the increase among Grade 7 students in those identifying themselves as ‘very creative’. Overall the majority of students (sixty-five per cent) said that they were ‘sometimes’ creative, and this did not change in the second questionnaire. Note that only one student in the Grade 5 group did not consider themselves to be at all creative, and this did not change in the the second questionnaire.

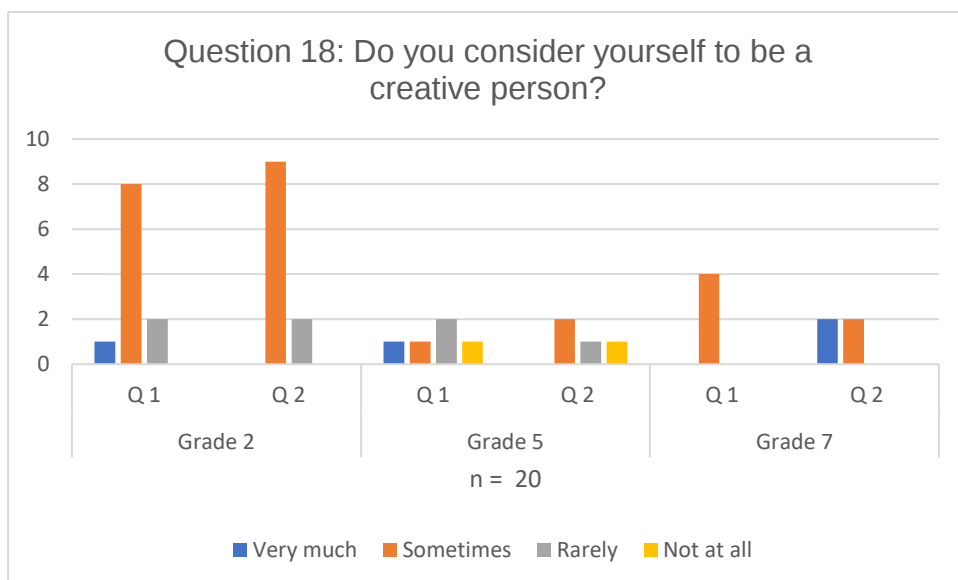


Figure 4.18: Students' perceptions of their own creativity

When asked what activities, outside of musicianship class, they engaged in that they considered creative, art and music were particularly important for students in the Grade 2 group.

I like drawing at home. I like listening to music because I feel like I know what the composer is thinking. [Q1.2.12]

Sport was another activity that was mentioned, although to a lesser degree. The Grade 5 group showed more diversity in answers here. Apart from the activities previously mentioned there was also cooking and baking, home decorating, writing lyrics and even creating

bizarre make-up looks [Q2.5.20]

Question Nineteen asked students if they considered themselves to be musically creative and invited suggested examples of creative musical activities that they engage in. The results are shown in Figure 4.19.

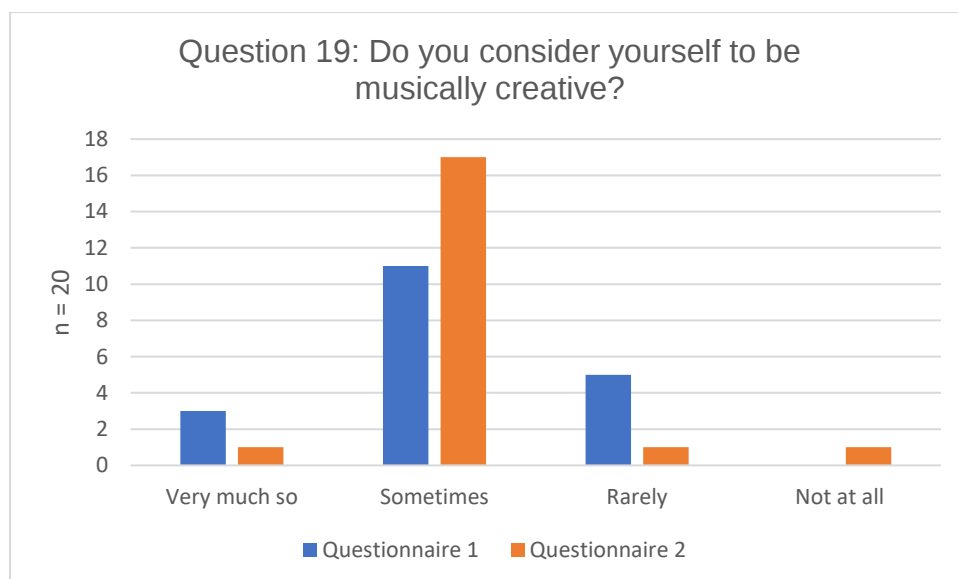


Figure 4.19: Students' perceptions of their own musical creativity

As can be seen the most notable change is the decrease in those identifying themselves as 'rarely' musically creative and the marked increase in those who identify as 'sometimes' musically creative. The presence of one student identifying as 'not at all' creative coupled with the decrease in those who said 'very much so' might indicate that the approach taken did not suit everyone. The element of collaboration and lack of clear guidelines was, perhaps, uncomfortable for some students. These will be discussed in Chapter Five.

When describing the creative musical activities they engage in students consistently cited playing an instrument, singing and listening to music. In the first questionnaire just over half of the Grade 2 group mentioned writing music:

sometimes I use parts of music to make my own song by adding my own notes, but I forget it after a while [Q1.2.12]

Responses in the Grade 5 and 7 groups similarly focused on activities such as playing, singing and listening. Only one of these ten students mentioned writing their own music and it was not in an enthusiastic way:

Writing music [is very creative] – which I never EVER do [Q2.5.23]

The final question, Question Twenty, asked students to describe their ideal musicianship class. Suggestions were provided including having a class outside and letting students decide what to learn. Students were invited to be as imaginative as possible with their replies.

For the Grade 2 group, with an average age of ten, describing their ideal musicianship class proved quite difficult in the first questionnaire. Five out of the eleven respondents simply copied exactly one of the given suggestions. Two students were very honest in recognising that they could not think of anything to say here.

In contrast in the second questionnaire every student had something to contribute. This time they relied much less on the suggested ideas and were more willing to push the boundaries in their ideas. Some of the suggestions in the second questionnaire included:

[How about] If we have a pause someone does a dramatic sound [Q2.2.8]

Bring in pets...learn hip hop music [Q2.2.10]

The older Grade 5 group had a lot more to say here. Every student made suggestions to this question and the responses were longer and more detailed than those of the younger group. Environment was a key theme for this group. Physical comfort, in the form of taking a short break during a seventy-five-minute class, was mentioned by two students while getting outside the classroom was also suggested by two students:

It would also be cool if we went outside the classroom for part of a lesson to do maybe a listening activity for sounds around us that can make music.

[Q1.5.21]

Students also expressed a desire to study a wider genre of music:

I suggest for a lesson we could chose [sic] a well-known more recent pop song and analyse it [Q1.5.19]

In this way students show an ability to connect their suggestions with general curriculum requirements.

Composition was suggested by two students, and in both cases it was part of a collaborative practice:

My ideal class would be trying to get the entire class composing a song together that sounds like the world around us. We could then try and play our composition as a class and see how it sounds [Q1.5.23]

In addition to collaborative work, more relaxed social interaction was important for students and there was a tangible sense of caring for each other:

[We could] chat to each other about how everyone are [Q1.5.18]

In the second questionnaire, talking and working with friends was again mentioned with many of the suggestions focusing on listening to music. This was not merely listening for relaxation rather students were keen to listen to live music outside the classroom and to experience instruments from around the world.

Collaboration and socialisation were also important for the four participating students in the Grade 7 group. There were three students ages fifteen and sixteen years and one adult student. Learning from each other in a fun environment was mentioned by three of these students:

I love when all the members of the class sing together in harmony. It feels like such a great team effort where everyone is involved...I would like if we had more time to get together and create our own music and harmonies and sing them as a group [Q1.7.27]

In the second questionnaire there was a suggestion, like those from the Grade 5, of attending live music events as a group. Improvisation and jazz were also suggested. One student chose to draw their ideal musicianship class. This drawing showed a traditional classroom layout with the tables in clearly defined rows facing the front of the room.

For one student a more challenging class based on a very traditional curriculum was their ideal:

I would love a more challenging class that focuses only on Baroque, Classical and Romantic styles (both Analysis and Composition) [Q1.7.24]

In addition to the questionnaire tool, two focus groups were held before the second questionnaire was administered. These allowed for greater exploration of student ideas and opinions and their findings are now presented.

4.3 Part two: Focus groups

For this research project two focus groups were held. One was for students selected from two Grade 2 musicianship classes, the other for students selected from a Grade 5 and a Grade 7 class. In keeping with the theme of creativity, students' names were chosen at random simply by pulling names from a hat. The result was that some of the shyest students were invited to take part. This was challenging at times in the focus group as such students were naturally more reluctant to contribute. However, the researcher felt it was very important to the ethos of the project to embrace the nature of creative work by taking a risk, allowing the process to unfold and thinking outside the box to make it work.

4.3.1 Grade 2 focus group

Figure 4.20 shows the main themes that emerged during the focus group with six students selected from two Grade 2 musicianship classes. The session lasted forty-seven minutes. The researcher chose freely from several topics inspired by responses to the questionnaire, rather than using a set list of prescribed questions. Topics included classroom layouts, making mistakes, and what students enjoy most in class. There were numerous pauses in the discussion. At times students paused while carefully considering their answers, but many times the pauses were simply due to the shy nature of some students. Care was taken to allow these pauses rather than pushing for an answer while simultaneously attempting to maintain a flow in the conversation. Students in this group frequently used non-verbal forms of communication. There was lots of head nodding and miming. Interestingly mimes and gestures possibly communicated more than language could and introduced an element of humour into the discussion.

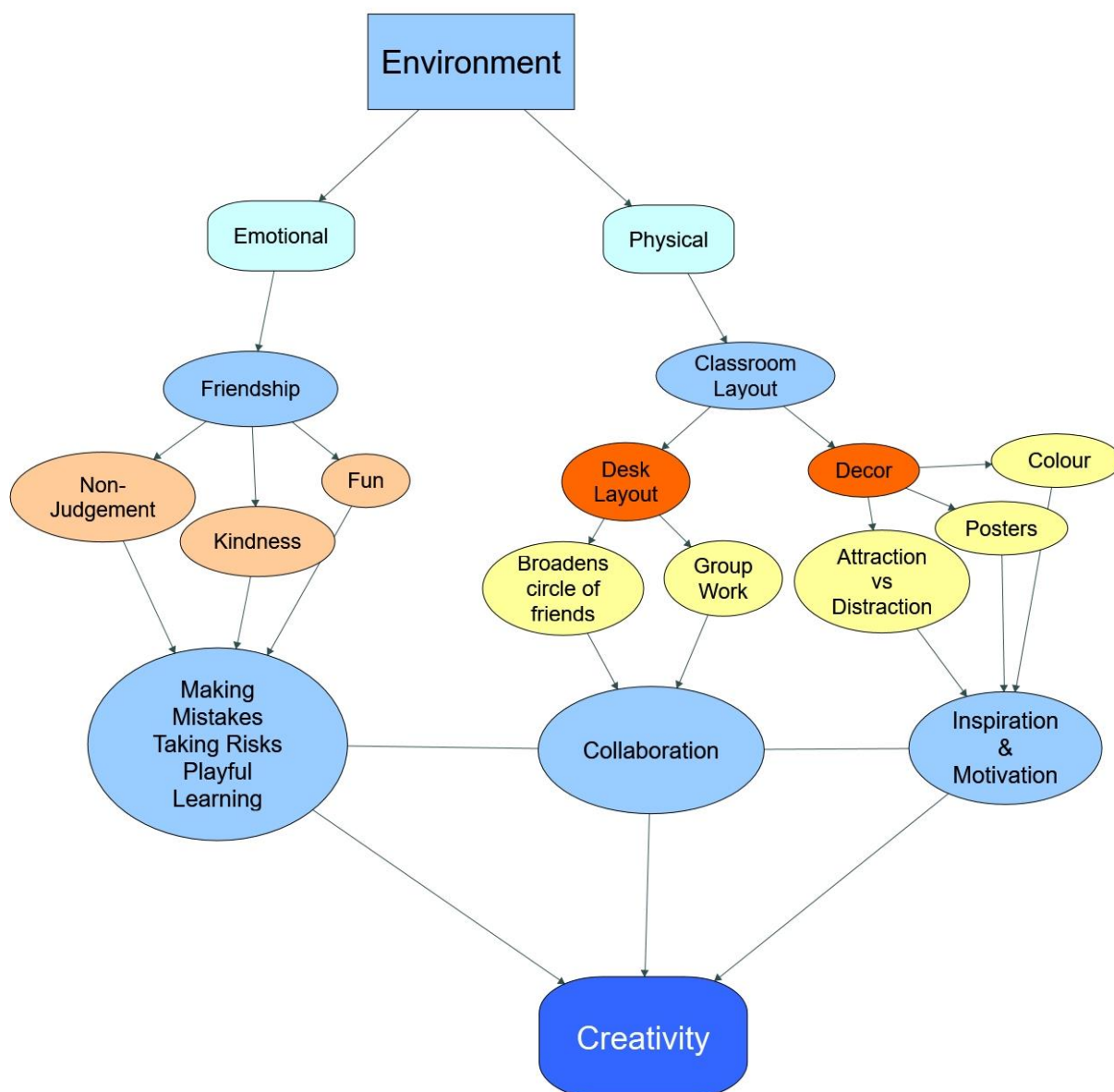


Figure 4.20: Concept Map - Grade 2 Focus Group Findings

The themes that emerged in this focus group can be summed up in one overarching theme: Environment—with emotional environment and physical environment as subthemes. For students in this group the emotional environment was equally important as the physical one in their enjoyment of, and participation in, musicianship class. Having a supportive emotional environment was extremely important to them. Students stated that the conservatoire environment broadened their circle of friends

while noting too the intergenerational element of some music classes. Having friends in class was seen to create a community of learners and was more fun. Reciprocity was important, and while it was beneficial that friends could assist learning, students were keen to help others in return. There were many examples where students displayed a very caring attitude toward their classmates. The importance of classmates was important too when discussing making mistakes. The group talked of their fear of being judged and its associated feelings of upset and embarrassment. Interestingly, it was the reaction of classmates that caused concern, with teachers being viewed as patient and helpful

I don't think that teachers would judge you [FG.2.16]

When asked how they might overcome this fear of judgement for getting the answer wrong one student summed it up succinctly

[We wouldn't be afraid if] Maybe like get to know each other maybe [FG.2.15]

Crucially this demonstrates that these students felt that they were less likely to be afraid of making mistakes and taking risks when they were among friends.

The physical environment's role in helping develop and deepen these friendships among students was discussed in the context of the fluid and flexible classroom arrangement adopted during the research project. For these students the traditional arrangement of desks in rows was viewed as boring. The element of novelty was attractive. Students also enjoyed the sense of freedom and autonomy such arrangements offered, and they felt better able to help each other when working in groups. However, working collaboratively in groups did not suit everyone. Those shyer students preferred desks in rows with one student stating they preferred their

[I like my] own space bubble [FG2.17]

For these students the solitude offered by sitting in rows was more relaxing.

When it came to the room décor students were very animated in their discussion.

Students admitted to being regularly distracted by their environment. The smallest of details did not escape their notice. There was consensus that rooms needed to be more colourful. Students were modest in their requests asking for

[I'd like] a little poster or a tiny little thing [FG.2.15]

Artwork was seen as both inspiring and distracting. It is interesting to note that students were more vocal and imaginative with their suggestions here when discussing this topic. Perhaps, they had relaxed into the focus group more, and, recognising they were among friends they were less fearful of being judged. One suggestion involved using stickers on desks instead of posters on walls. Students thought that a chart of key signatures would be very helpful but recognised the need to remove it for tests. Another student suggested enrolling other staff members to contribute to the artwork on the walls. While the idea was that the adults would be better at drawing, this suggestion would provide a wonderful opportunity for collaboration between practical teachers and musicianship teachers in the conservatoire.

Finally, in this focus group, students discussed what creativity meant to them.

Creativity was many things and was not confined to the musicianship classroom. It was, for example, a professional footballer coming up with new moves that others then imitated. It was problem solving and programming in electronics and getting lost in art and playing music. Students talked of creativity being

[I think creativity is] Personal [FG.2.14] and [it's like] daydreaming [FG.2.17]

and there was great admiration for those who came up with original ideas and had the skill to execute them. Additionally, students referenced another element associated with the creative process, namely the need for space to think:

let's say football when you're in a match maybe you can have like that little bit of time to think, maybe you can kick the ball in a way that is definitely going to go into the goal [FG.2.16]

When asked what they would like to see in musicianship class that would be more creative student suggestions included making up songs. This referenced one class where students worked together to make up a song. The process was very improvisational and often resulted in nonsense words. Nevertheless, students remembered these songs for many weeks afterwards. Students were also very excited by the possibility of using technology in the classroom. All had their own iPad and suggested they could be used for games and quizzes.

4.3.2 Grades 5 and 7 focus group

Figure 4.21 shows the four main themes that emerged during the focus group with students from both Grades 5 and 7 musicianship classes. Eight students took part in the focus group and the session lasted fifty-five minutes. As with the Grade 2 group, the researcher chose freely from several topics inspired by questionnaire responses rather than using a set list of prescribed questions. Students were free to direct and steer the discussion in whatever way they chose. This group engaged very well with the process. There were many ideas and experiences shared in a spirit of open dialogue.

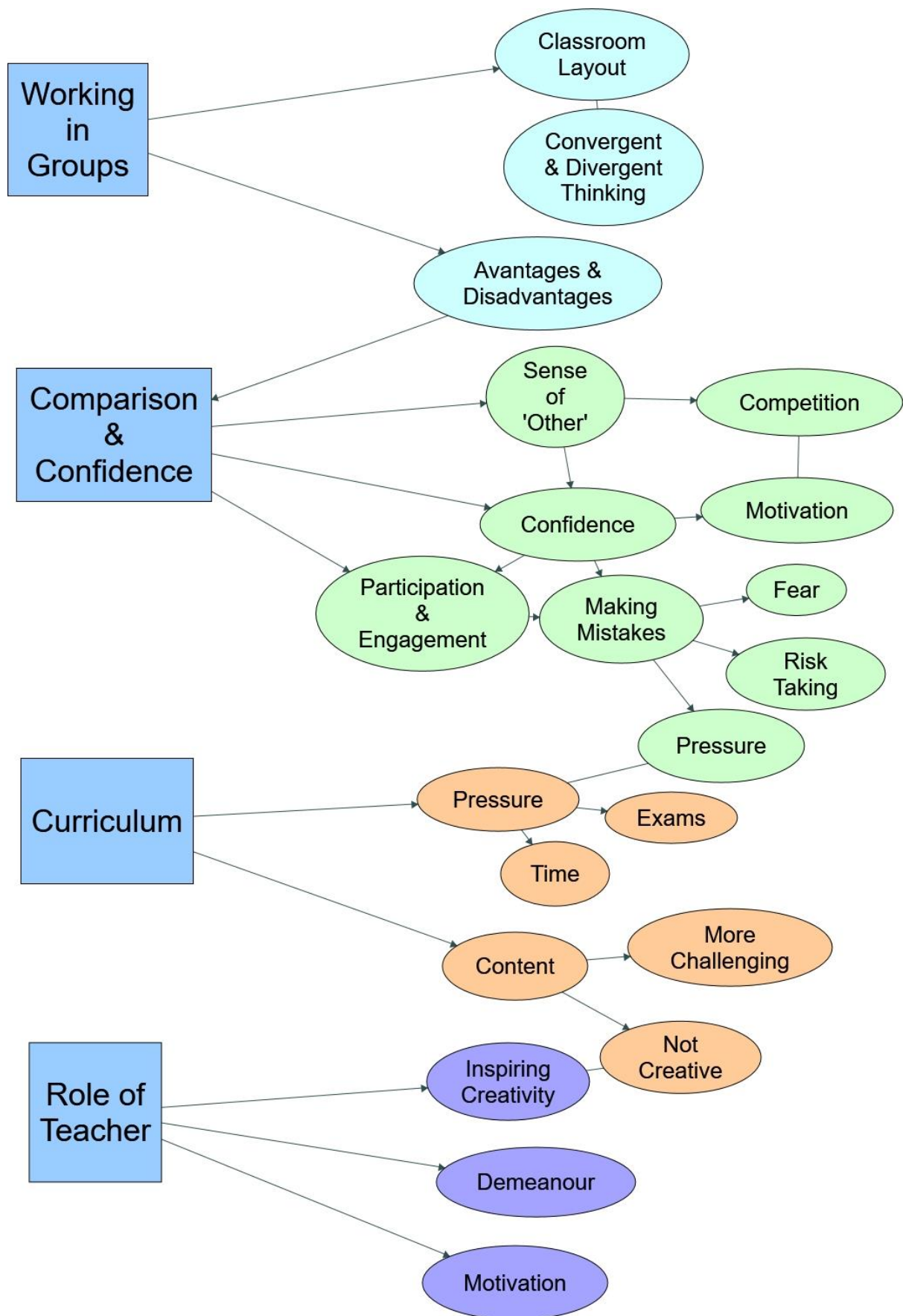


Figure 4.21: Concept Map - Grades 5 & 7 Focus Group Findings

The first topic to be discussed concerned the change of classroom layout from the traditional format of desks in rows to the haphazard arrangement used during the research project. Most students in this focus group preferred the traditional arrangement of desks as it was more practical and enabled them to see the board more easily. One student acknowledged that they are conditioned to expect this environment. The use of language was particularly interesting here. Students felt the haphazard arrangement lacked direction and focus preferring an arrangement where everyone is going in the same direction [FG.57.27]

Metaphorically the arrangement of the desks reflected the cognitive style being employed by the students. In this age group students indicated a clear preference for convergent thinking, clear direction and having the answer

[I prefer when everything is] straight in front of you [FG.57.23]

Students did acknowledge that they enjoyed working in groups. Groups were seen as supportive and fun, facilitating collaboration and enabling the appreciation of others' points of view. The benefit of working in groups was task dependent with students favouring a group dynamic for analysis work while preferring to work individually when composing. Instead of being a case of individual or group, one student suggested considering the individual within the group. In this scenario the student works individually and the group acts as observer in a place on non-judgement. This addresses the fact that for some students working in groups can be uncomfortable, triggering feelings of pressure and not feeling good enough.

This comparison of self with others was a particularly prominent theme in this focus group. It was not a concern for students in the younger cohort. Many times students expressed a lack of self-confidence. Their language was frequently self-critical

[There's no point as] It wouldn't be as good as everybody else's [FG.57.25]

being typical of the sentiments expressed. There was a corresponding lack of motivation when others were perceived to be so much better. In contrast, this sense of competition was a very inspiring and motivating experience for some who saw possibilities for their own success. Overall however, there was a sense that those who knew more were inherently better, indicating that students correlate their value to their perceived level of knowledge, resulting in a lack of confidence.

Students who lack confidence expressed they found it difficult to engage in the classroom. They expressed concern over being laughed at or judged, although they also admitted that they do not judge others' mistakes. For one student getting the answer wrong in front of others meant it was less likely you would repeat that mistake and so was a learning potential. Students clearly place a lot of pressure on themselves to get the answers correct. They also expressed a sense of pressure from being

picked on [by the teacher] [FG.57.23]

to answer in class. There was a consensus that students preferred to decide for themselves when to answer. This feeling of pressure, both internal and external, is exacerbated by the pressure to get through a course and pass an exam.

Students felt that there was a great deal of pressure to cover the course during the year. The syllabus was too broad and there was consensus that it was extremely difficult to cover everything sufficiently. Despite feeling that the curriculum has too many elements students did want to feel more challenged in their work. One student suggested that increasing the difficulty and challenge in the work increases student

motivation although it was recognised by the group that this depends on the individual student.

Discussions on curriculum content focused on singing and composition. Composition highlighted the conflict between freedom and structure. Students found the free composition task very challenging and simultaneously very rewarding. However, this method of composing differed from that required to complete an exam question resulting in confusion and uncertainty. There was a clear preference for composing using a structure with clear guidelines, echoing perhaps students' preference for a clear sense of direction in classroom layout

I want to pass the grade, but I can't pass if I do something wrong [FG.57.23]

Students at this level are looking for clear direction and steer away from the less structured approach

[Freedom of choice] just makes the whole thing really messy, you have to stick to structure [FG.57.28]

Underpinning this debate is the question: are we composing to fulfil exam requirements or are we composing for music's sake? Interestingly, students commented on the bias within the curriculum towards piano players. Figured Bass and Piano Accompaniment form a central part of the curriculum and account for forty per cent of the written exam. Students want greater choice in this regard suggesting that greater options be offered here.

Singing evoked very strong reactions. Students, with one exception, do not like singing. They expressed that they found it stressful and that this stress led to feelings of vulnerability and embarrassment. While students discussed how much

they like the sound produced when they sang four-part harmony, they felt that overall the curriculum material is

boring and old fashioned [FG.57.20]

and consequently, not creative. Critical to the transformation of the curriculum into a vibrant and creative practice is the role of the teacher and this was the fourth theme that students discussed at length.

According to these students, the teacher is at the heart of the cultivation of creativity in the classroom. Students require teachers who are invested, interested, love what they do and have a sense of fun. Even a teacher's tone of voice is important. All students had experienced teachers who were uninvolved and disconnected. This was demonstrated by them being

on their phone [FG.57.23]

Thankfully students' experience in the conservatoire is more positive. They described conservatoire teachers as passionate. Students expressed that this passion motivates students to express themselves creatively echoing the findings of CLASP (2002).

Teachers have a key role in allowing students make their own choices and, at times, their own mistakes. Students talked of how they appreciate when they are given options. Frequently students referenced

[I like] being allowed to [decide what to do] [FG.57.26]

One student summed it up as follows, note how the student changes from the idea of teacher as master to teacher as facilitator

You [the teacher] could just go up there and stand at the top of the class and talk to us and not get us, let us, get involved [FG.57.27]

Students also commented on the importance of a teacher's response when they make mistakes. An encouraging response was very important

You make the mistakes seem like they're ok [FG.57.23]

In a moment of vulnerability students appreciate a positive response to a wrong answer. One particularly insightful student recognised that mistakes are a part of learning and that

[Making mistakes is] almost like a process [FG.57.27]

Humour is also vital, deflecting pressure. In this way students laugh at the mistake rather than at the person who has made it.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data gathered from a questionnaire and two focus groups. There are several key themes that are emerging from these findings. Influence of environment is cited regularly as a factor in promoting such facets of creative behaviour as collaboration, risk taking and ideation. The influence of the teacher's demeanour in reducing fear surrounding mistakes and in encouraging students to believe in their own abilities is also evident. These primary findings will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

The goal of this research project is to explore ways to foster creative thinking among students in conservatoire musicianship classes. The orientating research questions are:

- 1 What pedagogical strategies can be employed to unlock and develop creative thinking in the music education classroom?
- 2 What is the impact of the implementation of these strategies on student engagement and the development of autonomous learning in the music education classroom?

The rationale behind this research project was to explore the role that pedagogical strategies play in the cultivation of creative thinking, and to investigate how going ‘off road’ might impact student engagement and autonomous learning. This is the first time that this combination of strategies, either singularly or in combination, have been explored in this conservatoire. The researcher is unable to determine at the time of writing whether such an approach has been adapted in other conservatoires nationally or internationally. However, there is clearly a need for this type of classroom-based research in the conservatoire at primary and secondary level.

This chapter will investigate and discuss the findings presented in Chapter Four. The data will be discussed in the context of the research questions, and in the broader context of current research on creativity in education as presented in Chapter Two. This discussion is organised under three headings based on the strategies employed

during the research project (as informed by the literature), and the themes that emerged in the thematic analysis of the findings: Environment, Pedagogical Strategies and Student Engagement.

5.2 Environment

Amabile (n.d.) has expanded her original componential model of creativity recognising that while all the necessary ingredients for creativity may be present, such as skills, knowledge, and motivation, without a supportive environment nothing will bear fruit. The significance of the nature and arrangement of space has long been acknowledged by those espousing constructivist theories (Jeffrey & Woods, 2003). This part of the research project sought to investigate the impact of classroom layout on students' creativity and engagement. For five consecutive weeks the researcher arranged the desks in a completely haphazard arrangement. This manipulation of space, like those cited in the CLASP (2002) report, was designed to discover whether a non-traditional layout would encourage students' creative expression (Besançon, Lubart & Barbot, 2013).

Results suggest that younger students were excited by the fluidity of the new classroom layout. They expressed a greater sense of freedom and autonomy with the new desk arrangement. In addition, students moved around much more from week to week and consequently engaged with a wider variety of their classmates. The researcher observed that students who would normally sit by themselves without interacting with their classmates, were happy to engage and work collaboratively in this new desk layout. For a small minority of students in the Grade 2 group, sitting in traditional rows felt more comfortable. For these shy students, sitting in rows provided a greater sense of privacy, and enabled them to focus more intently on the teacher. This illustrates that while much of the literature surrounding

creative thinking highlights the importance of collaborative work (Baer & Kaufman, 2017 and Lucas & Spencer, 2018), educators must be sensitively attuned to those individuals for whom creative thinking is an inward-looking journey. Sometimes it is solitude and silence that is required to foster creative thinking (Fryer, 2000 and Piirto, 2011).

Students in the Grades 5 and 7 groups were considerably less enthusiastic about the new desk arrangement. The evidence suggests that for this age group comfort is found in conformity and the haphazard desk layout challenged this. From the literature we know that sitting in rows implies conformity. It places the teacher in the role of the master and highlights an unequal relationship between students and teacher (Jeffrey & Woods, 2003), a role that some thinkers maintain is unsustainable in the twenty-first century (Allsup, 2016; Webster, 2002). The students recognised that they are conditioned in their general schooling to sitting in rows. In this study the evidence suggests that the older age group prefer convergent thinking, clear direction and having a single correct answer. This study indicates that students from this age group view the teacher as the singular source of knowledge. Considering current literature, these behaviours would appear to be the antithesis of creativity and the reasons behind these student beliefs must be explored. One significant reason that emerged from this study as to why this might be so, is that students in the teenage groups are focused on doing what is needed in order to succeed in examinations. This pressure stifles creativity. Amabile (n.d.) calls for the cessation of teaching to the test claiming it destroys the creativity not only of students but also of teachers, while Beghetto (2017) highlights how students equate lack of examination success with lack of ability and this is a cause of much anxiety. As highlighted in the study students' reluctance and fear to move beyond examination focus is impacting

on their ability to think creatively and learn independently. In our classrooms students must be encouraged to challenge and to question (Piirto, 2017), and they need to have the courage to stumble and fail (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995) for there is great learning in the mistake (Resnick, 2017).

In order to corroborate the findings that older students were less comfortable with the new desk arrangement, the researcher asked colleagues for their experiences with this layout. Some simply put the tables back into rows suggesting, perhaps, that teachers need to be more aware of challenging the status quo. Anecdotal evidence from other colleagues suggests, as for the research study group, that younger students enjoyed the random layout more and found it easier to collaborate. One teacher reported that some students in Grades 5 and 7 classes respectively moved their desks back to the traditional layout, while some students lost focus with the random arrangement. The teacher in question acknowledged that this may have been due to their lecture style teaching approach. Considering the literature presented in Chapter Two, teachers need to consider moving beyond the traditional didactic approach towards a dialogical one in order to unlock creative thinking. Teachers need to be adaptable in their teaching approach and this should be given careful consideration in the education of aspiring teachers. A third teacher simply replied that some students are naturally more comfortable with change than others. This study would suggest that in order to better prepare students for creative thinking in a rapidly changing world, they must be better equipped to deal with change, and in order to achieve this, manipulation of the desk layout may be a very simple and effective place to start.

Another significant factor to emerge from this research was the impact that the manipulation of the physical environment had on students' emotional environment.

One emotion that was cited repeatedly by the students, and which, according to the literature, is detrimental to creative thinking and behaviour, was fear. This study demonstrates that fear surrounding the making of mistakes affects all age groups. Cultivating relationship and a sense of community, as was facilitated in this study through the grouping of desks in a haphazard arrangement, is an important factor in helping to reduce these fears; fears that prevent students taking creative risks and inhibit a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008). This is, perhaps, a factor behind the increase in popularity of 'meeting friends' in Question Five of the second questionnaire. Together with the cultivation of relationship, the findings suggest that students need to be shown that mistakes are opportunities for greater learning (Resnick, 2017), and teachers need to open the door to possibility thinking (Craft, 2005). As Davidson (1990) observes, the classroom that supports creative work 'may have to subscribe to very different values from those that govern the classroom where traditional academic subjects are taught' (p.49).

Fear of being judged by others, together with accompanying fears of feeling upset and embarrassed, was a significant factor in avoidance of risk for all groups. The haphazard layout of the desks was designed to combat this fear by encouraging more collaboration in the classroom. Working collaboratively, students learnt to critically evaluate, rather than judge, not only other people's ideas but also their own (Craft, 2005). While students were wary of being judged for their mistakes, they were, nevertheless, eager to work in groups and this was one aspect of the new desk layout that most students enjoyed. The researcher observed that when working in groups students were very helpful and kind to each other: whether in pointing out an error in a written scale (Grade 2), or helping a classmate find their place when following an orchestral score (Grade 5). In doing so, students were learning from

each other and not just the teacher. Using the layout of the classroom to cultivate friendships is one step in addressing and possibly diminishing the fear surrounding judgement and mistakes.

Two unforeseen benefits arising from the reconfiguration of the desks involved improved teacher contact with students and a surprising positive influence on classroom behaviour. Regarding the former, the researcher, who would normally move around the classroom a lot during each lesson, noticed that she was better able to more successfully connect with every student in the class group when the layout was not in rows. Students can position themselves at ends of long rows that can be difficult to access. The new desk layout also had an unforeseen effect on discipline and engagement. Small groups of students who tend to sit at the back corner of the room and remain detached from other students now had no corner to hide in and were more integrated with the rest of the class. As a result, they were more engaged with the learning and this had a very positive effect for everyone in the classroom.

A final comment in this discussion on classroom layout concerns students' reactions at the end of the research project when the researcher returned the desks to their original layout. On entering the class students were very vocal in their disappointment with this. In keeping with the spirit of the research, the researcher gave the students autonomy in deciding which layout they would like, and students were given the responsibility for organising this. In a culmination of all the previous weeks' intervention, students worked together to rearrange their desks in a haphazard way. There was evidence of motivation, focus, problem solving, collaboration and humour as the students took control of their environment. In the class that followed students were eager and engaged.

Discussions in the literature surrounding the impact of the classroom environment in fostering and developing creative thinking tend to focus on the macro level — the teacher as the ‘sage on the stage’. What this study demonstrates is that micro level changes (simply rearranging the desks and adding colourful posters) have a very positive and powerful impact on student engagement, and on those traits associated with creative thinking such as risk taking, ideation and collaboration. There is a need for further research to explore the impact of these micro level changes in much greater breadth and depth in order that their scale and significance is not overlooked and underestimated.

Addressing the research questions, this study demonstrates that manipulation of the physical environment is a very important factor in the unlocking and developing of student creativity. It increases collaboration and promotes a sense of community. In reducing fear surrounding mistakes and judgement it encourages ideation and risk taking, as students need to feel safe and accepted if they are to risk proposing an original idea (Claxton, 2018). The importance of the physical environment in creating an emotional environment that is conducive to creative thinking, student engagement and independent learning was an unforeseen highlight of this research project. Friendships and fostering a community of learners are vital to creating an environment that supports creative thinking and behaviour. At the heart of all this is the teacher.

5.3 Pedagogical strategies: The impact of teacher behaviour

An argument presented in Chapter Two revealed that for critics of constructivist pedagogy allowing students greater agency in the classroom diminishes the role of the teacher (Baines & Stanley, 2000; Biesta, 2013; Plucker, Beghetto and Dow, 2004). Nevertheless, in order to facilitate the development of students’ own creative

abilities the importance of the teacher's role in modelling creative behaviours is very significant (Beghetto, 2017). The behaviours chosen by this researcher to explore included: a willingness to take risks; welcoming of mistakes; flexible thinking and an openness to be the learner.

This study would appear to confirm the benefits of risk taking, as a pedagogical strategy, in fostering and developing of creative thinking in students. Risk taking should not be confined to students alone but should include teachers also, with both parties forming a community of learners. In one example of risk taking, the researcher noticed that there was a rehearsal for a brass ensemble at the same time as a Grade 2 musicianship class. Inspired by a comment in the questionnaire about having class outside the classroom, the researcher took a risk and asked the conductor of the brass ensemble could she bring her class down to observe. What followed was an example of what Caputo (2016) terms the 'event' of education. It was a demonstration of how, in opening the doors to creative thinking and going 'off-road' there is enormous potential to add breadth and depth to learning for all involved (Craft, 2005). In employing an improvisatory pedagogical strategy like this, care must be taken to avoid chaotic unfocused work Sassi (2011). It should rather be what Goldberg (2018) terms 'directed wandering' (p. 11).

The directed wandering that took place following the decision to take the learning outside the classroom facilitated creative thinking in the students in a number of ways and fostered in them a sense of agency and autonomy. Creative thinking was demonstrated in the making of connections between the title of a pop song, 'Symphony', and the meaning of the word symphony in 'Symphony Orchestra'. Agency was exhibited when, being totally engaged in the experience, students asked to try out the French Horn and the Trumpet. At this point the students were

determining the direction of their own learning. Ideation was present when students, noticing how loud the brass instruments sounded, wondered is that why there are only two Trumpets and two French Horns in a standard orchestra compared with the larger number of string instruments. Students also demonstrated the making of remote connections by connecting this awareness of volume of sound to the importance for musicians to look after their hearing. Students incorporated material they had learnt outside musicianship class about Beethoven's ability to compose beautiful music even though he was deaf. This ultimately brought students to a discussion on the experience of aesthetic beauty and getting lost in music. In taking a risk to bring the learning out of the classroom, there was collaboration with other students not in their class, with the conductor of the ensemble and with the ensemble's accompanist all of whom greatly appreciated the students' questions and insights. This positive experience may have been a factor in the increase of students listening to classical music in Question Fourteen of the second questionnaire. This risk taking experience illustrates that allowing the class be led by students does not threaten standards, but, in fact, may broaden and deepen the learning taking place. Underpinning this it is important to remember that in going 'off road' the teacher must have a clear image of where the road is — illustrating the importance of deep content knowledge as a criterion of creative thinking (Amabile, 1996; Edwards et al., 2012).

Another aspect of risk taking by the teacher that was explored during this study was the wearing of different styles of clothing; from traditional formal clothing to very informal leisure wear. While Craft (2005) cites a Slough Think Tank stating that how a teacher dresses does have an impact on students, what this study demonstrates is that for these students demeanour is more important than dress. For this researcher

while the wearing of different styles of clothes did not effect the students, it did impact how comfortable she was in her teaching. It resulted in her sitting down more on days when she felt less comfortable, thereby reducing the collaboration and connection from which creative behaviour can spark. The question then arises, for schools that adopt a strict dress code for staff, in what ways might this impinge on a teacher's comfort to think flexibly, welcome mistakes and take risks. This can be expanded to consider ways in which the wearing of a school uniform might impact students' ability to think creatively.

While this study appears to confirm the literature as to the benefit of risk taking in unlocking creative thinking, it should also be considered that taking risks can result in a disorganised disaster. Finding value in the mess and mistakes (Patston, 2017) was another behaviour that the researcher modelled during this research project. The pedagogical strategy here was to frame questions in such a way that there was more than one correct solution. Following recommendations in the literature (QCA, 2005a) the teacher sought to ask questions in a manner that would promote flexible, expansive and possibility thinking, both key ingredients in creative thinking — 'How might?' 'What if' or 'What other ways could we?'

The results suggest that students responded very positively to this strategy. From their comments in the focus groups, students acknowledged the importance of the teacher's response to an incorrect answer. They were very perceptive in noticing techniques such as deflecting away from the mistake and changing the focus away from what was incorrect to what was correct in their thinking process. Above all students appreciated mistakes treated with humour. Using humour enables students to laugh together at the mistake and not at the person who made it. Students

appreciate being encouraged, and being made to feel they are capable to do the task at hand.

While this study illustrates the importance of open body language, smiling, and tone of voice in the teacher in reducing fear surrounding the making of mistakes, it cannot, owing to its small scale, determine the degree to which reducing this fear fosters creative thinking in the students. What has emerged is that when students fear making mistakes they are less likely to contribute in class, less likely to take responsibility for their learning and less likely to take risks. In contrast, all these factors can, as demonstrated in the literature and in this study, be a wonderful gateway to unlocking creative thinking.

While the literature refers to the way in which teachers ask questions, consideration must also be given to the way in which they answer them. In answering student questions, it was part of this research to model responding to questions in a supportive and flexible way. Firstly, it was important, where possible, to show that there are often a number of suitable answers. This is particularly true for music when composing is involved. Secondly, it was essential to reveal to students when the teacher was uncertain about an answer, or did not know the answer. This builds relationship, with students and teacher learning from each other (CLASP, 2002). In this dynamic, students are taken seriously as co-participants (Jeffrey & Woods, 2003). In collaborating towards possible solutions the direction a class may take cannot always be predicted. Some teachers may be fearful of this, and view creativity as challenging the status quo (Edwards et al, 2012; Richards, 2007). Nevertheless teachers, especially those in training or newly qualified, need to be encouraged to embrace this 'collaborative emergent process' (Sawyer, 2010).

Returning to the research questions, the effectiveness of modelling as a pedagogical strategy is evidenced in students' increased ability to suggest numerous and imaginative solutions to questions. An indication of this can be seen in the second questionnaire, particularly in the final question which asked students to describe their ideal musicianship class. In the second questionnaire responses showed an increase of flexibility in thinking, increase of imaginative suggestions and significantly the confidence to express these ideas. The cumulative effect of these strategies resulted in students stepping up and directing their own learning, evidence of which is described in the following section.

5.4 Student engagement and independent learning

To ensure students are autonomous learners they must be actively engaged with the curriculum and they must be afforded choices in choosing tasks that reflect their world and have relevance and meaning for them (Craft, 2005 and QCA, 2005a). The evidence of this study suggests that while manipulation of the physical environment, and adoption of strategies such as risk taking can result in improvements to student engagement and autonomy, these improvements are a by product of the strategies. This next element in the research study was to set the students a task with the specific intention of increasing student engagement and to give them complete autonomy over its execution. This involved the conceptualising and practising of creativity as an activity as well as a thinking style (Odena & Welch, 2016) through the setting of a composition task.

For this task students in Grade 5 had to compose a piece of approximately two minutes in length, while Grade 7 students had to compose a three minute piece. The task was set at the beginning of the five-week research project and students had to perform their compositions in class after this time. Apart from the suggested length

for the composition, students had complete autonomy over every other aspect. They could choose to work individually or they could organise themselves in groups of varying sizes. The music could be in any style they chose. Students had to work on this task outside of class time which meant that they were responsible for organising suitable times and venues for rehearsal. The evidence from the focus group suggests that this project really challenged the students both musically and in the utilisation of creative thinking behaviours. It confirmed that older students prefer clear guidelines and a convergent thinking approach. The performance of the work in front of their peers was also a challenge and for some students a source of anxiety also.

On completion of the study students performed the premieres of their works (Appendix F). Students demonstrated critical reflection in their acknowledgment of the difficulties encountered and in their recognition of the various stages of the creative process, as discussed in Chapter Two. Students spoke of the spark of their original idea at the beginning of the process, and how they used their existing musical knowledge to bring this idea to life. This confirmed the importance of content knowledge in the creative process as outlined in the literature (Amabile, 1996; Edwards et al., 2012). Students identified the benefits of sharing ideas and getting inspiration from each other thereby demonstrating the importance of collaboration in the creative process (Sawyer, 2011). Collaboration in turn contributed to a supportive emotional environment. Having this support provided students with the courage to take risks. This, perhaps, a factor in the increase of students wanting to work in groups in Question Nine of the questionnaire.

In giving students autonomy, this composition task became more than a purely musical assignment. Adding the element of autonomy meant that students had to draw upon all those personality traits and behaviours associated with creative

thinking and behaviour as discussed in Chapter Two namely risk taking, collaboration, open mindedness, connecting disparate ideas, humour and originality. It involved the generation of ideas, making connections between old and new material, and problem solving (Smith & Smith, 2010).

What is significant for this study, and for creativity research as a whole, is that while this study began by examining the impact of the unlocking of creative thinking behaviours on students' engagement and independent learning, this study suggests that the reverse of this may also be true — that facilitating student autonomy may in turn develop their creative thinking capabilities. The evidence from this study tentatively suggests that there may be an interdependence between the two.

5.5 Conclusion

In answer to the research questions posed, the implementation of the pedagogical strategies, which were very straightforward to implement, had a very positive outcome for the development of creative thinking and behaviour. Manipulation of the classroom environment and the modelling of behaviours associated with creativity increased collaboration and decreased fear of mistakes and judgement.

Consequently, students were more willing to take risks and this is evidenced in improved ideation. Significantly, in terms of evidence of student engagement and autonomous learning, on the very last day of term, two weeks after the study was completed, two students approached the researcher (one from Grade 5 and one from Grade 7) asking for advice as to how to take their composition skills further. This is work that the students wanted to pursue independently outside the classroom. One student wanted to use the composition completed for the assignment as the first theme for a symphony. The other student wanted to improve his ability to compose at the piano. The implications of this are so important for all

teachers, not just music teachers. While we are experts in our fields, we must be willing to be co-creators with our students. We must be willing to get out of the way, give them autonomy, and embrace the unpredictable. There is clearly need for further exploration here and suggestions for future research based on these findings is outlined in the conclusion of this thesis in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarises the salient points of this thesis. It begins with a recap of the rationale and the research questions underpinning this research. This is followed by a summary of the four major findings and recommendations of how these findings can be folded into existing classroom practices. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are outlined with a conclusion bringing this work to a close.

6.2 Summary

This study investigated the development of creativity as a thinking style in the conservatoire musicianship classroom. It explored pedagogical strategies associated with the development of creativity, including the adoption of constructivist practices, the modelling of creative behaviour by the teacher, and the manipulation of the physical environment and it observed the impact of these strategies on student engagement and independent learning. The inspiration for this study came from the researcher's own experience of working with TUDublin's IDEA Camp, a summer camp for children, designed to explore the cultivation of creativity through constructivist practices and play.

This study was designed in a social constructivist paradigm. A mixed method approach was used. The administering of a questionnaire at the start of the study and again on its completion after five weeks provided quantitative data, while two focus groups supplied qualitative data to add richness and depth to the work.

Analysis of the findings confirmed much from the literature on the importance of teacher behaviour and the impact of the environment in the cultivation of creativity.

6.3 Major findings

There are five major findings in this study. The first major finding concerns the interaction between space and practice from the students' perspective. Having a random arrangement of desks strengthened collaboration between students. In helping to build relationship it reduced anxiety around making mistakes and encouraged students to be braver in answering questions and bolder in proposing new ideas. Students, particularly in the younger cohort showed a high level of engagement with the learning in this context. The impact of the physical environment on students' emotional environment was an unexpected and significant finding.

The second major finding also concerns the interaction between space and practice but this time from the teacher's perspective. The desk layout promoted a certain way of teaching. It encouraged movement around the classroom and the teacher was able to better connect with each individual student. The result was the organic emergence of a cooperative, collaborative, dialogic style. This encouraged and challenged the teacher to be creative in her teaching and enabled the establishment of an environment, both physical and emotional, that invited and encouraged the expression of each student's creative potential.

The third major finding revealed the importance of modelling behaviour in the fostering of student creativity. In both body and verbal language, the role of the teacher was crucial in encouraging students to take risks. Creative thinking was fostered through expansive questioning that encouraged students to problem find and problem solve for themselves. This promoted independent learning and enabled

students to learn from each other and not just the teacher. Findings from both FGs emphasised the importance of the teacher's manner in responding encouragingly to mistakes. This was particularly noticeable in the older Grade 5 and Grade 7 groups.

The fourth major finding was the distinction that emerged between younger and older students. Younger students were much more comfortable with flexibility both in classroom layout and teaching style and embraced tasks that required divergent thinking skills. In contrast older students sought conformity and convergent thinking citing examination pressure as a reason. To unlock and develop creative thinking in teenage students this study would indicate that we need to create a culture that welcomes the richness presented by mistakes in a learning context.

The fifth, but more tentative, finding concerns the interdependence of creativity and autonomy. This study has suggested that the facilitation of autonomy may develop creative thinking and behaviour. Focusing on autonomy as a pedagogical strategy in and of itself, may be a very powerful tool in the unlocking and developing of students' creative thinking abilities

6.4 Recommendations

Creative thinking is a complex combination of risk taking, ideation, collaboration, enthusiasm, boldness and originality. As a consequence of these findings the following recommendations are proposed. Classrooms should be flexible in their design to allow for reorganising of the space depending on the task at hand. The potential for all spaces, not just classrooms, to be learning spaces needs to be considered in the design of our schools and colleges. Communication training for teachers is vital to enable them to harness the power of both body and verbal language in the classroom. Teachers need to be given confidence, by means of

training programmes, to go 'off road' and be encouraged to develop a culture of exploration and experimentation in their classes. Alternative assessment practices must be considered. There is increasing need for assessment practices that support and encourage creative thinking, reduce extrinsic pressure and promote intrinsic motivation.

6.5 Limitations

This study was a small-scale study conducted with the researcher's own students in a Dublin conservatoire. The researcher acknowledges the limitations inherent in this and recognises that different findings are possible with a different cohort of students in a different context.

The conservatoire provided several unique challenges in the collection of data.

Firstly, as the teacher only meets the class once a week, the distribution of information sheets, consent forms and administering of questionnaires was a time-consuming process, with student absences for competitions accounting for many delays. Secondly, as students often travel quite a distance to the conservatoire organising suitable dates and times for focus groups was also time consuming despite the tremendous goodwill of the participants.

6.6 Suggestions for possible future research

This study was the first step in the investigation of creative thinking in the conservatoire musicianship classroom. Possible directions for further research include repeating the study with students from other classes in the conservatoire with the possibility of extending the study to other conservatoires nationally. There is potential to investigate how the findings of this study might be implemented in practical lessons in the conservatoire environment. The significant impact of the

reconfiguration of the classroom on students' creativity indicates scope to examine the impact of different class layouts on students' thinking styles — traditional layout for convergent thinking tasks, random arrangement for divergent thinking tasks and vice versa. Investigation of methods to support teachers to teach in a more fluid improvisational way is another possible direction for research as is the exploration of the impact and influence of classroom layout on teacher identity.

6.7 Conclusion

'let the subtle energies of the "perhaps", of possibilities hitherto unimagined, slip in like a fog and make everything tremble with a future we cannot see coming' (Caputo, 2016, p. 128).

Caputo reminds us of the unpredictability, the "perhaps", of education, an unpredictability those who embrace creativity are very familiar with. This study demonstrates that teaching for and with creativity facilitates deep and playful learning. It establishes an egalitarian classroom that welcomes unpredictability and allows students to determine the direction and content of the class. The results from this study demonstrate that this results in increased depth and breadth of learning.

The findings of this research have many implications for practice. There are implications for teacher practice: teachers should be encouraged to go 'off road' more, and training should be provided to enable them step comfortably into an improvisatory role. There are implications for our curricula too. In order to enable students to fully realise their creative abilities the focus should be on integration rather than separation. Integration of the school with the wider world, integration of students of diverse abilities and even integration of subjects. There are implications for assessment practices, on what we assess and how we assess it. Ultimately

teaching for and with creativity challenges the status quo. It is positively disruptive. If we are to overcome the challenges we face in education and in the wider world beyond, this disruption may be just what we need and why, as the title of this thesis suggests, we need to teach our students to be bold.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Classroom before the study: Traditional classroom layout with teacher's desk at the front.



Haphazard desk arrangement for Grade 2 musicianship class during the study





View of classroom from the doorway. It shows how most desks are facing away from the board.



An example of posters added to assist student learning and add colour to the room.

Appendix B

Title of Research Project

Teaching students to be bold: Exploring pedagogical strategies to foster creativity in the musicianship classroom.

Student Participant Questionnaire

Creativity has been identified as an essential component of education in the 21st century. It is vital for economic development and personal wellbeing. Teachers need to foster and enhance creativity by encouraging and promoting curiosity, risk taking and ideational fluency in their classrooms.

My research aims to explore how we might achieve this in the musicianship classroom. Together we can create an environment of exploration, collaboration and infinite possibilities.

I am very grateful that you have agreed to help me with this research. Please answer every question with complete openness and honesty. **Remember there are no wrong answers! Your views are really important to me.** They are important too in helping develop the teaching of musicianship. Be assured that the responses you give are anonymous.

There are 20 questions in total and it will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please take your time to answer the questions carefully.

Finally, thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Section 1 General Questions

Question 1:

Age: _____

Question 2:

Musicianship Grade: _____

Question 3:

Instrument(s) played: _____

Section 2 Your Musicianship Class

Question 4:

How much do you enjoy attending musicianship class?

(Please tick one answer)

A great deal ☐

A moderate amount ☐

A little ☐

Not at all ☐

Question 5:

What parts of your musicianship class do you enjoy the most?

(Please number the following from 1-6, giving 1 to your most favourite)

Listening to Music ☐

Composing ☐

Singing ☐

Meeting friends ☐

Dictation ☐

Clapping rhythms ☐

Other (Please describe in the box below)

Question 6:

What parts of your musicianship class do you not enjoy?

(Please number the following 1-6, 1 being the part you **like least** in your musicianship class)

Listening to music ☐

Singing ☐

Dictation ☐

Assessment ☐

Composing ☐

Homework ☐

Other (Please describe in the box below)

Question 7:

Is your classroom a place that inspires you to want to learn more about music?

(Think about your classroom here. For example, is it bright, is there enough space to move around comfortably?)

Yes

☐

No

☐

Suggest ways in which it could be improved:

Section 3: Working Collaboratively

Question 8:

When working on a task do you prefer to:

Work on my own ☐

Work in a group ☐

Please outline reasons for your answer

Question 9:

Would you like more opportunities to work together in groups?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Can you suggest an example of a task that you could work on in class in groups?

Section 4: Risk Taking

Question 10:

How comfortable are you answering question in class?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Extremely comfortable | ☐ |
| Very comfortable | ☐ |
| Moderately comfortable | ☐ |
| Not really comfortable | ☐ |
| Not at all comfortable | ☐ |

Question 11:

How comfortable are you giving your opinions in class?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Extremely comfortable | ☐ |
| Very comfortable | ☐ |
| Moderately comfortable | ☐ |
| Not really comfortable | ☐ |
| Not at all comfortable | ☐ |

Question 12:

If you are uncomfortable either answering questions and/or giving your opinions can you explain what might make you uncomfortable?

(Please tick **all** that apply)

Afraid of getting the answer wrong ☐

Other people answer first ☐

Not interested in the topic ☐

Too shy ☐

Teacher never seems to pick me ☐

Other (please give details in the box below)

Section 5: Making Connections

Question 13:

How often do you make connections between what you are learning in musicianship class and what you are learning in your instrumental lessons?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| All the time | ☐ |
| Fairly often | ☐ |
| Rarely | ☐ |
| Not at all | ☐ |

Question 14:

Outside of musicianship class what types of music do you enjoy?

(Please tick **ALL** that apply)

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pop | ☐ |
| Movie soundtracks | ☐ |
| Music from video games | ☐ |
| Rap | ☐ |
| Classical | ☐ |
| Irish traditional | ☐ |

Other (please give details in the box below):

--

Section 6: Your Teacher

Question 15:

How open is your teacher to hearing your opinions and ideas?

- Extremely open ☐
- Very open ☐
- Fairly open ☐
- Not very open ☐
- Not at all open ☐

Question 16:

In what ways does your teacher make a musicianship class fun and enjoyable?

(Please tick **ALL** that apply)

- Smiles ☐
- Makes me feel part of the class ☐
- Talks about things that are important to me
even if they are not related to classwork ☐
- Encourages me to work out solutions for myself ☐
- Sings a lot ☐
- Explains things in a clear and concise manner ☐
- My teacher does NOT make my class fun and enjoyable ☐

Other (Please give as much detail as you can):

Question 17:

Do you make judgments about a teacher based on the way that she/he dresses?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| All the time | ☐ |
| Fairly often | ☐ |
| Rarely | ☐ |
| Not at all | ☐ |

Section 7: Your Creativity

Question 18:

Do you consider yourself to be a creative person?

Very much so ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

Not at all ☐

Outside of your musicianship class describe those activities you do that you consider to be creative:

Question 19:

Do you consider yourself to be musically creative?

Very much so ☐

Sometimes ☐

Rarely ☐

Not at all ☐

Describe those musical activities you do that you consider to be creative:
(Examples might include: playing an instrument, singing, writing your own music, listening to music)

Question 20:

Describe your ideal musicianship class.

This can be as imaginative and far out as you like!

Details you might consider could be:

The type of music you study

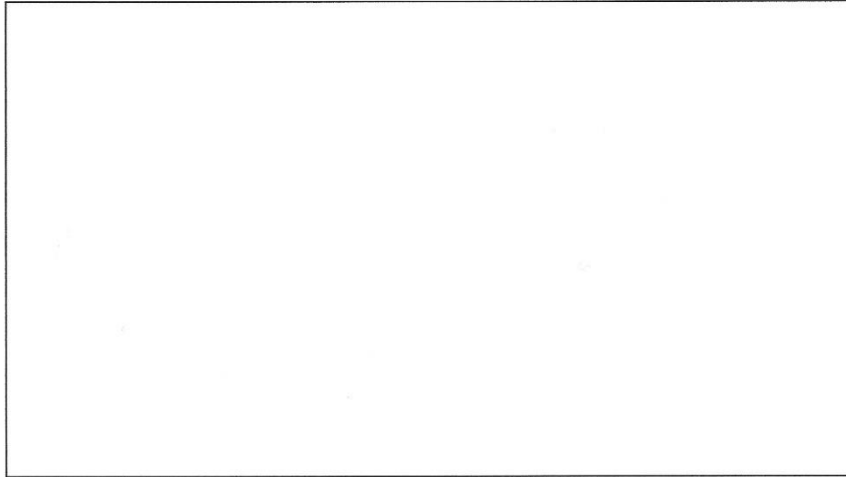
Playing your instrument in class

Having class based around a theme e.g. weather, holidays, planets, animals

Having students decide what to learn

Having a class outside the classroom

Let yourselves be as creative as you like with this one!

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw or write their response to the question.

Appendix C



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Head of School Information Sheet

Trinity College Dublin

February 2019

Dear Orla

As you may be aware, I am currently in my final year of the MEd in Music at the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. As part of this programme I am conducting research into the area of creativity, with a particular focus on the pedagogical strategies teachers can employ in order to foster and develop creativity in musicianship education. My research is under the supervision of Dr Susan McCormick and is entitled: Teaching students to be bold: Exploring pedagogical strategies to foster creativity in the musicianship classroom.

My thesis will investigate how we might increase students' capacities for creative thinking. It will encourage them to explore such aspects of the creative process as: problem solving; problem finding; and the generation of new ideas. The research will further explore areas such as student autonomy and 'possibility thinking'. The research will follow on from my work with TUDublin's IDEA Camp; this camp allows children to develop their ability and to express themselves creatively in a fun and playful environment www.ideacamp.ie.

In order to carry out my research I will be inviting students from my Grades 2, 5 and 7 musicianship classes to participate in my research project. I have chosen these grades as they represent the junior, intermediate and senior musicianship cycles of the musicianship curriculum. It will be clearly explained to all students that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they can withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice.

Data collection for the project will include a questionnaire at the start of the project. I propose to repeat this questionnaire on completion of the project. I estimate that the research will last

between 4 and 6 weeks. In addition, there will be a focus group at the end of the research project. This will take between 30 and 60 mins and will be held outside of class time at a day and time to be agreed with the participants.

All information gathered will be treated with appropriate privacy and anonymity. No information about the Conservatoire, or its students, will be identifiable in the research. All information will be securely stored with access available only to the myself, my supervisor and examiners. Data will be destroyed after a period of 10 years. Anonymised results will be included in a thesis and may be discussed at conferences or published in academic literature. As the Conservatoire will be the site for data collection, a copy of the results can be made available to you on request.

I appreciate how busy you are and that you have many demands on your time, so I greatly appreciate your support with this project. I can foresee no risks associated with participation in this study, either to the individual students or to the TUDublin Conservatoire, beyond those experienced in everyday life. As with the volunteer student participants, the support of the Conservatoire is entirely voluntary.

Should you have further questions regarding this research project please feel free to get in touch using the email address below. Thank you for taking the time to consider my research. The participation and the support of the Conservatoire is invaluable, and I hope my research can benefit it and its wonderful students in the years ahead.

Kind regards

Paula Hughes

Email: paula.hughes@dit.ie

Phone: 0872486320

Supervisor

Dr Susan Mc Cormick

Email: mccorms5@tcd.ie

Phone: 0868301579



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Principal's Consent

I have read and understood the information included with this consent form and I am happy for Paula Hughes to conduct research at TUDublin Conservatory of Music and Drama.

Principal's signature: *John Mc Donagh*

Date: 22/3/19



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Title of Project:

Teaching students to be bold: Exploring pedagogical strategies to foster creativity in the musicianship classroom.

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am currently studying for an M.Ed. at the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. As part of my course I am carrying out research into the development of creative thinking in students of musicianship. My thesis will explore ways in which teachers can foster and develop students' capacities for creative thinking, encouraging them to 'think outside the box'. It will also encourage them to explore aspects of the creative process including problem solving, problem finding, and the generation of ideas. The research will take place over 6 weeks and will follow on from my work with IDEA Camp. Here, in the context of a summer camp, children develop their ability to express themselves creatively in a fun and playful environment — www.ideacamp.ie.

Participant Information

Should your child agree to take part in this research, she/he will be asked to complete a short questionnaire at the start and again at the end of the project. This questionnaire will be completed at home and should take approximately 15 minutes. I will explain the process fully to the students in class.

In addition, a number of students will be invited to take part in a focus group

discussion at the end of the research. This discussion is to allow for a deeper exploration of student experiences of musicianship classes. In line with best practice, the information gathered will be treated in the strictest confidence and information will be anonymised.

During the course of the research it may be necessary for me to make audio recordings of the class. This is simply to ensure that I do not miss any details when notating my field notes. The recordings will not be available to anyone else and will be destroyed on completion of my thesis.

Anonymised results from the research project will be included in a thesis and may be discussed at conferences or published in a journal or a book.

Please know that your child's participation is entirely voluntary. They are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to give a reason. If you have any questions or wish to talk to me about this project, I am happy to do so. My contact details are listed below.

Finally, thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Kind regards

Paula Hughes

Researcher contact details: paula.hughes@dit.ie 0872486320

Supervisor contact details: mccorms5@tcd.ie 0868301579



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Parent/Guardian Consent Form (Under 18)

Title of Project: Teaching students to be bold: Exploring pedagogical strategies to foster creativity in the musicianship classroom.

Your child is under no obligation to participate in this study. Should they agree to participate, but at a later stage feel the need to withdraw, they are free to do so without needing to provide an explanation.

Please answer **all** of the following (tick the appropriate box)

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • I have read and understand the information sheet | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I understand what the research is about and what the results will be used for | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I know that my child's participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any stage without explanation | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I am aware that my child's results will be kept anonymous | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I agree for my child to participate in the questionnaire part of this study | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I agree for my child to participate in the focus group part of this study | ☐ | ☐ |

Signature of Parent

(Print Child's name please)

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Researcher contact details: paula.hughes@dit.ie 0872486320

Supervisor contact details: mccorms5@tcd.ie 0868301579



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Student Information Sheet

Title of Project:

Teaching students to be bold: Exploring pedagogical strategies to foster creativity in the musicianship classroom.

Dear student

I am currently studying for an M.Ed. at the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. As part of my course I am carrying out research into the development of creative thinking in students of musicianship. My thesis will investigate what methods a teacher can use to help students realise and develop their ability to think and work creatively.

Information for participants

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the start of the project and again at the end of the project. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 mins to complete at home. I will go through it with you in class to make sure you understand it thoroughly.

In addition, a smaller number of students will be invited to take part in a discussion at the end of the 6-week project. This is to enable me to further understand your thoughts, opinions and observations about musicianship class.

During the course of the research it may be necessary for me to make audio recordings of the class. This is simply to ensure that I do not miss any details when notating my field notes. The recordings will not be available to anyone else and will be destroyed on completion of my thesis.

Any information you contribute to the project will be treated with privacy and anonymity. No information about you will be revealed in the research. This information will be stored securely with access only available to myself and my examiners and will be destroyed after 10 years. Anonymised results from the research project will be included in a thesis and may be discussed at conferences or published in a journal or a book.

Please be aware that your participation in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part, please note that you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage without needing to give an explanation.

If you have any questions, or wish to talk to me about this project, I am happy to discuss any concerns you may have. My contact details are listed below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Thank you

Paula Hughes

Researcher contact details: paula.hughes@dit.ie

0872486320

Supervisor contact details: mccorms5@tcd.ie

0868301579



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Student Consent Form (Under 18)

Title of Project: Teaching students to be bold: Exploring pedagogical strategies to foster creativity in the musicianship classroom.

Please be aware you are under no obligation to participate in this study. Should you agree to participate, but at a later stage feel the need to withdraw, you are free to do so without needing to provide an explanation.

Please answer **all** of the following (tick the appropriate box)

	Yes	No
• I have read and understand the information sheet	☐	☐
• I understand what the research is about and what the results will be used for	☐	☐
• I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any stage without explanation	☐	☐
• I am aware that my results will be kept anonymous	☐	☐
• I agree to participate in the questionnaire part of this study	☐	☐
• I agree to participate in the focus group part of this study	☐	☐

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Researcher contact details: paula.hughes@dit.ie 0872486320

Supervisor contact details: mccorms5@tcd.ie 0868301579

Appendix E

This is a video of a Grade 7 collaborative composition. The intention here was to investigate the impact being given autonomy over their work would have on students' creative thinking and behaviour. Apart from the instruction that the piece was to be approximately three minutes long, students were given complete autonomy over this task. Students organised themselves into various ensembles. In this example the students took inspiration from Shakespearean sonnet No. 73.

The piece is titled 'At the Carnival'. It depicts the life of a carnival through the different seasons.

It was inspired by a fragment of text, which a student reads in the middle section.

The text is from Shakespeare Sonnet No. 73

When yellow leaves, or none, or few

do hang

Upon those boughs which shake

against the cold

Bare ruined quires, where late the

sweet birds sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t25g9IRg4>

Students' faces are blurred to ensure anonymity.

