Musical Futures as Critical Pedagogy: Participatory Case Study Research with Generalist Primary School Teachers in the Republic of Ireland

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Abstract

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Within the primary generalist context, issues inter alia of confidence, knowledge, beliefs and values, efficacy, and considerable variance in the musical backgrounds and experiences of teachers compound to problematise music education provision. Consequently, the provision of music education at the primary level is often sparse and inconsistent, relying largely on the background and existing experience of teachers and mediated through their beliefs and values about music and musicality.

This thesis investigates the backgrounds, values, beliefs, and ideological positions of primary school teachers with regard to music education. It critically examines the impact of culture, society, and individual factors that affect how teachers implement the music curriculum in Ireland.

Using this knowledge, the project engages teachers with Musical Futures – an international approach rooted in how popular musicians learn and spanning over two decades of research into informal learning. The pioneering work of Lucy Green (2002; 2008) in developing the Musical Futures approach has seen it grow exponentially since its inception in the UK in 2003 and has now been adapted by over 13,000 teachers internationally in Canada, Australia, Singapore, China, Cyprus and more recently, Ireland. Musical Futures is an approach or philosophy of music education that places the needs, interests, and abilities of students at the heart of the learning experience and orients intentionality towards playing and making music, with the teacher acting as a facilitator of the process of students' musical discovery. While Musical Futures has been shown to have had a positive impact on promoting music education at the secondary level, to date, no comprehensive study within the Irish context has examined the impact of the initiative at the primary level in this manner.

Through participatory case study research, the thesis investigates the cultural, structural, and agential conditions that affect generalist primary teachers' experiences of music learning and teaching and the provision of music within the school community using the Musical Futures approach to learning and teaching. Participatory case study research presents a pragmatic and potentially empowering approach for generalist primary teachers and primary school communities to explore, assess and improve their own practices in non-formal music learning. The study worked with six primary schools and seven generalist teachers who engaged with Musical Futures approaches from a period of ten to thirty weeks with their students aged 8-12 years. Data collection tools included teacher interviews, lesson observations, focus group discussions with students, teacher and researcher reflective notes, and video recordings of lessons.

The research intersects between the fields of sociology, education and music education, whereby the social reproduction of musical ability and musical values is critically examined. Findings demonstrate how informal learning and non-formal teaching pedagogies impacted practice at the level of the student, the classroom, the teacher, and their ideological position with regard to music and musicality. Using the theoretical lenses of Althusser and Bourdieu to frame the findings, the thesis traces shifts in the ideological position of the teacher with regard to music and musicality within their practice, highlighting the interplay between identic, efficacious and agentic factors in shaping the musical habitus of the generalist teacher, and proffering unique perspectives on informal learning pedagogies and generalist primary music education respectively.

Keywords: primary generalist teachers; music education; ideology; Musical Futures

listening to my day's news. Even when the most exciting event might have been the most mundane thing, you were still enthusiastic. I can never thank you enough.
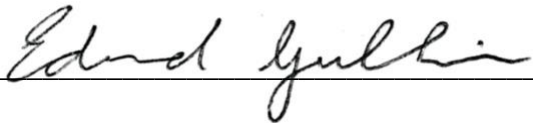
Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Margaret 'Peggy' Heffernan, who passed away shortly before I began my PhD journey. She once told me to 'let them see you can do anything'. I hope this goes some way to living up to those words and honouring her memory.

Declaration

I, Edmond Gubbins, declare that this thesis is based on the original research work that I carried out between September 2019 and June 2022. Additionally, and to the best of my knowledge, all sources have been duly acknowledged within the body of this thesis.

Word count (inclusive of appendices and list of references):   88,000 words

Signature: _____

                        Edmond Gubbins

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List of Abbreviations

AR	Action Research
CIDREE	Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
EEC	European Economic Community
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIM	Identity in Music
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
IRC	Irish Research Council
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MF	Musical Futures
MIC	Mary Immaculate College
MII	Music in Identity
MIREC	Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee
MSL	Music as Second Language
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SEC	State Examinations Commission
SET	Special Education Teacher
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Music is a condition of human existence common to all cultures; it is a shared feature of identity present in ritual activity, social organisation, caregiving, and group cohesion and is used around the world to motivate, to soothe, to mourn, to rejoice, to share meaning, and to celebrate (Kaplan 1956; Shepherd and Wicke 1997; Trehub *et al.* 2015; McCarthy 2017; Sacks 2018). Notwithstanding the ubiquity of music, the distinct inherent and delineated meanings within the realm of sound (Green 1988) manifest in a gamut of beliefs and values towards music itself. At the same time, international research outlines the benefits of music for children and young people from a range of disciplines and perspectives, including education, sociology, therapy, psychology, and advocates for quality arts experiences (Eisner 1972; Storr 1992; Gardner 1993; Eisner 2003; Rabkin *et al.* 2004; Hallam 2005; Hoffman-Davis 2008; Geist and Hohn 2009; Robinson 2011; Korn-Bursztyn 2012).

Engagement in music-making is unquestionably present and deemed to be of benefit to an individual at all stages of their lifespan (Creech *et al.* 2020; Varvarigou *et al.* 2021). The primary school represents a critical and formative site of musical engagement and experience that is microcosmic of society, largely shaping an individual's lifetime ideological and axiological positions in relation to music (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bernstein 2004; Wright *et al.* 2021).

Within the primary generalist context, issues inter alia of confidence, knowledge, beliefs and values, efficacy, and considerable variance in the musical backgrounds and experiences of teachers compound to problematise music education provision (Hennessy 2000; Holden and Button 2006; Seddon and Biasutti 2008; Stakelum 2008; Biasutti 2010; de Vries 2013; Kenny *et al.* 2015; Henley 2017; Gubbins 2021). Consequently, the provision of music education at the primary level is often inconsistent, relying largely on the background and existing experience of teachers and mediated through their beliefs and values about music and musicality.

This thesis investigates the backgrounds, values, beliefs, and ideological positions of primary school teachers with regard to music education. It critically examines the impact of culture, society, and individual factors that affect how teachers implement the music curriculum in Ireland. Using this knowledge, the project engages teachers with Musical Futures – an international approach rooted in how popular musicians learn and spanning over two decades of research into informal learning. The pioneering work of Lucy Green (2002; 2008) in developing the Musical Futures approach has seen it grow exponentially since its inception in the UK in 2003 and has now been adapted by over 13,000 teachers internationally in Canada, Australia, Singapore, China, Cyprus and more recently, Ireland. Musical Futures is an approach or philosophy of music education that places the needs, interests, and abilities of students at the heart of the learning experience and orients intentionality towards playing and making music, with the teacher acting as a facilitator of the process of students' musical discovery.

While Musical Futures has been shown to have had a positive impact on promoting music education at the secondary level, to date, no comprehensive study within the Irish context has examined the impact of the initiative at the primary level in this manner. Key findings in this study have uncovered and explored the shifts in practice at the level of the teacher and the classroom respectively and their wider implications for music education, positing informal and non-formal approaches as promising means of enhancing generalist teacher practice and student outcomes for music education in Ireland.

Background and Rationale

Music is enshrined in national curriculum documentation as a feature of Irish national culture, heritage, and identity (Government of Ireland 1999a; 1999b). The curriculum identifies music as a key component of the development of the child in a holistic sense and a medium through which the child can organise and express their feelings, provide them with a means of creative expression, while simultaneously enhancing their musical knowledge and skills (ibid., pp. 2-3).

Though the curriculum clearly outlines the delivery of music in primary schools, in practice, its implementation in practical terms is reliant on the musical knowledge, experience and confidence of the generalist primary teacher.

While few will dispute the argument for ensuring that all children should experience high quality music education, the prevailing problem that this research aims to explore is trifold: first, while the value of music education within the context of educational policy and curricular agendas is portrayed as central to the human condition and therefore of inherent value, changing policy agendas often emphasise 'core' subjects and relegate music and the arts as optional (Bernstein 1973; McGarr and Lynch 2017); second, this optional status has a reproductive tendency to confer music education as quasi-elitist i.e. giving the impression that music is only for a select group of students, often those who are deemed 'gifted' enough to perform or have been described as 'musical' (McPherson 1997; Henley 2017) and third, the practice of music teaching and learning in the primary school is often dependent on the musical experience and background knowledge of the teacher (whether generalist or specialist) (Gubbins 2021). All of these interconnected issues point to what could be best described as unachievable ideals as set out in curriculum documentation, unreasonable expectations for generalist teachers and a patchwork quilt of music learning experiences for children in the primary school. Undoubtedly, a considerable challenge is posed in addressing such issues within the primary generalist context.

Personal Rationale

> Just as we can develop pupils' written language without being a novelist, it is perfectly possible to engage pupils in music without being a pianist.
>
> (Mills 2009, p.2)

Upon entering my initial teacher education programme, one of the first things that struck me as being particularly interesting was the variation in differences among student teachers' beliefs

and values in relation to music education. I had grown up immersed in Irish traditional music, having learned the tin whistle and piano accordion using a combination of ABC notation [1] and aural methods through my local Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann [2] branch; I had spent every summer practicing for and playing at Fleadhanna Ceoil [3] in group, band, trio, duet, and solo competitions. These competitions demanded a great deal of practice as part of a group and encouraged me to push myself to achieve success, which I did at county, provincial, and national levels at every age group, as well as enhancing my ability to play as part of an ensemble. As I entered my teenage years, I also began to explore popular music in my spare time, branching out into teaching myself the piano as I studied music to Leaving Certificate at secondary level. I also became interested in singing and musical theatre at this time and played and gigged regularly at local events and sessions. These experiences have instilled a love for music making in my life, while also shaping my musical identity and knowledge.

Owing then to my considerable musical background, the area of music was one I was highly excited about teaching. Indeed, the quote above captures some of my beliefs about music education. These values however, were not shared with the vast majority of my fellow student teachers, many of whom were dreading the prospect of teaching music to a class. This caused me to wonder about the impact such beliefs and values would have on students of these future teachers.

Upon graduation from my Bachelor of Education programme, this notion was compounded for me in very realistic terms as I realised that there were significant inconsistencies and gaps in my students' musical knowledge; I found that many aspects of the curriculum that my students should have covered according to the curriculum and their stage of primary schooling had not been addressed. Consequently, I was trying to cover the foundational

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[1] This is a shorthand form of musical notation that uses letters to represent notes, commonly used in Irish traditional music.
[2] This is the largest organisation that promotes Irish music and dance nationally and internationally since 1951. For more information, see https://comhaltas.ie/about/
[3] These are music competitions organised at county, provincial, and all-Ireland levels by the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

elements of music that they should have already known over a very short period of time. This meant that I was under considerable pressure to teach them what they were meant to have attained prior to this class level. I could only surmise that their music education up until that point may have been inconsistent which forced me to ask the question: why was this the case? At the same time, it was clear that the students I taught loved being exposed to music in many different forms and exhibited wonderful creativity. This innate interest was something that I wanted to foster in my own teaching, instilling the same love for music in my students that I hold. I began to wonder why the students hadn't been afforded as much experience of music education as possible, given that it was such a natural source of enjoyment and motivation for them?

I was fortunate enough to complete my Master's in Education in West Chester University in the United States which afforded me the opportunity to witness the considerable differences in models of music education practice within the US and Ireland. Consequently, as part of my Master's dissertation (Gubbins 2018; 2021), I wanted to dig down deeper into these issues and went about qualitatively examining the differences between generalist and specialist models of music education provision in Ireland and the US with the aim of identifying the divide in musical practices among teachers. I had many unanswered questions from this research, including how could the often negative attitudes of generalist teachers towards music education be tackled? It was here that my interest in conducting research bloomed and motivated me to continue investigating this problem at doctoral level in order to make some headway in addressing it. I am very fortunate, having the musical background and experience that I've had, to now be in a position to contribute to the field of music education in Ireland in a scholarly way. Thus, it can be seen that the stimulus and impetus for this study stemmed from a combination of personal and professional experiences in music and music education.

Musical Futures as Critical Pedagogy

Given the considerable challenges in generalist primary music education, this thesis aims to pursue avenues that can address these challenges and provide the "shock" that is needed to reassess generalist practice (Bandura 1997). Informal and non-formal pedagogies vis-à-vis Musical Futures approaches have had positive impact on music teaching and learning in international contexts (Jeanneret 2010; O'Neill and Bespflug 2011; Wright *et al.* 2012; Hallam *et al.* 2017a; Hallam *et al.* 2017b; Hallam *et al.* 2017c; Isbell 2018; Mariguddi 2021) and constitute the central focus of this study within Irish primary music education. As the findings will show, Musical Futures approaches have triggered a reappraisal of what it means to teach music for participants, challenging assumptions, beliefs and values of musicality and musical ability, while developing students' musical and extra-musical skills.

Russell (1996, p.250) speaks about the transformative power of "structured encounters with music" for the generalist. Musical Futures represents one such structured encounter. As will be the subject of further discussion in Chapter Two, the work of Lucy Green presented a critical pedagogical approach to music education in secondary schools in the UK drawn from how popular musicians learn and with a desire to examine the reasons why many students disengaged with formal music education at the secondary level (2002; 2008b). Her research identified that many students still engaged with music informally, and so, she wanted to harness this into a pedagogical approach for the classroom, which later became known as Musical Futures.

Initially funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Musical Futures is an approach whereby non-formal and informal learning practices are integrated into classroom music practice. Though there are many definitions of these terms, informal learning is often "haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic" (Green 2008, p.10), whereby "the activity steers the way of working/playing/composing" (Folkestad 2006, p.141) while non-formal learning represents a slightly different pedagogy of "learning by doing" (Mak 2006, p.5), where learning is caught

rather than taught, done 'with' and 'by' students, not 'to' and 'for' them (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2014, pp.44-45). These terms in the context of Lucy Green's work and international discourse will be the subject of much more detailed discussion in Chapter Two.

Originally introduced in the UK in 2003, Musical Futures has been implemented in schools in the UK (D'Amore 2009; Hallam 2009b), Australia (Jeanneret 2010), Canada (Wright 2011; O'Neill and Bespflug 2011), Singapore (Chua 2013), and recently in a pilot study in Ireland (Moore 2019) and a small-scale study in Cyprus (Papazachariou-Christoforou 2022). The approach utilises the ubiquity of popular music in contemporary culture and facilitates ownership over music-making in the classroom. The literature argues that the inclusion of popular music in the classroom, inter alia, promotes authentic musical engagement (Green 2002; Westerlund 2006; Green 2008; Campbell 2012), shapes student identity and autonomy (Hargreaves and Marshall 2003), makes music more accessible (Björnberg 1993), redefines the relationship between teacher and student (Rodriguez and MENC 2004; Rodriguez 2009), advocates for musical pluralism and polyvalence (Mantie and Tucker 2012, p.267), and legitimises and celebrates students own musics (Kallio 2017). As such, Musical Futures can be regarded as a critical pedagogy that frees individuals from ideological and cultural forms of domination, in turn recognising "the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values and freedom seriously" (Giroux 2011, p.4). Further discussion of Musical Futures as a critical pedagogy will feature in Chapter Four.

Purpose of the Study

In response to the specific problems impacting generalist practice as aforementioned and recognising the importance of music education generally in the lives of students and young people, this study introduces Musical Futures as a potential answer to such concerns. Thus, the study had four key aims:

I.   To document primary teachers' musical backgrounds and prior music learning and teaching experiences within the Irish context through the lens of Bourdieu and Althusser;

II.   To interrogate assumptions of musical value and the social reproduction of musical opportunity within Irish primary music education;

III.   To explore how critical pedagogy as intervention can influence beliefs about musicality and musical ability for primary school communities; and

IV.   To enhance the confidence and efficacy of generalist teachers, and music education provision generally at the primary level.

Research Questions

Cognisant of the aims of the study, it was necessary to design research questions that were clear and appropriate to the topic under considerations in order to elicit relevant data, reflecting the significant connections between prior music education, experience, beliefs, and values and their prevailing impact on teaching and learning. As such, the following overarching research question and sub-questions informed the study:

To what extent can non-formal teaching and learning in music education using the Musical Futures approach affect beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of generalist primary teacher practice?

o   What are the musical experiences and prior music education of generalist primary teachers?

o   How do these musical experiences and prior music education influence teacher beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of their practice?

o   To what extent are teacher beliefs and practice (teaching and learning) influenced by ideologies of musical value and musical ability?

o   To what extent can non-formal teaching and learning pedagogies using Musical Futures approaches facilitate changes in teacher beliefs and practice?

o To what extent can non-formal teaching and learning pedagogies using Musical Futures approaches enhance music learning and pupil engagement in the primary classroom?

A Brief Note on Methodology

The research intersects between the fields of sociology, education, and music education, whereby the social reproduction of musical ability and musical values is critically examined (Green 1988). Introduction of Musical Futures as a novel approach to music education within the primary context led to a qualitative paradigm with case study research being the chosen methodological approach. This was because in order to unpack the highly personal nature of musical activity (O'Fynn 2005, p.191) and its impact on practice, rich and contextualised data needed to be collected that elicited how such practice shifted in response to an engagement with informal and non-formal approaches and in line with the study's aforementioned aims. However, a more nuanced methodology within case study research was necessary to reflect the prevailing barriers to informal music engagement, as well as the relationship between the participating teachers and I as the researcher working with mutual aims. From this, it was decided that participatory case study research would form the methodological approach for this study, which constitutes a "significant methodology for intervention, development, and change within communities and groups" (Reilly 2009, p.658). It was originally intended to utilise a whole-school Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach in relation to the research, but due to the impact of COVID-19 on the engagement and interaction between teachers, students, and classes, this was not deemed possible, resulting in the selection of case study research as the preferred model.

Six primary schools and seven generalist primary teachers participated in the project. These schools were located primarily in the Munster region, in the southwest of the Republic of Ireland. Students ranged from 2nd class (aged 7/8) to 6th class (aged 11/12), with a total of 137 students taking part in the project across the schools. A range of instruments were employed

as data collection tools, including pre- and post-engagement interviews with participating teachers, focus group interviews with students, video recordings of lessons, lesson observations, teacher reflective notes, and the utilisation of a researcher reflective journal. These tools yielded rich and contextualised data about the music teaching and learning taking place in the participating schools and classrooms, which were inductively analysed to generate the findings. Further discussion of the research design and data analysis processes are to be found in Chapters Five and Six.

Contribution to the Field

In a pilot study of Musical Futures in Ireland, Moore (2019), argues that the potential for its adoption and adaption for the Irish primary context is substantial. Indeed, as I will present in Chapter Two, the case for Musical Futures and its ability to reconceptualise music education pedagogy has been brought to light through an increasing body of research and its inclusion in curricula internationally. Musical Futures creates a platform for a re-envisioning of what it means to teach and learn music, opening new avenues for exploration and discussion at the primary level. This redefinition of music education to include popular musics can be seen

> …as a way to acknowledge the diversity of classroom populations, as a turn to student-centred pedagogies and informal learning styles, placing an emphasis on democratic practices and exploring the critical potentials of music education in an increasingly media-driven society.
>
> (Kallio 2017, p.333)

Chua and Ho agree: "such student-centred music pedagogies have the affordances that could potentially contribute towards the development of 21st century student outcomes" (2013, p.58). Harnessing students' innate interest and love for music into powerful motivation for engagement in music making could potentially give rise to significant shifts in teacher practice and will undoubtedly challenge preconceived ideological assumptions and positions about music education.

Given the paucity of literature into the impact of the implementation of the Musical

Futures approach on teachers' pedagogies, ideologies, belief and value systems, as argued by Evans *et al.* 2015 and Hallam *et al.* 2017c, this thesis offers unique insights into this under-researched area. Indeed, Isbell (2018, p.43) states: "the music education community would benefit from more information about the experience of music teachers as they implement informal learning and nonformal teaching in their practice". Within the Irish context, Stakelum claims that current curricula and pedagogy are outdated and misaligned, arguing for the inclusion of teacher experience and voice in the development of music education in practice (2008, pp.289-291). More critically, studies examining the adaption of Musical Futures for the primary level are scant. Thus, the study is timely in its original contribution to the existing body of literature in four ways: a) through its investigation of the capacity of Musical Futures to positively influence the musical beliefs and values of teachers, b) its application of informal and non-formal approaches for the generalist teacher at the primary level in Ireland, c) its utilisation of participatory case study research within the generalist context, and d) its discussion of novel theoretical insights using the concept of interpellation (Althusser 2014) to explore how critical pedagogy as intervention can cause shifts in the ideological and axiological positionings of generalist teachers. Further discussion of positionality in relation to ideology and axiology will feature in Chapter Four.

A Note on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Study

Growing research on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on research describe the difficulties faced by researchers in conducting projects (Byrom 2020; Bradham and Umaña 2021), including limitations in conducting fieldwork, reduced collaboration and networking opportunities, obstacles in data collection, and mental health concerns. This doctoral programme took place from September 2019 to June 2022 and was significantly impacted by the arrival of the COVID-19 virus to Ireland in March 2020. Out of the 33 months duration of the doctoral programme, less than 7 of these took place without the influence of the pandemic

and I think it would be remiss not to acknowledge its influence on the project.

The attribution of pandemic status to the virus' transmission led to the closure of school buildings from 12th March 2020 until September 2020. High rates of infection and increasing pressure on the hospital system led to their further closure from 6th January 2021, reopening on a phased basis between February and April 2021. While school buildings were reopened in the window of September 2020 until December 2020, significant health and safety measures were in place, severely limiting in-person interactions with schools. However, I was fortunate enough to be able to complete the pilot phase during this time, in a modified format as originally intended while still maintaining as much of the original plan as possible, given the circumstances. The extract from my researcher journal below from the pilot phase illustrates the stark situational atmosphere in which the project took place:

> As I entered the classroom, I was met with the sight of four long rows of desks, facing the front of the room. A child sat at each desk, originally meant to seat two, tuning their own ukuleles. The teacher greeted me at the door as she was removing her gloves from the distribution of the ukuleles to the children and was sanitising her hands before picking up her own ukulele to tune. After greeting the class, I followed the narrow pathway indicated by yellow warning tape on the floor which directed me to a seat at the opposite corner of the room, in keeping with the school's COVID-19 policy. The teacher began the lesson with the class.

(Extract from researcher journal 12/11/2020)

Despite this, teachers were still willing to participate in the project and I was very pleased and grateful to complete the vast portion of data collection with the teachers and schools from March 2021 to June 2021.

Initially, the project was designed to include a whole school Participatory Action Research approach to informal learning. However, the restrictive measures introduced in light of the pandemic were outside of my control and demanded a change of plan; Inter and intra-class interactions were severely curtailed, meaning that it was only possible to work with one class in each school. Virtual classroom visits, interviews, and focus group discussions were facilitated in some schools while limited in-person visits were permitted in others, subject to adherence to health and safety protocols.

While it could be suggested that the altered format of the project may have limited its scope and findings (see Chapter Ten), I would counter that my response in adapting to the changing climate and landscape posed by the COVID-19 pandemic developed my flexibility and resilience as a researcher, qualities that are essential in an experienced researcher. My GANTT timeline and plan was reframed several times (see Appendix H) and at times the ever-changing situation created much uncertainty and unpredictability around the feasibility of the project. Nevertheless, I persevered in partnership with the teachers and schools and as I will go on to show, the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the originality of the findings into music making practices of classrooms.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One briefly frames and establishes the purpose and background of the thesis. It sets out the main research questions and sub-questions which guided the creation of the dissertation and gives an overview of the significance of the research.

Chapter Two discusses *Musical Futures* as a pedagogical and philosophical approach to music education. It delineates between formal, non-formal and informal teaching and learning models and situates them on a spectrum of practice. An overview of the origins of Musical Futures traces the development of the approach from Green's work into how popular musicians learn to the approach as it exists currently. Finally, a summative analysis of studies conducted into the impact of the Musical Futures pedagogy describes the most pertinent findings emerging from international contexts.

Chapter Three critically examines primary music education in Ireland. Issues within generalist practice are contextualised within the social, historical, cultural, and educational landscape of the primary education system.

The theoretical framework underpinning the thesis is contained within **Chapter Four**, which outlines Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus as well as Althusser's concept

of interpellation as critical lenses through which the research is focused.

Chapters Five and Six frame the philosophical and methodological research design for the project, including a rationale for the utilisation of participatory case study research. An explanation of and justification for the data collection tools implemented is featured. These chapters also outline the data collection timeline and an overview of the process of data analysis.

Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine present the thesis' findings which are explored and interpreted through teacher (micro), classroom (meso) and societal (macro) lenses. Discussion of the findings is interwoven with existing literature and grounded within a theoretical framework.

Chapter Ten offers the conclusion to the thesis, including a reflection and discussion of the study's limitations. Here, the thesis' contribution to the field is outlined and recommendations for further research are identified.

CHAPTER TWO

MODELS OF MUSIC EDUCATION PRACTICE

Introduction

In this chapter, I trace the origins of Musical Futures as a pedagogy, framed within wider discussions of formal, informal, and non-formal approaches on a continuum of practice. A review of the literature pertaining to Musical Futures discusses its impact for both teacher and student in international contexts, while also highlighting gaps within current discourse.

Research abounds on different learning practices in music education. Traditional "transmission"-style methodologies pervade much of music education discussion (Jorgensen 1997, p.24), as formalised learning practices bear the weight of historical implementation in educational contexts, as will be explored within the Irish education system within Chapter Three.

In recent years however, alternative models of music education have garnered increased attention. Drawing from the knowledge gathered into the music practices of popular musicians by authors such as Green in the Western tradition (2002; 2008), Söderman and Folkestad in the hip-hop genre (2004), Mok in the Eastern tradition (2014), Neuman in the Indian tradition (1990), and Waldron (2009; 2012; 2013) and Cawley (2013) in the Irish tradition, informal learning practices have been distilled and adopted in education settings worldwide.

Standing seemingly in opposition to formal teaching, informal learning extends beyond the sphere of music education, as its origins can be traced back over 50 years in educational discourse; there is a considerable body of research on informal learning practices (not just associated with music) situated in the Scandinavian and Nordic countries (Tagg 1982; Stålhammar 2000; Faulkner and Davidson 2006; Westerlund 2006; Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010; Kallio 2017). These studies relate to informal learning in a range of contexts including male choirs and garage bands, as well as traditional classroom contexts and perspectives from teachers, student teachers, and students alike. Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) argue that while informal learning methods have been well established since the 1960s in Sweden, Green's work into the Musical Futures approach was the first to develop a research-

based popular music informal learning pedagogy.

The Origins of Musical Futures

Prior to the establishment of Musical Futures, Professor Lucy Green conducted original and extensive research into how popular musicians learn. This pioneering work examined popular musicians' skills, knowledge, and self-conceptions and led to her seminal publication *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* in 2002. Here, she includes portions of the interviews she conducted with 14 musicians aged between 15 and 50 who were involved in what she describes as "'Anglo-American guitar-based pop and rock music". Including her own discussions and interpretations of the interviews, Green discovered that there was a certain mismatch between the musical training gained by the popular musicians to experience 'success' in their field and the musical training that they received in school. The content of formal music education centred predominantly on the classical and Western musical traditions, thereby alienating many of the musicians' home musical experiences (Green 2002, p.148). In the concluding chapter, Green culminates her findings and advocates for the inclusion of informal learning approaches in formal or traditional music education settings.

Following from Green's work with popular musicians, Musical Futures was established in the UK in 2003 with the funding and support of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2019). Originally an action research project, its aims were twofold: a) to understand the issues affecting the apparent disengagement of young people with continued music-making activities and b) to uncover creative and original methods of engaging young people (aged 11-19) in music making (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2014, p.10). Music education providers were consulted in 2003 through three 'Pathfinder' projects to determine the most appropriate approaches and structures to engage young people in meaningful musical experiences, with Green herself leading the 'Pathfinder' in Hertfordshire. Green's informal learning project was by far the most successful

of the three and thereafter became known as Musical Futures. This led to the pilot of Musical Futures in 21 secondary schools across the UK. The project was divided into seven stages:

1. Dropping pupils in at 'the deep end'- emulating self-selected popular music pieces in groups

2. Modelling aural learning with popular music

3. The 'deep end' revisited

4. Informal composing

5. Modelling composing

6. and 7. Informal learning with classical music

Not all the schools completed the seven stages, depending on the choices made by the individual schools and their commitment to the project.

The empirical portion of the pilot lasted until 2006. This led to Green publishing the findings of the pilot in *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* in 2008. In this book, she outlined the principles of her informal learning pedagogy that will be discussed later in the chapter. A survey of Musical Futures during the pilot was simultaneously conducted by the Institute of Education in the University of London. This survey, completed on behalf of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, found that Musical Futures had the potential to improve pupil motivation and enhance the quality of music education provision but that there were issues relating to accommodation and resources (Hallam *et al.* 2009b).

In 2006, the first set of teacher resources materials was made freely available to educators. Musical Futures expanded rapidly within a few years. In 2011/2012, Musical Futures was piloted in Wales, with interest and uptake from schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland also (Evans *et al.* 2015, p.2). The Paul Hamlyn Foundation continued its investment until 2017, when it helped to support Musical Futures become an independent, not-for-profit organisation.

Reviews of Green's (2002; 2008) work (Pitts 2004; Heuser 2005) have challenged Green's study, noting that only 2 of the 14 participants in her 2002 book were female and that

the musicians selected were of one particular popular music genre, calling into question the representativeness of Green's study in depicting how popular musicians learn. Indeed, other authors similarly challenge Green's work (see Allsup 2008), including limitations surrounding the all-white participant profile sample. However, Green herself discloses that Musical Futures is not a universally applicable and 'silver bullet' approach to music education, and instead should be used to complement existing practices: "more work is needed to ascertain the extent to which the incorporation of informal learning practices in the curriculum prepares students for further study" (2008, p.185). Despite this, Green's work provided an original inquiry into music-making practices of 21st century popular musicians, noting their methods of learning and practice and synthesising these into a set of principles for informal learning in the classroom.

Now, Musical Futures has grown extensively, both in the UK and abroad, through its separate organisation Musical Futures International. Musical Futures began in Australia in 2012, following a pilot in 2010/2011 in Victoria and Queensland (Musical Futures Australia 2013). Canada also adopted the approach, with pilots in 2011 in British Columbia (O'Neill and Bespflug 2011) and in 2012 in Ontario (Wright *et al.* 2012). Most recently, Musical Futures expanded to Singapore in 2012 (Chua and Ho 2013), China (Gower 2019, personal correspondence July 2021), with a pilot study conducted in Ireland (Moore 2019) and a small-scale study in Cyprus (Papazachariou-Christoforou 2022). Currently, over 2000 teachers and practitioners in 600 schools are adapting Musical Futures worldwide, with upwards of 200,000 young people benefitting from the approach (Musical Futures 2019). Indeed, there are over 20 'Champion Schools' and 20 'Champion Teachers' who are featured on the Musical Futures website [4] worldwide that embody the approach within their education contexts (Musical Futures 2019). The approach has also more recently been adopted and adapted for the primary level (Jeanneret 2010; Moore 2019). More detailed discussion of Green's pedagogy is to be found later in the chapter.

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[4] https://www.musicalfutures.org/who-we-are/the-team

Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal Learning: Mutually Exclusive or a Continuum of Practice?

Music is distinct from most other educational activities, due to "the occurrence of informal learning outside the formal system" (Cope 2002, p.93). For clarification, Finney and Philpott (2010) delineate between formal and informal music practices:

> The moment of informal learning is an orientation to *playing and making* music. The formal moment is an orientation to learning *how to play* music. In this sense all musicians are constantly engaging in a dialectic between these two moments.
>
> (Finney and Philpott 2010, p.9)

Regardless of their respective definitions, Folkestad (2006) suggests that formal and informal learning should be conceptualised as part of a continuum to account for and encourage fluidity and movement within these practices:

> Formal-informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum; in most learning situations, both these aspects of learning are in various degrees present and interacting.
>
> (Folkestad 2006, p.135)

Reviews of Green's work (Folkestad 2008, p.501), argue that there is not so much of a distinction between formal and informal learning practices, rather a distinction between "playing music" and "learning how to play". Indeed, students' musical activity maintains an interchange between the formal and informal. Learners may move between formal and informal contexts of learning as they progress, developing concepts about music informally outside of school that can be related to the academic knowledge obtained in formalised settings such as the classroom. For example, students who form bands with their friends may take up peripatetic lessons following their experience or vice versa. The visualisation of formal, non-formal, and informal learning practices as a spectrum or continuum is helpful in this instance as it highlights the fluidity of musical experiences that shape musical progression and development. These practices should not be regarded then as mutually exclusive within the music lesson and should instead reflect the way real-life musicians engage in their own music learning (Green 2002)

along a continuum of practice.

The spectrum of formal and informal learning situations presents a challenging environment from which to base pedagogy, none more so than in the area of music. That said, there is a difference in orientation towards teaching and learning practices on this continuum. Folkestad (2006) elucidates this distinction:

> Having established that *learning*, and the learning situation, can be both formal and informal, it is important to clarify that this is not the case with *teaching*: teaching can never be carried out using 'informal teaching methods'. Teaching is always teaching, and in that sense always formal. As soon as someone teaches, as soon as somebody takes on the role of being a teacher, then it is a formal learning situation.

(Folkestad 2006, pp.142-143)

That said, arising from the need to describe the incorporation of informal learning in formal contexts, the term *non-formal teaching* has emerged (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2014) to reflect this nuanced pedagogical approach. While Folkestad's clarification above explains why the terms *informal learning* and *non-formal teaching* cannot be used interchangeably and are distinct from one another, Wright *et al.* (2016) describes these two terms as partners due to their many overlapping characteristics, including:

> …the emphasis on inclusion, removing the necessity of formal barriers such as notation, supporting group-based work, tacit learning, democracy, students as peer teachers, the teacher becoming a facilitator rather than expert and the affordances of these teaching qualities for student skill development in creativity and emotional literacy.

(Wright *et al.* 2016, p.12)

In this way, one could argue that the resultant hybrid learning situation arising from non-formal teaching could be regarded as non-formal learning.

To this end, Table 1 gathers multiple authors' definitions of the three modes of music practice, summarising the key features across four aspects or domains, namely: learning situation, learning style, ownership, and intentionality, as identified by Folkestad (2006, p.141).

	Formal Learning	Non-Formal Teaching	Informal Learning
	Continuum of Practice → (Continuum of Practice ←)		
Learning situation (Where does learning take place?)	• Generally in an institutional setting (Folkestad 2006), during a set time, timetabled weekly/monthly/termly.	• Community music centres • Private lessons • Music clubs • Classroom workshopping, although typically outside traditional learning environments (Mak 2006).	• "Enculturation refers to the acquisition of musical skills and knowledge by immersion in the everyday music and musical practices of one's social context" (Green 2002, p.22) • ""Real-life" experiences" (Isbell 2018, p.41) • "An immersion in intense situations of nonformal learning, which creates non-traditional social learning environments that combine interactive and self-directed processes" (Wright and Kanellopoulos 2010, p.73).

Learning style (How is the character, nature and quality of the learning process realised?)			
	• Traditional "transmission" style, objectives/outcomes set before the lesson, planned assessment approaches. • "Hierarchically-organised levels of mastery…overseen by more experienced participants" "pre-ordinate series of instructional steps [allowing] teachers to control learning and efficiently identify problems in the process" (Rodriguez 2009, p.38) • "Structured, established guidelines where one person (teacher) transfers knowledge to another (student)…curricula, outcomes, and expectations are pre-determined" (Isbell 2018, p.40)	• "Explicit intention on the part of the learner and the mentor to accomplish a/some specific learning tasks(s)" (Mok 2011, p.13) • "Learning by doing" (Mak 2006) • Learning is caught rather than taught, done 'with' and 'by' students, not 'to' and 'for' them (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2014, pp.44-45) • "An inclusive approach to music making, lower entry barriers" (Wright *et al*., 2016) • "Utilises the skills within the group through peer learning as students bring with them different instruments and improvise according to their abilities" (Chua and Ho 2013, p.56)	• "Haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic" (Green 2008, p.10), integrated strands of listening, composing and performing. Learning as incidental – tapping into the musical experiences brought with and in students (Chua and Ho 2013, p.54) • "…the teacher relinquishes…control and enters into a more flexible and dynamic relationship with the learner" (Rodriguez 2009, p.38) • "The activity steers the way of working/playing/composing" (Folkestad 2006, p.141) • "Musical development occurs primarily through listening, performing, improvising and composing. Informal skills acquisition and growth occur in idiosyncratic ways, specific to individual learners" (Isbell 2018, p.41) • Knowledge is "context-sensitive and/or experience-dependent" (Jenkins 2011, p.182)

Ownership (Who 'owns' the decision of the activity of what to do as well as how, where, and when?)	• Teacher, grounded in curriculum (Folkestad 2006).	• "Students…are allowed opportunities to enter the educational setting at an time, explore topics immediately of interest to them, and contribute to the path of instruction" (Isbell 2018, p.40) • Teacher's role as "curator" (Kallio 2017, p.335) who helps students "make things happen for themselves" (Rodriguez 2009, p.39)	• "…locates production and development of musical knowledge with pupils themselves" (Wright and Kanellopoulos 2010, p.73) • "Non-linear, cooperative learning, controlled by a social group rather than by an individual" (Campbell 2001, in Feichas 2010, p.50)
Intentionality (Towards what is the mind directed?)	• Towards learning how to play and the contextualisation of knowledge ("pedagogical framing") (Saar 1999 in Hargreaves and North 2001, p.232)	• Towards the immediate task at hand	• Towards playing and making music ("musical framing") (Saar 1999 in Hargreaves and North 2001, p.232) • "'Student-centric' orientation, where the *intentionality* is on the learning needs of the students" (Chua and Ho 2017, p.2) • "A disconnecting of the means from the ends" (Jenkins 2011, p.184)

Table 1: Comparison of formal, non-formal and informal music education practices (adapted from Folkestad 2006)
.

In assessing whether a learning situation is formal, non-formal, or informal , Wright (2016, p.211) argues that we should consider these factors as being in a state of constant flux in relation to one another, like the sliders on an audio mixing board presented in Figure 1, where "several of the sliders may be anywhere on the continuum between formal and informal at any one moment in time".
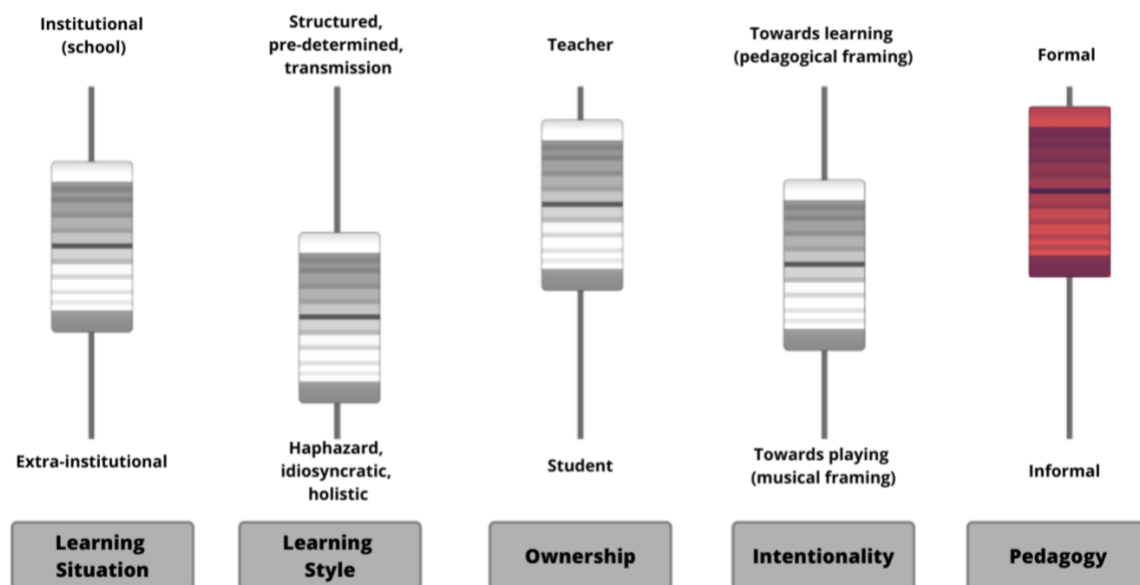
Figure 1: Determining the nature of a learning situation (adapted from Folkestad (2006) and Wright (2016))

Cain (2013) and Ng (2018) both agree with such a proposition, arguing that in reality formal and informal learning practices do not manifest as direct opposites. As such, Figure 1 presented above puts forth perhaps a more comprehensive method in determining the formal or informal nature of a learning situation, offering multiple criteria which may be present to varying degrees in manifested practice. In later work, Wright (2016) goes on to posit that teachers need to be sensitive to these elements when deciding on a learning strategy for students and that they might even move between formal-informal practices multiple times in a lesson.

Musical Futures falls predominantly on the informal range of the continuum. Wright and Kanellopoulos' (2010, p.74) assert that the approach will pose significant challenges to teachers and teacher education, demanding different qualities than current, more formalised teaching as per the continuum, necessitating music educators to develop a new skillset.

However, Hess (2020, p.12) proposes a balance between formal and informal practices to ensure "that students who depend solely on school music for their music education will be able to continue in music if they so choose".

Informal Learning Pedagogies: Philosophical and Theoretical Underpinnings

As the thesis investigates the impact of Musical Futures as an informal learning pedagogy, an extended discussion follows on informal learning pedagogies and their philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) identify four features of informal learning pedagogy which will each be discussed in turn here:

Firstly, they cite informal learning as being culturally responsive. In an increasingly multicultural and multilingual society, the challenge of educators is to respond to the diverse needs of students in a manner which recognises and values their distinct and unique identities, harnessing this richness of diversity into meaningful learning experiences for all students. A recognition of personal world views through socio-cultural consciousness and an affirmation of those from different backgrounds are key first steps in becoming a culturally-responsive teacher (ibid., p.xi). Moreover, Barton and Riddle (2021) posit that students find learning more meaningful when it is connected to their own lived musical experiences and frames of reference. Musical Futures is an approach grounded in such cultural responsiveness, as it derives its content from the innate and diverse interests of the student population; it is "filtered through the knowers' frames of reference" (Villegas and Lucas 2002, p.68).

Secondly, by their very nature, informal learning pedagogies rely on theories of socio-cultural learning, that is, learning from another. D'Amore and Smith (2017, p.63) agree that students are "developing as individual musical agents in their socio-cultural contexts". Underpinned by the work of Vygotsky and Piaget, informal learning can often extend these ideas in the form of "communities of practice" (CoP), a term coined by Wenger (1999). Authentic participation in such communities is facilitated by the both the teacher and students,

where the exchange of knowledge and ideas develops musical learning and musical identities in often unplanned trajectories, based on the knowledge within the community itself.

Thirdly, informal learning falls into the philosophical tradition of pragmatism. Deweyan pragmatism as a philosophy envisions the quest to solve problems of everyday life, where education is the means to explore and transform societal ideas. Pragmatism views education as growth and as an ever-changing, dynamic process. Informal learning pedagogies are resonant of pragmatist perspectives as they depart from static conceptualisations of knowledge, instead situating musical development within relationships to one another and the environment.

Finally, Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) posit that informal learning as a form of critical pedagogy strives to deconstruct the relations of power within society and education, proffering methods to emancipate individuals from such constraints. The marginalisation of individuals through hegemonic practices results in a stratified society which in turn perpetuates further hegemonic practices. Critical pedagogy conceptualises education as a transformative and empowering practice; knowledge is no longer the property of the teacher (Freire and Ramos 2017, p.53). Informal learning provides a normative framework from which to enact critical pedagogies, thereby breaking down barriers within music education and providing equality of access and opportunity for all students. This is achieved through the dissolution of typical classroom power dynamics and a reconstruction of the roles of teacher and student within the learning paradigm, leading to the empowerment of 'student-teachers' (ibid.) as agents of their own learning and teachers as agents of change. Further discussion of this process features in Chapters One and Four.

It is apparent that informal learning pedagogies have much to contribute to music education, aligning teacher practice with student voice, breaking down barriers to engagement, and creating authentic learning experiences.

Musical Futures' Pedagogical Approach

Musical Futures aims to capture the "conscious and unconscious" learning habits found in popular musicians and translate this into classroom practice (Green 2002). In other words, Musical Futures encapsulates people's intrinsic motivations for music learning and harnesses such motivation into meaningful classroom learning, thereby honouring the value and experience of the student. Indeed, from a pupil perspective, a more student-centred approach to music education has the potential to encourage stronger connections between music in school and music in their everyday lives. It is through enculturation, as defined by Herskovits (1949), that students learn most authentically:

> The aspects of the learning experience…by means of which...he achieves competence in his culture, may be called enculturation. This is in essence a process of conscious or unconscious conditioning.
>
> (Herskovits 1949, p.39)

Musical Futures is a unique method of music teaching and learning in schools that harnesses non-formal and informal teaching and learning approaches and brings them into the formal context of schools (D'Amore 2014). It emphasises practical music making and informal learning commonly utilised in community music practice (Higgins 2012; Howell *et al.* 2017).

Underpinned by the work of educational visionaries Vygotsky (1896-1934), Dewey (1859-1952), Piaget (1896-1980), and Bruner (1915-2016), Musical Futures draws on social, constructivist approaches to music teaching and learning. Democratic and discovery-based learning, communities of practice, and situated cognition are all encompassed by the Musical Futures model (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2014; Moore 2019).

Musical Futures approaches are embedded in five principles of informal learning:

1. **Learning music that students choose, like and identify with,** as opposed to being introduced to music which is often new and unfamiliar, and chosen by a teacher.

2. **Learning by listening and copying recordings,** as opposed to learning through

notation or other written/verbal instructions.

3. **Learning alongside friends**, instead of learning through instruction with continuous adult guidance.

4. **Assimilating skills and knowledge in personal ways,** according to musical preferences, starting with whole 'real world' pieces of music, as opposed to following a designated sequence from simple to complex, involving specially-composed music, a curriculum or a graded syllabus.

5. **Maintaining a close integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing** throughout the learning process, as opposed to gradually specialising and differentiating between listening, performing, improvising and composing skills. (Green 2008, p.10)
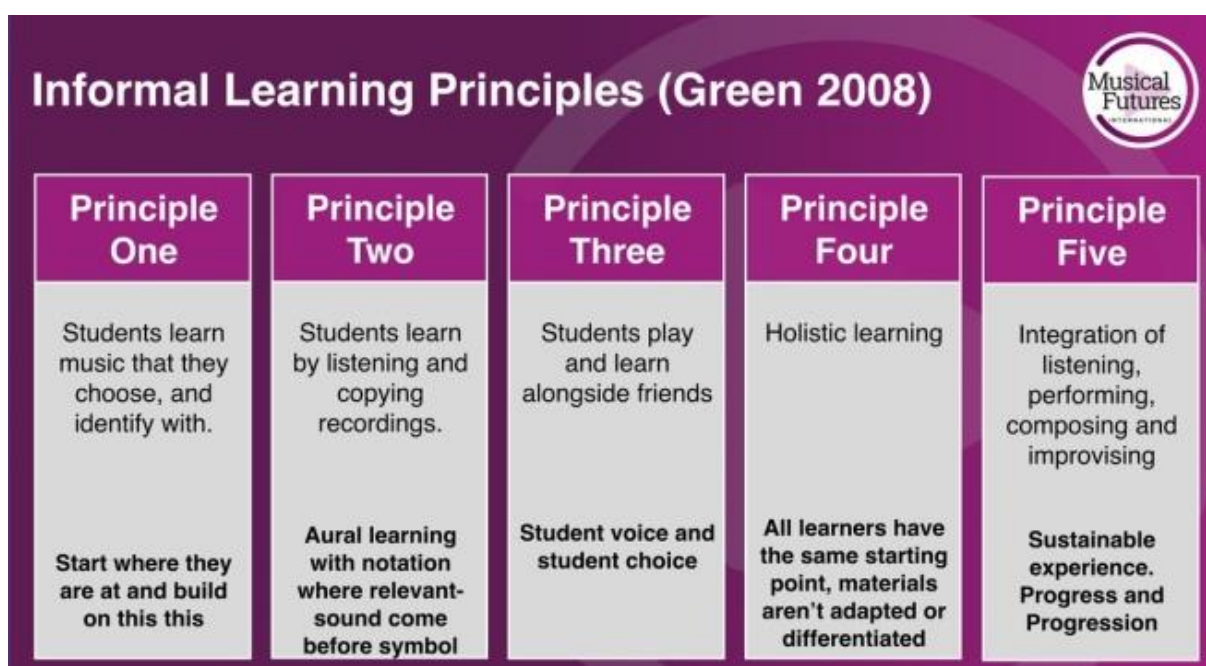
Figure 2: The five principles of informal learning

Cognisant of the distinctions between formal, non-formal, and informal learning practices as already discussed in this chapter, Musical Futures' philosophical rationale departs with traditionally formal classroom music practice, instead advocating the informal principles of learning outlined above. Certainly, the shift from formal to informal teaching practices in the music classroom is a significant one (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2014). By placing the impetus

for learning on the students, the power-dynamic of teacher as master of knowledge is relinquished and students are empowered as authentic voices in the creation of their own musical knowledge. In this way, the significance of the teachers' efficacy, content knowledge, and other factors is lessened. Therefore, this approach has the potential to substantially impact the delivery of music education for teachers who may hold negative attitudes towards music education, or those who do not believe they have the musical skills necessary to teach music.

Musical Futures is but one organisation that promotes the utilisation of informal learning practices. Influenced by Musical Futures in the US, Little Kids Rock promotes similar practices, albeit using a much more structured whole class approach. Wish *et al*. (2015), originator of the Little Kids Rock informal learning approach in the US, interestingly contextualises musical learning as similar to acquiring a second language. This Music as a Second Language (MSL) notion aligns with an informal learning approach, as the learning is student-centred, pressure-free, and natural (Powell et al. 2017, p.738). Extending this analogy further, formal teaching methods (as previously defined) are not dissimilar to teaching a student the rules and grammar of a language before giving them a chance to use and speak it. Yet in classrooms, this is sometimes the case with regard to how music is taught – students learn to read traditional staff notation and musical theory before they engage with the playing of music. Informal learning approaches emphasise the performance and composition dimensions of music rather than listening, interpreting, and responding: "The focus of MSL is firmly on participation – making music for the benefits inherent in the process – rather than on perfecting, regurgitating and reifying a recognized canon." (Power *et al*. 2017, p.738).

The Impact of Musical Futures: Literature and International Perspectives

Following a review of the literature into Musical Futures approaches, a discussion follows outlining the prevailing findings. This discussion will have a dual focus; firstly, to analyse the impact of Musical Futures on teachers and schools that have adopted the approach

internationally and; secondly, to develop a rationale for the adoption of Musical Futures within the Irish context. There are several international studies into the utilisation of Musical Futures in schools. Most of these studies are primarily concerned with secondary education, with some studies including reference to a small proportion of primary schools (Jeanneret 2010; Moore 2019). In light of a dearth of literature on the discussion of Musical Futures at the primary level, some generalisations will have to be made from what the literature reports at second-level education. Nevertheless, recent expansion of Musical Futures to include a more targeted approach for primary teachers has resulted in its development and adaption for generalist primary teachers (Jeanneret *et al.* 2011). Informal learning practices have been made accessible to primary level students through the *Just Play* and *Making Music* strands of the Musical Futures' plethora of resources. Literature regarding the implementation and adaption of these strands is scant and, again, some generalisations must be drawn from existing literature. In response, this thesis seeks to begin addressing such a lacuna in educational discourse into the implementation of Musical Futures at the primary level.

Upon a review of the corpus of literature pertaining to Musical Futures and its adoption and adaption around the world, all of the studies discussed the impact on teachers and/or students as distinct perspectives. Thus, it was decided to conduct a summative analysis of the findings from both the student and teacher perspectives in a similar manner. Although the thesis primarily investigates the values and ideological positionings of teachers, the student voice is one that cannot be discredited, as it is so inextricably connected to the teacher within the dualism of teaching and learning. The student and teacher perspectives will henceforth be examined in turn.

Musical Futures and the Student – Reported Findings

From the student perspective, the benefits of an adoption of Musical Futures as a pedagogical approach is significant. Evans *et al.* (2015) state that students who engage in Musical Futures

accrue several benefits, not just explicitly in the area of music. This suggests that Musical Futures has the potential to facilitate the development of skills and competencies outside the mode of music. Consequently, both domains will be examined, namely the enhancement of musical skills and attitudes, and the development of extra-musical skills.

Musical Development

In the UK, Hallam *et al*. (2009b) attest to the benefit of Musical Futures in instilling an interest in music and a contribution to musical progression. This is echoed in similar studies in Australia (Musical Futures Australia 2013), Canada (Wright 2011) and Singapore (Chua and Ho 2017). Students generally enjoy music (Lamont & Maton in Lamont *et al.* 2003; Lamont 2008; Lamont and Maton 2010; McCarthy *et al.* 2019). However, they can become disengaged with music in formal education settings (Hallam *et al.* 2017a). In agreement with this argument, Evans *et al.* (2015, p.1) note that "young people disengage with music-making in school [even though it] forms a central part of their social identity", but that engagement with Musical Futures "engaged and motivated learners" (ibid., p.13). One can deduce that "personalised learning" (Price 2005) offered in the Musical Futures approach through the self-selection of music for study from the students' vernacular repertoire is a powerful motivating factor towards the enjoyment of music lessons. This is because it harnesses students' existing passion for music vis-à-vis their musical interests and reflects it in classroom practice, thereby capitalising on the link between learner autonomy and learner engagement (Evans *et al.* 2015, p.2). Mariguddi (2022, p.7) concurs that "students' previous musical enculturation and distracted listening experiences of popular music enable them to access purposive listening activities more easily [rendering] the learning process as being more accessible". Wright (2011, p.20) references one teacher's comment that Musical Futures "has revealed hidden talent from pupils". This is striking as it causes one to wonder, why was the talent 'hidden'? What is it about current music education practices that hides such talent when it should serve to do the exact opposite? This

presents a strong case for the potential of Musical Futures at redefining musical experiences within the school context.

When students emulate the recordings, their listening strategies are enhanced (Baker and Green 2013), suggesting that in trying to copy the musical riffs and motifs within a piece, one is required to go beyond a surface-level of listening and thoroughly analyse a piece of music in layers (for example, vocal lines, harmonies, repeated rhythms, bass lines, form and structure, tempo, key, riffs and motifs). Furthermore, placing the authority of music selection on the student bypasses teachers' concerns over a musical piece's difficulty, capacity for inclusion, feasibility, and educational value and moves away from the idea that musical development is best achieved through the study of canonical works (McQueen *et al.* 2018).

An additional finding (Jeanneret 2010) notes that students have a better understanding of a range of musical genres from their engagement with Musical Futures. Again, this resonates with both Hallam *et al.*'s (2009b) and Papazachariou-Christoforou's (2022) studies. As students advance from the emulation of their chosen recordings, they are encouraged to replicate the process with unfamiliar pieces of music, allowing them to use the skills and strategies that they have acquired thus far. In this way, students authentically engage with a variety of musical genres. As they are listening at a critical level, they are more cognitively engaged, encouraging a deeper level of understanding and appreciation of musics that they are not typically used to hearing (Baker and Green 2013). Additionally, teachers reported that students acquired a range of compositional strategies through trial and error and independent learning (Hallam *et al.* 2009).

When combined, these findings demonstrate how Musical Futures approaches enable students to become critically reflective of their musical practices. This aligns with Elliott's praxial philosophy of music education, whereby listening is placed at the centre of the teaching and learning experience and students are facilitated in becoming reflective and creative practitioners, rather than just making sounds for the sake of it (1995).

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The studies however do not go into explanation about how exactly the improvements in the development of musical skills were measured and what specific skills were being referred to. While the teachers perceived that there was an improvement, there is little to no mention of what evidence there is to support this assertion. Granted that it is difficult to empirically measure improvements in abstract, ethereal and intangible concepts such as listening and composition skills, one could argue that the novelty of the approach caused a perceived improvement in musical skills when this may not necessarily be true.

Extra-Musical Development

As aforementioned, the literature suggests that not only does an engagement with Musical Futures benefit children's musical and instrumental skills, but it also serves as a method of enhancing a range of extra-musical abilities. These skills are often acquired unconsciously, through "enculturation" in group music-making and informal learning approaches (Green 2002, p.22). Myriad authors attest to the capability of Musical Futures to foster such extra-musical benefits, including enhanced self-confidence, social skills, motivation, autonomy, groupwork, self-efficacy, on-task behaviour, analytical and critical thinking, wider participation, greater focus, leadership, greater independent learning skills, and organisation (Hallam *et al.* 2009b; McPhail 2013; Evans *et al.* 2015; Hallam *et al.* 2018; Papazachariou-Christoforou 2022).

Not all of the findings were positive. Jeanneret (2010) mentions that teachers did not see considerable improvements in the learning outcomes for students with poor work ethics or for those students who do not work well in group situations. This was due to the increased emphasis on self-led learning and peer learning with the Musical Futures approach. Hallam *et al.* (2009, p.6) similarly found that Musical Futures might be aligned more to certain groups of pupils, deemed "gifted and talented". Evans *et al.* (2015, p.11) noted that "implicit hierarchical strata" manifested among students, arising from differences relating to skill acquisition. This meant that students deemed to be 'more musical' were assigned a higher status by the group.

The role of the teacher was critical in addressing such egalitarian issues and nullifying notions of hierarchy. These findings necessitate the consideration of such groups of students in the implementation of informal learning approaches within the classroom.

Musical Futures and the Teacher – Reported Findings

Mariguddi (2019; 2020) argues that the literature pertaining to how MF is experienced by teachers is limited, signalling issues which could endanger the future success of Musical Futures if not addressed. This scarcity of literature is concerning, given the centrality of the teacher in facilitating the implementation of Musical Futures, as stressed by Evans *et al.* (2015). Mariguddi's study investigates the perceptions of the informal learning branch of Musical Futures and highlights how the approach may be described as aspirational, providing a pedagogy that facilitates changes in teacher practice, notions of musicality and musicianship, value and attributions towards music. Finney (in Isbell 2018, p.43) "found evidence that [Musical Futures] effectively challenged teachers habitual, preconceived ways of thinking about how music is taught and learned". Gower's (2012) work discusses the facilitation of student-led informal learning experiences in a formal learning environment where clear structures, accountability and expectations exist for every lesson. There is not as much pressure regarding standards and accountability at the primary level, giving scope for this approach to blossom/thrive, if given the chance.

In several of the studies (Jeanneret 2010; Hallam *et al.* 2017c; Isbell 2018), the theme of the locus of classroom control pervaded. Teachers, prior to their engagement with Musical Futures, typically identified themselves as the instigators of the learning process and as the primary individual imparting knowledge, with one teacher commenting "I have previously believed that the teacher was in the position to know everything in the classroom about the content being taught" (Jeanneret 2010, p.153). Musical Futures challenged this perception and encouraged teachers to relinquish some of this control, trusting the students to engage with the

learning independently. Chua and Ho (2017, p.3) posit that one of the cornerstones of success in engaging students in meaningful informal learning experiences is the role of the teacher in "autonomy negotiation", meaning their ability to balance students' freedom with accountability and responsibility. This brings with it radical reconfiguration in pedagogy and the classroom environment.

Such a reconfiguration, coupled with the shift of locus of control from teacher to student, caused a considerable amount of unease among some music educators. In particular, this related to perceptions that behaviour management would be an issue - when and how to intervene when students were struggling, and how productive the students would be while working independently. Conversely, others found balancing learner autonomy and teacher intervention "liberating" and "exhilarating" (Isbell 2018, p.50). This would suggest that, given an appropriate initial organisation and set up, Musical Futures has the potential to create alternative classroom control paradigms, where the relationship between teacher and student roles divert from the traditional formalised context.

Another theme centred on the ability and skillsets of teachers. Unpreparedness to deal with new concepts, pedagogies and skills raised challenges for teachers and brought into consideration the effectiveness of their teacher training in equipping them to deal with informal learning approaches. Isbell's study found some teachers reporting Musical Futures as "stressful" (2018, p.47). However, teachers who committed to the implementation of the approach stated that it increased their musical confidence, pedagogical effectiveness and personal enjoyment of teaching music (Hallam *et al.* 2009b; Jeanneret 2010; Hallam *et al.* 2017c; Hallam *et al.* 2017b; Isbell 2018).

A third theme related to resources, accommodations, and support. Many investigations reported on the importance of support from managerial bodies with regard to adequate time, resources, instruments, space, etc. (for example D'Amore and Smith 2017, pp.70-71). The receipt of such support was generally positive across the studies, suggesting that it contributed

to the relative success of the projects (Hallam *et al.* 2017c). In studies where supports were a concern, involvement from senior management, clearer guidelines, resource packs, specific training, financial support, additional time, and in class support were all suggested ideas in overcoming barriers to engagement (Hallam *et al.* 2009b). Support issues stemmed from the power dynamics present in schools as teachers struggled for autonomy in how they conducted their practice. Mariguddi (2019) succinctly encapsulates the dual notions of power and freedom as they played out in the experiences of Musical Futures from the teacher and the student:

> [Musical Futures] is often restricted by power: the power of authority from [senior management], government and policy; and the power from the drive for marketisation within the current societal climate. Herein threatens the continuation of [Musical Futures]. However, [Musical Futures] can sometimes be strengthened by power: the power of the teacher and student voice permitted through choice and freedom. [Musical Futures] can offer the hope of freedom and choice for teachers and learners, independent from other sources of power, authority and restriction. Although most of the participants in this study strove for freedom, some teachers' fear stemmed from the prospect of student freedom…Freedom requires trust: trust in students; and trust in teachers as professionals. This … captures both the variety of powerful forces at play, and their antidote: freedom.
>
> (Mariguddi 2019, pp.142-143)

A school-based plan or governmental initiative provided the impetus for many of the studies. Therefore, consideration and inclusion of the necessary supports and networks were a central feature in the implementation of Musical Futures in the schools and classrooms featured in the literature. As such, a key insight for this project was that teachers need to feel supported in utilising the approach in their classrooms if it is to have the best chance for increasing teaching and learning outcomes.

A final theme concerns establishing connections with students (Wright *et al.* 2012; Hallam *et al.* 2018; Moore 2019). The dissolution of the typical teacher-student roles, characterised by a relinquishing of control as previously mentioned, allowed teachers to learn alongside their students. Evans *et al* (2015, p.5) termed this as a "shared enterprise", marking the lessening of the formalised context. Such "personalised teaching" was deemed to have long-term and sustainable impact on the delivery of music education to students (Hallam *et al* 2009,

p.6). Teachers who authentically engaged with the approach found that it brought their own preconceptions of music education into consideration, thereby causing a confrontation and reappraisal of existing music educational philosophies and practice. This generally caused a strengthening of motivation and purpose and a solidification of musical philosophies, as Isbell notes: "Musical Futures may serve as a practical, helpful means of organizing these imprecise, often perplexing music experiences, even for those teachers with background in informal learning themselves (2018, p.63).

Literature Gaps

While the reported findings suggest that Musical Futures has the potential to significantly impact the teaching and learning of music in classrooms, the contexts of the studies are a cause for consideration when applying them to the Irish context. In a recent review of twenty years of research into Musical Futures and informal learning, Mariguddi (2022, p.4) agrees with this point that much of the literature is likely to be less significant in certain educational contexts. For example, in Australian studies (Jeanneret 2010; Crawford 2017), most of the teachers who participated in the study were specialist music teachers. This calls into question the applicability of the findings for the generalist context as specialists will typically have more explicit pedagogical and content knowledge in the area of music in comparison to their generalist counterparts.

On the point of musical knowledge, in most of the studies cited, the musical backgrounds and experiences of the teachers is not explored in any depth. From this, it is hard to ascertain the effectiveness of the approach at changing teacher values as we are not given a clear benchmark from which to judge the change. While most teachers found the approach to have had a positive effect on teaching and learning, a limitation of the studies is that teachers were not given an opportunity to describe their teaching and learning experiences prior to implementing Musical Futures in their own contexts. In addition, most of the studies were

conducted straight after the initial implementation of Musical Futures. There is scope here for follow-up studies in the same schools as they continue to use the approaches in their contexts, crafting a longitudinal dimension to the experiences of teachers.

Of course, there is a certain positivity and 'buzz' around anything new being implemented in schools. This 'halo effect' (Blum and Naylor 1968 in Darby 2007) can significantly impact teacher perceptions of the approach and needs to be considered. Consequently, it was important to note how long the teachers were using Musical Futures in their teaching contexts before they were interviewed, surveyed, observed, etc. to see what their views on MF were over a prolonged and sustained involvement in the approach. Many of the teachers quoted enthusiasm, positivity, and increased participation, with one even going so far as to deem it 'life changing'. One has to call into question the adjustment period for such statements.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an examination of informal, formal, and non-formal learning practices from international literature, with a specific focus on Lucy Green's work and the subsequent development of the Musical Futures pedagogical approach. It has discussed the practical principles and theoretical foundations of the approach, highlighting it as an innovative pedagogy for music educators. Finally, it has analysed the impact of Musical Futures both in the UK and abroad for students and teachers, while also addressing some of the limitations of such studies for their application within the Irish primary context.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONTEXT OF PRIMARY MUSIC EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Introduction

> One can hardly comprehend a musical system without knowing how it is taught, learned and transmitted in its own society.
>
> (Nettl in Myers 1992, p.389)

This chapter critically examines primary music education within the Irish education system. First, I outline the challenges that problematise music education within generalist practice before tracing the historical underpinnings of curriculum and how the weight of history bears on current curricula and practice. I then explore the features of the existing curriculum and recent discourse about the purposes and aims of a music curriculum with the aim of situating the research within a socio-cultural context.

Generalist and Specialist Teaching

The Irish primary school utilises the generalist model of transmission. The term *generalist* for the purposes of this research project refers to those teachers who have responsibility for all content areas of the primary curriculum. The teacher is tasked with the job of teaching music as a subject itself to children in conjunction with a host of other subjects throughout the school day. They may also integrate music into other content areas as they see fit. Conversely, the term *specialist* (as it applies to music specialist teachers) is defined as someone who has extensive training and skills in music (Marsh 2012, p.318) and who takes different classes throughout the school for a set time each week specifically devoted to the teaching of music.

Challenges to Meaningful Music Education for the Primary Generalist Teacher

Chapter One briefly alluded to the trifold nature of the issues within Irish primary music education. It is to these prevailing issues that I now turn for further explanation as I examine the research problem through four interrelated issues relating to policy and practice, namely: curriculum, school culture, teacher identity and initial teacher education.

Curriculum and Practice

> Children of all ages and abilities have potential in music, and music education celebrates individual differences among them. The child's musical expression and responses to musical experience are valid, and his/her creations and innovations in musical compositions are fostered and valued.

(Government of Ireland 1999, p. 5)

The importance and influence of curriculum within music education and the school culture cannot be understated with regard to its impact on music education practice, as Bresler (1994, p.8) notes: "because curriculum conveys the past, but even more because it shapes consciousness, establishing a curriculum defines the opportunities children will have to experience different forms of consciousness".

Whilst the Irish Primary Music Curriculum (published in 1999) has been widely praised for its emphasis on holistic, collaborative, flexible and integrated learning, we know that introducing changes at policy and curricular levels is difficult to enact 'on the ground' due to the "robust and durable habitus" of teachers (Stakelum 2008, p.102). Stakelum's work is germane to the thesis in that it is one of few examinations of generalist primary teacher practice within the Irish context and argues that teachers' personal experiences and understandings of music can actually work to inhibit the implementation of a curriculum, despite its intended freedom and flexibility (ibid., p.289). In this regard, Stakelum (2008) noted that teachers may unintentionally manipulate objectives for alternative purposes external to music education, or even disregard certain aspects of the music curriculum, such as composition (Gubbins 2018; 2021).

In a recent national study conducted in University College Dublin, music was regarded poorly in comparison to teacher subject enjoyment, with only 25% of teachers (n=75) stating they enjoyed teaching music a lot (Devine *et al.* 2020). This is a cause for concern when the literature suggests that the successful translation of curriculum statements into practice depends on the confidence, knowledge, and skills of the teacher (Temmerman 1991). In the same report,

it was reported that nearly 40% of 2nd class children in over 100 schools often engaged in musical activities (Devine *et al.* 2020). Given this figure, why is it that so many teachers regard music as an area they do not enjoy teaching?

International research shows similar challenges with regard to curriculum implementation. For example, within the United Kingdom, music is seen by many teachers as the area of the curriculum as the one they have the least confidence teaching (Holden and Button 2006, p.29). Indeed, some authors have called for a reconceptualization of curriculum to mitigate the constraining impact of policy and legislation regarding curricula on teacher autonomy and agency (Stavrou and O'Connell 2022). Compounding these issues further is the fact that even though teachers may operate within the same curricular parameters, they are also originators of knowledge (Elbaz and Elbaz 1983; Elbaz 1991; Day 2002) and so, approach their practice in a non-homogenous manner (Goodson 1990 in Stakelum 2008). This results in inconsistencies between ideals held at national curricular level and practice at local teacher level:

> …it cannot be assumed that, since teachers are working within the same centralised system, with the same standardised syllabus, a generic enactment of the syllabus exists with each teacher transmitting the official version of the curriculum more or less in the same way.

(Stakelum 2008, p.101)

Consider the following situation. The primary music curriculum recognises the place of traditional music as one of the "strongest living traditions" within Ireland's educational, cultural and social landscape (Government of Ireland 1999b, p.5), placing Ireland in quite a unique position socio-musically, through its *bimusical* culture. The term 'bimusical', as coined by Hood, M. (1960) and explained by O'Flynn (2005), can be defined as "the presence of two relatively distinct musical systems or styles among the musical practices of some groups and individuals" (O'Flynn 2005, p.198), more specifically referring to being able to understand and be proficient in the technical requirements and stylistic nuances of two distinct musical systems. In the primary school context, the inclusion of both Irish traditional and Western classical music

in curricula create tensions and challenges for generalists who may prefer one, both, or neither genre within their practice. Such infighting as to the primacy of Irish traditional music or Western art music– "the cleavage between 'high' (or 'fine') and 'low' (or 'popular') culture" (Sundin 2000, p.4) - can consequently leave little space for other musics to be explored within the primary curriculum. Furthermore, the teacher's "richness of interpretations which [they] bring to bear on the curriculum" means that students' experiences of music will be vastly different (Stakelum 2008, p.291), despite the fact that the curriculum is a universal document.

Moreover, the musical genres included for study and discussion are at the discretion of the teacher. Yet, the inclusion (and/or exclusion) of musical genres informs students of their 'value' within the teacher's set of educational concerns, or "subscription of beliefs" (Green 1988, p.53). Green goes on to say that not only does it inform students of the teacher's musical values, but it also works to present students with perceived sociological values, as their teacher may be seen to embody the values of wider society: "[analysis of music] in schools [is] the very mode of study that ingenuously deposits upon music the reified appearance of eternal value generating out of itself" (ibid. p.61). Such implicit value systems can work to benefit certain cohorts of students. For example, parents of children from middle-class backgrounds may be able to afford to send their children to private instrumental tuition outside of the school in the Western classical tradition or in Irish traditional music (or indeed another musical genre). It could be argued that this provides them with an added advantage in accessing the content of the primary school curriculum, thereby granting them a privileged position within the school. Such hidden curricula alienate certain student cohort's experiences of music education, as the differences between home and school musics validate and authenticate certain genres over others (Hargreaves and Marshall 2003, p.266).

Of course, this does not begin to take into account the position and status of music within the wider primary curriculum. Generalists are under growing stress and pressure to teach in an increasingly crowded curricular agenda, fuelled by additional demands on generalists and the

rapid implementation of initiatives such as the Department of Education and Skills' National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy [6] (Irish National Teachers' Organisation *2015 Review of Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life*). Coupled with the increasing emphasis placed on the areas of literacy and STEM education, there is a trend coming from governmental and corporate influences towards easily measurable criteria in education. Music does not fit neatly within such criterion-based frameworks and presents a counter to standardisation as noted by Hennessy (2000, p.194): "Music does seem to present some particular difficulties for students and teachers alike, largely a product of the way musical behaviour and ability are traditionally defined and assessed". Thus, music is placed within a precarious position within the curriculum (Green 1988, p.47).

In terms of curricular implementation internationally, lack of time and adequate resources are cited as barriers within a school to authentic musical participation (de Vries 2013; Gubbins 2018; Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe 2019; Henley and Barton 2022). Hallam *et al.* (2009a, p.236) suggest two potential avenues to enhance the practice of generalist teachers: increased availability of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities, and collaboration with specialist teachers. Currently, the CPD of primary generalists is largely at the discretion of the school and the teacher themselves, who may not choose to pursue in-service training in the area of music, depending on their own needs and interests. Furthermore, there have also been mandates by government to ensure that courses focusing on literacy and numeracy are provided and that courses focusing on other curricular areas also embed literacy and numeracy in their design (Department of Education and Skills 2011).

School Culture

Given that within the Irish context, the generalist teacher is the individual who is tasked with

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[6] See https://assets.gov.ie/24520/defd56aec10946798ab2d32a42dc0d86.pdf

teaching the music curriculum to students, a school's climate, culture, and ethos can work to actively facilitate or hinder musical participation, with the attitudes and values of the principal and staff towards music largely determining the musical exposure of students (Sloboda 2001). This can lead to an ad hoc nature of music in schools, as Ryan (2001) notes: "provision is not universal but is haphazardly dependent on local circumstances and on the enthusiasm and skills of particular teachers" (Preamble section, para. 9).

This "serendipitous nature" of music instruction (Wiggins and Wiggins 2008, p.9) causes huge variance in music practice from school to school. Hallam *et al.* (2009a) warn of such a situation:

> Where a school values music and has had the foresight (or luck) to appoint teachers with confidence in their abilities to teach music then the musical life of the school is healthy, permeates the whole community and sits alongside and within other subject areas as a full member of the curriculum…in many schools, if there is no champion for music on the permanent staff much of the fundamental provision and the access to enrichment are compromised.

> (Hallam *et al.* 2009, p.23)

Russell-Bowie (2009, p.33) identified the lack of priority for music in schools and the lack of teachers' personal musical experiences as being two issues of greatest concern in music education within five countries, including Ireland (USA, Namibia, Australia, South Africa), despite Ireland's rich musical heritage (Riada *et al.* 1982; Pine 1998; McCarthy 1999; Fitzgerald and O'Flynn 2014). By way of illustration, teachers who hold strong musical values upon entering a school may have their passion and motivation diluted or 'washed out' within the school culture due to occupational socialisation and micro socio-politics as they interact with colleagues, leading to the normalisation of negative attitudes towards the subject, as has been shown in the field of physical education (Lawson 1986; McEntyre and Richards 2021).

Even in schools where meaningful musical engagement is present, the climate, ethos, location, and culture of a school may play a role in how music is envisioned and valued. Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) describe the tensions at play between music internal and external to the school:

> If there is a cultural mismatch between school music and community music, or between the musical preparation of the teacher and the music of the community, efforts to take advantage of a generalist teacher's musical background may come to naught.
>
> (Wiggins and Wiggins 2008, p.3)

Indeed, this situation places music in a "double bind" (Bresler 1994), where it faces challenges in trying to engage children to develop musical ability while also facing resistance from internal and external forces for its perceived value to the wider curriculum.

> Clearly, the school culture places music in a double bind: On the one hand, music instruction fails to draw on cognitive, higher-order aspects (in accordance with curricular advocacies); on the other hand, music is marginalized for its dispensable role as entertainment. Within a culture that regards the primary role of school as the development of students' base of knowledge and academic competencies, music as taught by lay people is perceived to be outside the esteemed territory. Stripped of its intellectual substance, music does not share in the school's primary values of knowledge. At the same time, its aesthetic aspects are viewed as "frills" within the current values. It was music as entertainment that was more compatible with the other school goals such as cohesion, bringing together school and community, inculcation of traditions, and fitting with school productions for holidays. In the hands of untrained people, however, music often turned out to be superficial and simplistic, typically serving as a vehicle to other ends, rarely transcending to artistic and aesthetic levels.
>
> (Bresler 1994, p.8)

Moreover, inclusion of specialist, community, or visiting artists is at the discretion and funding of the individual school context. On this point, much of the literature surrounding the Musical Futures approach discusses how it is used by specialist teachers who will undoubtedly have a considerably different set of knowledge and pedagogies to their generalist counterparts and, as such, must be taken into consideration.

Teacher Identity

Confidence and Efficacy

From the quote above, we see that competencies and knowledge play a pivotal role in the realisation of music education. Intricately related to a teacher's personal competencies and knowledge is the area of teacher identity; one can trace some of the most pertinent issues of music education for the generalist to their musical identity. Myriad authors have written on this topic within music education and education more generally (Russell 1996; Hargreaves *et al.* 2002; Korthagen 2004; Alsup 2006; Sammons *et al.* 2007; Isbell 2008; Rodgers and Scott 2008;

Lamont 2011; Freer and Bennett 2012; Kelly-McHale 2013; Bates *et al.* 2014; Natale-Abramo 2014; Kenny *et al.* 2015; Kenny 2017; Shouldice 2019; Chua and Welch 2020; Tucker and Powell 2021; Yang 2021; Paananen 2022). While philosophers and authors from various fields have argued over the term for decades, for the purposes of this research, Sollberger (2013) presents a useful definition of identity as

> …specified by detailed, conceptual or substantial attributes: we describe somebody by the particular social roles, which he or she assumes or refuses to assume in his or her action orientation and life praxis, by the ideals and values that matter to him or her, by specific habits, capacities, skills, and biographical experiences.

(Sollberger 2013, from Straub 1991, p.2)

This definition takes into account the social and cultural contexts in which teacher identity is manifested, reference groups with whom the teacher's identity is compared, and the interaction between an individual's "'self-systems'…which can be context-specific, or domain-specific" (Hargreaves and Marshall 2003, p.264).

Mindful of the complexities that this definition presents, the intersection of these multiple aspects of identity can establish the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the generalist music educator, with the interactions between prior musical experience, beliefs, attitudes, skills, competencies, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and classroom practice being multifarious (Biasutti 2010, p.64). Variance in socio-musical values can produce interesting manifestations of music education in practice, for example, a teacher may have excellent general pedagogical knowledge but limited specific musical content knowledge (Shulman 1987; Ballantyne and Packer 2004; Shulman 2013; Millican and Forrester 2019), resulting in limited musical experiences of their students. In the same vein, a teacher who is an adept musician but lacks the theoretical underpinnings and pedagogy may struggle in developing and delivering musical content to students, albeit in a different way to the former example.

As this study will go on to show, the personal and professional lives of teachers interact strongly in particular with regard to music; one's identity as a teacher is intricately connected to their personal identity and experience. As O'Flynn (2005, p.191) notes "…the development

of our musical selves is conditioned by our social and cultural experiences, not least through processes of education". The development of musical identity spans the lifetime of the teacher, including their music education experience within the formal education system.

Research has shown that positive musical experiences as a learner correlate to musical security as an adult (Pitts 2009). Unfortunately, such positive musical experiences cannot be guaranteed for the generalist teacher, prompting feelings of inadequacy and even embarrassment for teachers (Hennessy 2000), where they may class themselves as 'unmusical' (Mills 2005). If we are to take Henley's (2017) criteria for what defines being 'musical' – i.e. being musically active; having musical experiences; doing music; feeling musical; making musical contributions and; developing musical expertise - generalists may struggle to identify themselves as musical. Many may find it difficult to see past their musical ability as a fixed entity (Dweck 1986, p.1041), with myths surrounding talent, motivation, opportunity, and continuity perpetuating the notion that not everyone can be musical (Lamont 2011) despite studies that have discovered this to be unfounded (Sosniak 1990; Howe *et al.* 1998). Indeed, newly qualified generalist teachers in an Australian study (de Vries 2011, p.9) correlated being able to play an instrument with being musical, with many participants not regarding the voice as an instrument, thereby limiting their perception of musicality to instrumentalists.

These identic factors have a direct impact on issues of confidence and self-efficacy, the latter of which refers to an individual's "perceived operative capability" (Bandura 1977, p.646), or the "belief in [one's] ability to affect change in students' learning outcomes" (Pendergast *et al.* 2011, p.7). Many other authors also contribute to the discussion on efficacy in education (Gibson and Dembo 1984; Parkay *et al.* 1988; Tschannen-Moran *et al.* 1998; Goddard *et al.* 2000; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001). Garvis (2013) argues that there is a direct correlation between a teacher's self-efficacy and their perceived capability to teach music. Unsurprisingly, music has been identified in two distinct studies as the subject generalist teachers were least confident in teaching (Hennessy 2000; Holden and Button 2006), often emerging from the

belief that music is a specialist discipline (Mills 1989) requiring a "talent or giftedness" (Biasutti 2010, p.62). While discourse internationally argues both for and against the inclusion of a specialist music teacher, Russell (1996) has reservations about referring to teachers as non-musicians, when we do not refer to non-mathematicians or non-scientists. Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) elaborate on Russell's argument and justify the term, explaining how

> we would not allow someone who had stopped studying mathematics at the fifth grade level to teach mathematics…Yet we expect that generalist teachers can teach music when their last formal musical instruction, if any, may have occurred at that age or earlier.

(Wiggins and Wiggins 2008, p.4)

While this study relates to the US context, its logic is applicable to primary education in Ireland, calling into question the capability of generalists to teach music, given their potentially limited engagement with music through the formal education system.

For teachers who already have strong musical backgrounds, confidence and efficacy issues can still arise due to the idiosyncratic nature of music and musical participation. Often, the musical tastes and experiences of students differ considerably from that of their teacher, as Wright and Finney (2010) explain:

> Indeed, the cultural capital which many pupils wish to acquire in a musical field is that of contemporary popular music in which many music teachers, by virtue of their own educational experiences in music predominantly within the western art-music field, are singularly unconfident and ill-equipped.

(Wright and Finney, p.229)

More recent research into music education and cultural capital accumulation has identified how prior exposure to certain kinds of music and music education influence the stock of cultural capital an individual possesses, in turn affecting genre preference and choice (see Cuadrado-García *et al.* 2022). Lack of familiarity with the musical genres of our students (often typically popular music) means that "we cannot relate them to higher-level forms. We therefore receive few, or merely confused, inherent meanings, cannot engage with the music, are rarely negated and rarely affirmed. At times such an experience is boring" (Green 1988, p.35). This threatens a generalist's willingness to utilise musics in their teaching other than that with which

they are comfortable.

Such issues of confidence and efficacy have been exacerbated and brought sharply into focus in recent decades. In an increasingly technology-driven world, access to music and media is changing at a rate in which teachers are struggling to keep pace with and consequently "institutions such as schools no longer comprise a privileged route to access" (Sloboda 2001, p.250). Postmodernistic views of culture argue that "there are no longer clearly defined boundaries between elite and popular culture; all has collapsed into a single, confused mass…ruled by individual preference and the vagaries of the mass media" (Wright and Finney, in Wright 2010, p. 232). This has resulted in an omnivorous appetite for music among younger generations (Stone 2016), which, for the music educator, has raised difficulties in trying to keep up with the blistering pace of change of musical tastes. This struggle can be defined in terms of a deficiency in *subcultural capital* (Thornton 1995, p.105) - or simply being 'in the know' of what is current and trendy – which can cause a distancing of the musical worlds of teacher and student, resulting in the disengagement of students who do not see the relevance of music lessons to their lived experience of music and feelings of disillusionment from teachers who struggle to connect with their students and their interests. Sloboda (2001) takes this point further, stating that even if teachers try to gain such subcultural capital and incorporate musics which are relevant to the students' lived experiences of music, the very fact that such music is becoming the subject of study within the formalised school setting makes it unpopular and less trendy. Wright and Finney (2010) summarise the situation: "[teachers] are no longer the holders of the keys to an elite world of culture, understanding of which allows access to a higher social circle, with attendant possibilities of financial and social elevation" (in Wright 2010, p.229).

Understandably then, aligning music education with the demands of the curriculum in a way that capitalises on teacher confidence and efficacy, while also maintaining relevance to the student population presents a considerable challenge.

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values

Branching from teacher identity, an interrelated area of challenge concerns the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the generalist teacher. Despite their pervasiveness with regard to their impact on practice, beliefs, values and attitudes are again a complex phenomenon compounded by a lack of clarity on their conceptualisation and understanding (Pajares 1992). Fundamental to our understanding is that they (a) function as regulators for our perception, thinking and actions, (b) act as indicators of our practice within a system and, of distinct relevance to this thesis, (c) can be seen as an inertial force that may resist change (Pehkonen and Törner 1996). Thus, an unpacking of the relevance of these factors is vital to getting to the bedrock of how they may be changed.

Stakelum (2005) conducted an investigation into how generalist primary teachers conceive music and make sense of the prescribed music curriculum. She found that the differences in teacher practice can be defined in terms of the values teachers attribute to music in their own lives and in the lives of their pupils. In other words, poor or negative attitudes towards music can translate into poor music teaching and learning: "…the belief that musical abilities cannot be fundamentally changed…can lead to low expectations of teachers' future as non-gifted pupils and it determines a cycle of low expectation in the development of musical skills" (Biasutti 2010, p.64). Given the earlier discussion of teacher self-efficacy, this would seem logical. Interestingly, Henley (2017, p.480) found that contrary to previous studies, generalist teachers have an above average level of musical qualifications and exhibit a "richness of musical experiences". This would suggest that there is considerable variance in the musical backgrounds (and, in turn, the beliefs and values) of generalists. One of the most significant indicators of attitudes towards music teaching, according to Hallam *et al*. (2009a) and deVries (2011) is current musical engagement. This is mirrored in Holden and Button's article (2006, p.33) where they state that "teachers who participate in musical activities are more likely to feel confident to teach it" and that higher confidence in music teaching can be attributed to "greater

personal interest and increased knowledge and understanding of the subject brought about by personal participation" (ibid.). Personal participation in music will largely reside with teachers who already hold positive beliefs about music and their musical ability.

The influence of teachers on student opportunities and outcomes in lifelong musical engagement cannot be understated (Pitts 2012; Creech *et al.* 2020). Teacher beliefs of what counts as music can often create for them a preconceived set of what a 'good' music student is like, typically one who has prior musical training received outside of formal education. These students may not necessarily be any more musical than those who did not receive external music education but may be more well versed in the value laden language of music (i.e. have high musical habitus). How then can a student who does not have the ethereal elements sought by the teacher ever be considered 'good' at music? In practical terms, a teacher unfamiliar with rap music may see no value in a student who can rap and thus never invite them to explore their musical potential. Essentially, as Green (1988) highlights, music education tends to perpetuate a system that rewards students from privileged socio-economic backgrounds (those who have extensive musical capital/habitus) while at the same time denying those without the teacher-defined prerequisites of music a chance of exploring their musical potential. As Bourdieu eloquently puts it: "The education system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give" (Bourdieu 1977, p.494).

Furthermore, the beliefs and attitudes surrounding the purposes and value of music education within primary education are cause for debate. Disparity of beliefs surrounding the purposes of music education can result in inconsistent practices among generalists. For example, is music to be learned as a subject in its own right, is it for enjoyment, is it to be used as a vehicle to teach other subjects, or some combination of these? Wiggins and Wiggins (2008, p.14) found in their US study that many generalists had "misguided visions [about] what it is to be a musician, to teach music, and to learn music", going on to say that generalists often saw music as a vehicle to "entertain, create group cohesion, or teach non-musical skills such as

motor skills or following directions" (ibid., p.24). While within an integrated curriculum (such as is the case with the Irish primary curriculum) these benefits are certainly favourable, they should not be the primary aim of music education. Indeed, the curriculum's aims value music for study in its own right (Government of Ireland 1999, p.12).

Initial Teacher Education

A fourth challenge concerns initial teacher education (ITE) in relation to music education. There is a significant body of literature from Ireland and abroad that focuses on preservice generalist primary teachers training [7]. Indeed, the process of occupational socialisation as mentioned earlier occurs as early as during a teacher's ITE, influencing which beliefs and values teachers will acquire and which will be ignored (Schempp and Graber 1992). From an arts and music perspective, ITE is a critical time for the formation of identity and efficacy of teachers (Hargreaves and Marshall 2003; Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010; Garvis 2013; Bates *et al.* 2014; Kenny *et al.* 2015; Kenny 2017). The absence of a music requirement for entrance to ITE courses leads to a diverse makeup of musical backgrounds and experiences of student teachers entering the profession. Such "musical starting points" of generalist teachers entering the profession vary enormously (Henley 2017, p. 473), leading one to ask how can colleges of education provide ITE in music that caters for such individual diversity?

Seddon and Biasutti (2008) suggest that student teachers should be involved in activities that enable them to experience practical musical skills based on their informal background, as they have the potential to influence their confidence in relation to classroom music practice. Other authors such as Kenny (2017) and Hewitt (2002, p.36) agree with this claim to redress the "lack of immersion in musical performance" by engaging student teachers in collaborative creative music-making activities. Despite teacher training courses attempts at exposing students

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[7] Please note that for the purposes of the thesis preservice teacher education within the Irish context is known as Initial Teacher Education (ITE). While international research mentions and utilises preservice teacher education as a term, in this thesis ITE will be the prevailing terminology used.

to good educational practice, trainee teachers often do not regard these activities as 'real' music, thereby leaving their perceptions of music as a specialist subject unchallenged (Seddon and Biasutti 2008, p.418).

Indeed, given the many aspects to be covered in a generalist teacher preparation course, limited contact hours in discrete music education within ITE compounds the issue further (O'Flynn *et al.* 2022). Alter *et al.* (2009, p.28) state that "it is difficult to compensate for an individual's lack of arts background given the limited amount of time available for arts pedagogy in undergraduate pre-service training programs". Variance in musical backgrounds can also create difficulties whereby the presence or absence of musical skills is seen as an issue for many teachers. In a Scottish study (Hewitt 2002, p.35) of generalists engaging in a group composition compared to specialist music educators, issues arose with regard to direction and management of music-making, assessment and evaluation of children's music, utilisation of conventional music notation, confidence, and general ability to think musically. Further to these issues of skill-oriented musicality, Biasutti (2010, p.63) claims that "the teaching of music is a problem for non-specialist primary teachers, since they have few resources and methods for organising the music didactic". Russell (1996, p.255) echoes this point of teachers having an articulated musical terminology to give verbal form to their musical thinking and being mystified by musical notation. Explicit unpacking of this "tacit musical knowledge" (ibid., p.258) has the potential to transform generalists' understandings of music, if given adequate time and attention during teacher training.

Putting it all Together: Ideological Perspectives

In sum, the idiosyncratic and haphazard nature of music education practices across schools, considerable diversity in the musical experience and backgrounds of generalists, negative belief and value systems of generalists, and limited initial teacher education in music compound to problematise and threaten music education provision at the primary level. While these

challenges may seem emic, disparate, and highly individualised to the micro level, the literature suggests that they are interrelated at larger meso and macro structural levels through ideological structures. Indeed, Figure 3 presents my visualisation of how ideologies simultaneously influence and are influenced by the challenges to music education as discussed throughout the last few pages, including curriculum and practice, school culture, initial teacher education, and teacher identity. In this figure, ideology can be seen as the structure that mediates and is mediated by these challenges, with these barriers themselves also being connected to one another.
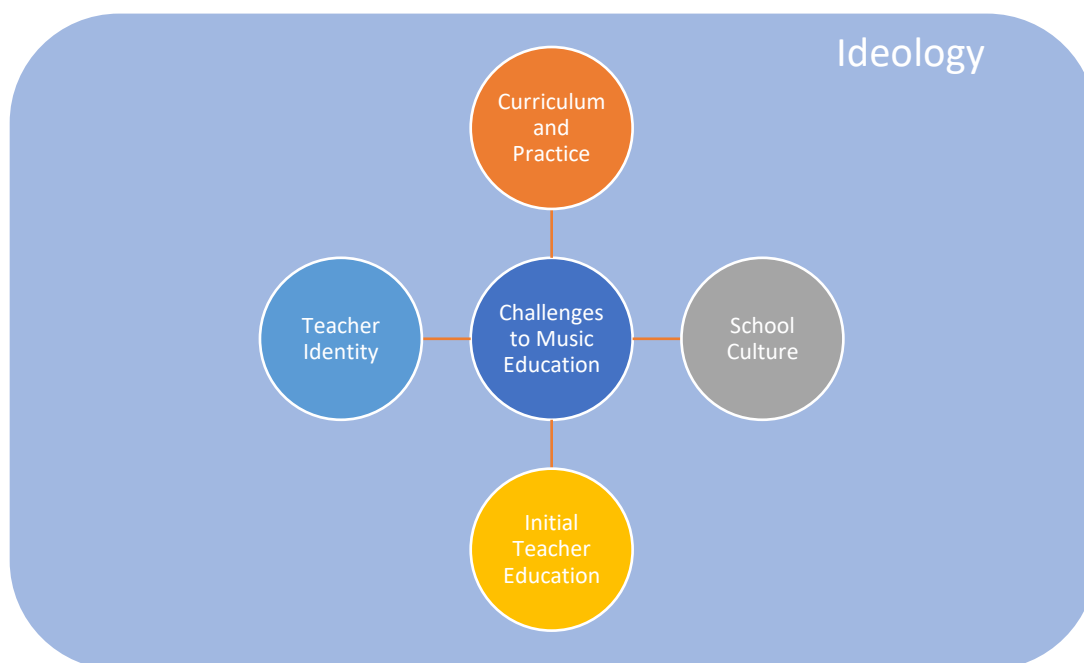
Figure 3 Challenges in music education as mediated by ideology

The pervasiveness of ideology within the education system has been examined by numerous theorists, such as Green, Bourdieu, and Althusser, and will be subject to further discussion in Chapter Four. However, at this point, it is noteworthy to make an etiological connection between individual teacher practice and its ability to be mapped onto wider ideological structures. The valence of qualia relating to music and musical value are influenced by ideology and directly impact teacher practice. From the literature, it would appear that

several of the problems at their core are mediated and manifested through larger ideological structures and distilled down through the educational system to the generalist. Thus, it follows that the role of ideology is significant in shaping teacher identity and consequently, the format and experiences of music and music-making delivered to students. If the ideological positionings of teachers impact their practice, to what extent can beliefs (as mediated through ideology) be changed to create the most meaningful educational outcomes for students? As such, an analysis of the ideological underpinnings and positions of generalists forms a central tenet in the exploration and investigation of teacher practice in music education, which is at the heart of this thesis and the crux of the research problem.

Historical Context of Music Education Provision in Ireland

The current 1999 curriculum is a document that bears the vestiges of Ireland's historical and cultural influences from the past two centuries. The Stanley letter, written in 1831 by Edward Stanley - chief secretary for Ireland within the United Kingdom's government at the time - proposed a legal basis for the formation of a national system of education in Ireland. For music education, this subsequently marked the beginning of a standardised curriculum in Ireland that focused on vocal music and musical literacy (sol-fa) within the classical tradition. McCarthy notes how education reports at the time assigned the function of music education to be "social, religious and aesthetic" (1999, p.52), with a view to 'humanising' the lower classes, strengthening colonial identity, and contributing to a more civilised and anglicised society overall.

Nationalist ideological movements at the end of the nineteenth century, proliferated by institutions such as the Gaelic League (1893) sought to re-establish Gaelic identity, with traditional music being seen as a vital component of this movement. Intensification of patriotism pervaded the beginning of the twentieth century and the status of music within the wider curriculum was upgraded as music was seen to contribute to the whole development of

the child within the Revised Programme for Primary Schools (1900).

In 1922, the establishment of the Irish Free State saw considerable reform as the country grappled with defining itself. This transition once again radicalised the educational system, where a particular emphasis on cultural nationalism, Irishness, the Irish language and Irish music epitomised education at the time. Schools were seen as "prime agents in the revival of the Irish language and native tradition which it was held were the hallmarks of nationhood and the basis for independent statehood" (Coolahan 1981, p.38). Practices at the time were synonymous with sol-fa and song singing in Irish, offering a narrowly focused music programme that echoed the Hullah method decades before, despite revisions to the curriculum in 1934.

It was not until the introduction of the 1971 curriculum that conceptualisations of music and musicality were broadened within curriculum documentation. This iteration of the national curriculum saw some of the most sweeping changes ideologically and pedagogically with the aim of "enlarging [students'] musical experience in every way possible, through song singing, music making and listening or moving to music" (Coolahan 1981, p.211). This curriculum was innovative and child-centred and encouraged the fostering of children's creativity, which necessitated a considerable level of upskilling for teachers at the time. International pedagogies such as the Ward, Kodály, Orff and Suzuki methods began to emerge within teacher practice to varying extents and degrees of success. Interest surged in folk music through its promotion by the organisation Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann among others and this period was marked by "a growing tolerance for pluralism" (McCarthy 1999, p.140) and acceptance of a range of musical traditions, brought to the fore by Ireland's entrance into the European Economic Community (EEC) as a nation with its own unique cultural identity.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was set up in 1987, prompting discussion about curriculum reform in light of a changing society in the country. This resulted in the publication of the 1999 curriculum which, as Walsh (2016, p.27) states,

built on the philosophies of its predecessor rather than a radical departure. Stakelum (2005, p.36) agrees that the content of the 1971 curriculum remained largely unchanged to its 1999 counterpart, arguing that the main shift was away from centralisation and towards an acknowledgement of teacher knowledge, autonomy, and control in shaping the learning.

Indeed, the intense efforts to promote nationalism, Gaeilge, Irish music, and sport in schools post-colonialism are echoed in the current iteration of the curriculum through an acknowledgement of the importance of the inclusion of Irish traditional music as a core feature of Irish heritage and identity (Government of Ireland 1999).

Current Music Education Provision

Surrounding Documentation and Reports

Music Education at the primary level in Ireland is currently guided by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in liaison with the Department of Education and Skills (DES). There are two critical documents that pertain to music education in particular, namely: *Primary School Curriculum: Music* and *Primary School Curriculum Music: Teacher Guidelines*. Both published in 1999, these set out the learning content and objectives for each class level, ranging from Junior Infants to 6th Class. Since the introduction of the 1999 curriculum, several other legislative and policy documents have been issued that influence the delivery of music in classrooms, including *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* (2007), *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* (2009), *Literacy and Numeracy: For Learning and Life* (2011), and *Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools: Guidelines for Primary Schools* (2017). Initiatives such as Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) (2005) [8] and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011-2020) [9] have also impacted music education. The ever-

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[8] https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/4018ea-deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools/
[9] https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3b9186-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-for-life/

increasing corpus of legislature has left teachers feeling overwhelmed and with insufficient time to meet the needs of all learners, leading to the NCCA's publication *Curriculum Overload in Primary Schools* (2010, p.7). Here, it is suggested that "overload is caused by *important* subjects competing for space with one another and also competing with what some consider to be *less important* subjects" (italics in original). This hierarchical designation of subjects based on their perceived relative usefulness is noteworthy as ascriptions of 'important' and 'less important' subjects offers an insight into what is valued in education at the macro level and what society deems important for its citizens of the future.

The Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) report into effective resources to support arts education was published by the NCCA in 2019 [10]. Looking across the modes of music, visual art, drama and dance, teachers were asked to complete an online survey detailing their responses to a range of questions regarding their teaching context, experience, and use of resources to support their teaching of the arts subjects. According to the report, 19.64% of respondents stated they felt 'very confident' in delivering music. 44.64% stated they were 'confident', 33.93% stated they were 'not very confident' and 1.79% stated they were 'not confident at all'. While the number of participants in the report was small, respondents were from a mixture of urban and rural settings across the country. In addition, 21.43% of respondents stated that they had an additional qualification to teach one or more arts subjects. While the report did not go into specifics about what art areas the teachers were referring to or what the level or degree of qualification was, it is interesting to note the 78.57% that said they did not have an additional qualification. Does this lead to concerns over efficacy and confidence of teachers when implementing arts curricula?

When asked about the key features of useful arts resources, the top three responses were that an arts resource must (i) be simple to understand (ii) have an easy-to-follow layout and (iii) be easily applied to the teacher's context. When asked to elaborate, one teacher commented that

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[10] https://ncca.ie/media/4153/cidree-arts-survey-2019.pdf

it should include 'practical and visual' aspects also. Such a comment is noteworthy in relation to this project. Moreover, teachers stated that the main benefits from using arts resources were that they: a) gave them new ideas and ways for teaching the arts; b) increased their confidence; c) improved their skills and capacity to teach arts subjects, and d) increased their knowledge (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe 2019, p.10).

Following from the initial survey, 5 teachers were contacted to complete an interview. When asked what resources they use effectively with their pupils, many cited 'human resources' in the form of other teachers (team teaching, visiting other schools), specialists (Speech and Language Therapists, local artists). Later in the interview, this arose again as the power of the "team-teaching environment" (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe 2019, p.15) contributed to the professional development, improved confidence, greater knowledge and understanding, and improved skills in delivering arts experiences to students.

When asked how the resources they selected were judged to be effective, 60% spoke about the interest levels of students. Others mentioned the easiness to follow, the adaptability of the resource, and the relative cost of the resource. Regarding how teachers used resources to deliver arts experiences, one teacher stated that "resources were especially good in kick-starting an idea, as the driving force behind them, or even to help deepen student understanding" (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe 2019, p.14). This is interesting as the teacher is viewing the resource to be a teaching methodology in and of itself. This teacher wasn't alone in their view as another said that resources helped them to "[fulfil] curriculum objectives" (ibid).

"Professional judgement" (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe 2019, p.15) on the part of the teacher was a term used when a teacher felt confident enough in their own abilities in an art mode. However, when such confidence was perceived to be lacking, following a "pre-designed programme" (ibid) allowed the teacher to

feel they were delivering an effective curriculum, knowing it was created by someone who may have been more knowledgeable than them and their level of expertise in the area. It would appear that when teachers have a strong sense of self-efficacy, they rely more on their own judgement in the selection of resources. In the opposite case where teachers may lack confidence in a particular area, they turn to existing resources, colleagues, and external sources for inspiration, methodologies, motivation, ideas, etc.

One final comment from a teacher interviewed was that there was "space in Primary schools for broadening pedagogy and looking at process as well as product…[and that it was] important that the teacher be seen as a co-learner with students and not always the expert in the room" (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe 2019, p.17). These findings resonate with the philosophy of the Musical Futures approach, and indeed the data is useful for informing the study as it underlines the importance of a strong suite of resources (such as those on Musical Futures online) in supporting the generalist.

Primary Music Curriculum (1999)

The curriculum broadly follows a spiral design, whereby existing concepts are revisited and built upon each year in increasing breadth and depth. Figure 4 illustrates how the music curriculum specifically is structured under three main strands: Listening and Responding, Performing, and Composing. These three strands are further broken down into strand units. Underpinning all of the strands and strand units are the musical elements, which are "the building blocks of music and are interrelated in any musical activity" (Government of Ireland 1999a, p.10): pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, and style.
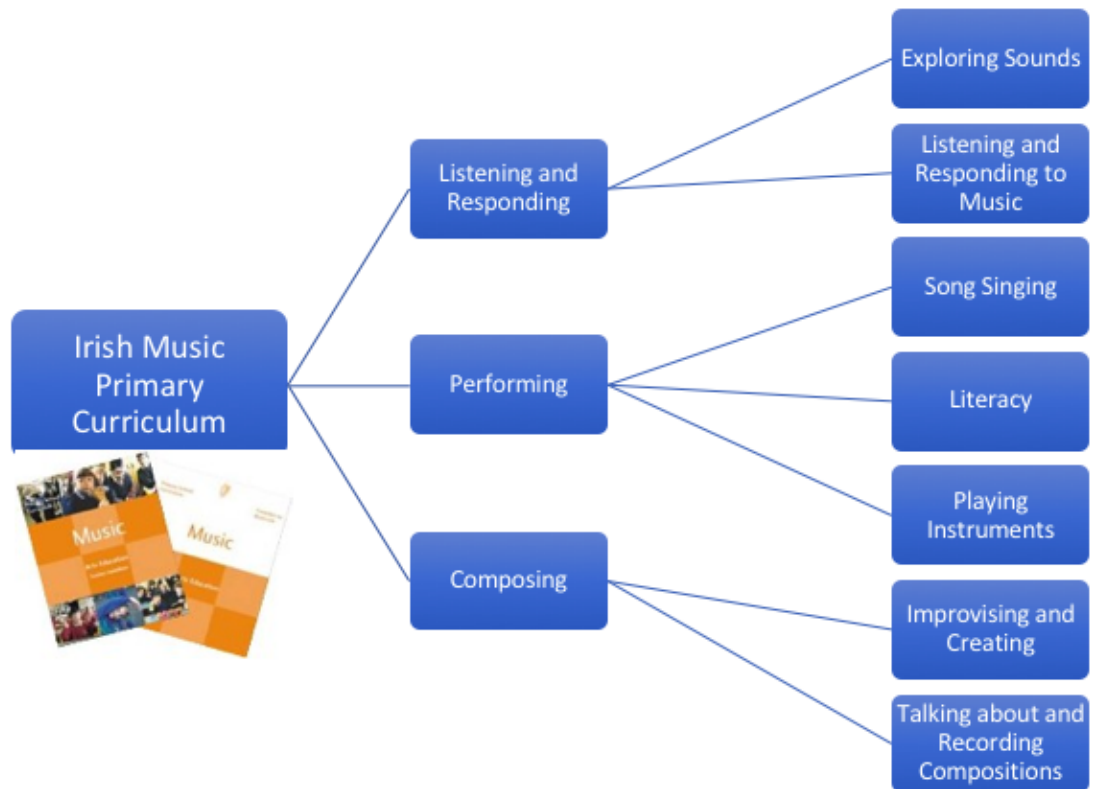
Figure 4: Structure of the Irish Primary Music Curriculum (from Gubbins 2018)

The document sets out the official aims and objectives, as well as pedagogic strategies that teachers are expected to use. Government guidelines on what constitute good practice and approaches to teaching are regularly issued in the form of circular letters. The inspectorate body supports this process through the evaluation of teaching quality across the curriculum in the form of Whole School Evaluation (WSE) or Curriculum Evaluation of a specific subject. Schools must also engage in the process of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) in an area of their choosing.

The tripartite structure of the Irish primary music curriculum has been informed by international experts in music education, including Swanwick (1994) and Elliot (1995). The structure of the curriculum undoubtedly impacts how teachers approach the implementation of music education. Indeed, a common misattribution about classroom music is that it is relegated solely to an emphasis on performance. For example, in my M.Ed. research (Gubbins 2018), I

found that generalist teachers devoted the greatest proportion of their discrete music teaching time to the performing strand. The emphasis on performance similarly pervaded much of the qualitative findings, despite it only forming part of the curriculum.

Integration and Linkage

Seeing the areas of listening and responding, composing, and performing as three distinct areas can cause a disjoint in how they are addressed in teachers' planning and lesson delivery. For example, O'Flynn (2002, p.93) notes how "listening is a behaviour that pervades all musical experience" but difficulties arise in firstly the selection of listening material, and secondly its interpretation due to the difference of "listening behaviours…[within a] matrix of social and personal experiences" among individuals (ibid., p.97). He goes on to argue that the variance in the musical backgrounds of teachers mean that the addressing of listening as a musical activity and skill will be considerably different in its integration across the musical modes, in turn influencing the development of student listening skills discretely and holistically.

It is interesting at this point to imagine alternative structures for music curricula. Had the curriculum centred around the fusion and co-dependence of these discrete strands, students would be more often working across two or more of the three modes of music simultaneously. As an international example, the Victorian curriculum in Australia divides their music strands as follows: Explore and Express Ideas, Music Practices, Present and Perform, Respond and Interpret. This links with Small's (1998) notion of 'musicking' and Elliott's (1995) praxial philosophy of music, whereby music is an integrated activity. Indeed, Small (1998) defines musicking (as a verb) thusly:

> The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world.

It is useful to think of music in this broader way in the classroom as professional musicians routinely flow between all three modes in their work and so, to authentically capture a multidimensional music-making experience, children need to work across all three domains also.

In fact, addendums to the current primary school curriculum are trending towards more integration to facilitate the maximisation of teaching time in a very crowded curriculum. Indeed, there are changes looming on the horizon and portents of this have already surfaced with the new 2019 Primary Language Curriculum [11] and a new mathematics curriculum being in development [12]. These changes suggest integrating music, art and drama under arts education which will have consequences for the delivery of music within the primary school and may threaten the position of music within the broader primary curriculum.

Within the notion of integration, there is a delineation to be made between *arts integration* and *integrated arts* experiences. Typically, arts integration refers to music as it is integrated into the teaching of other subject areas as a vehicle or methodology of enhancing the learning in that area. Integrated arts as a term denotes the combination of two discrete art modes (music, visual art, dance and/or drama) to symbiotically enhance one another. Music is routinely used as a way to enhance the teaching and learning in other curricular areas, with many music skills transferable to other domains (Bresler 1995).

Linkage refers to the teaching of more than one strand unit in a discrete lesson. In terms of music education, linkage connects the strands of listening and responding and/or composing and/or performing. From my Master's thesis, I uncovered that teachers typically spend the least teaching time on the composing strand of the curriculum (16%). Opportunity exists here for the linkage of strands to facilitate greater time in composing.

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[11] https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Primary-Language/
[12] https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/maths-curriculum/
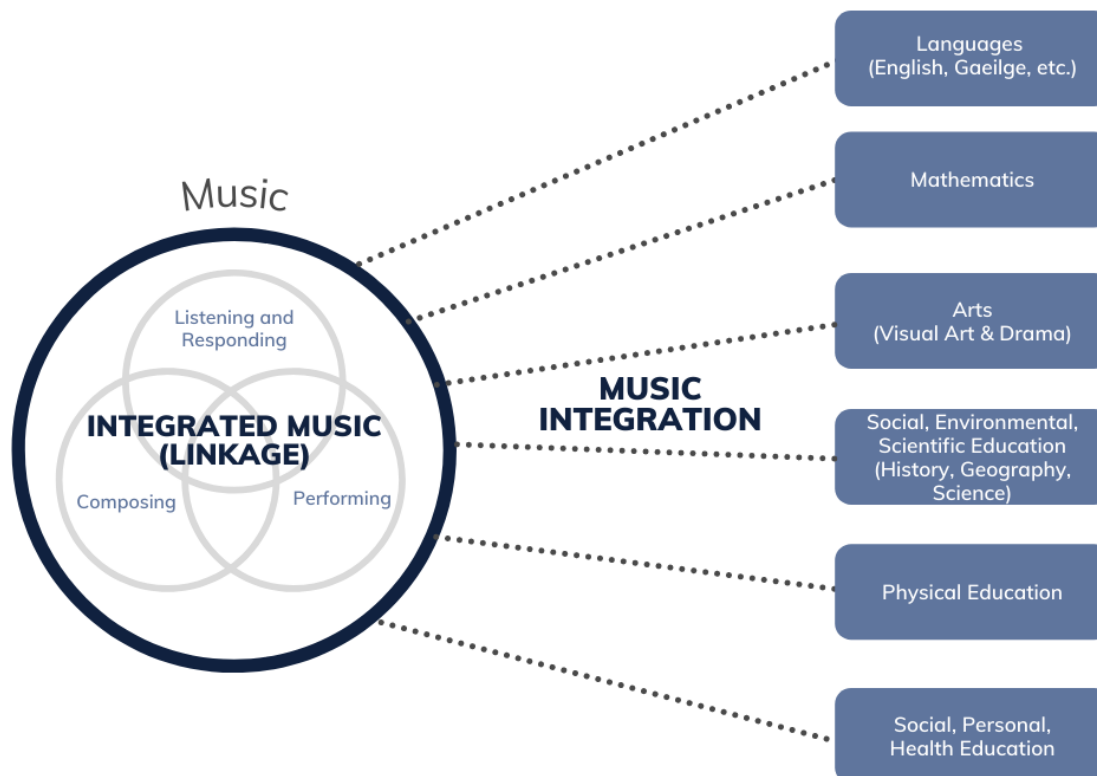
Figure 5: Diagram of integrated music versus music integration in the Irish primary curriculum

Returning the focus to the thesis, the discussion on linkage and integration is important as it establishes how music is delivered in primary classrooms across the country and can indicate teachers' conceptualisation of music, giving an insight into their ideological positionings. Teachers who may not value music as a subject in its own right may see the use of integration as a convenient way to 'tick the box' and say they have taught music. This may be the case when they haven't actually taught music, instead having used it as a methodology to teach other subjects. Such music integration cannot truly be regarded as music education. Rather, it is a musical experience, as to be deemed music *education*, there must be the inclusion of new content knowledge or the development of a musical skill. In this way, a teacher's approach towards integration and linkage of music can speak volumes about their value systems regarding the art mode.

Curriculum: Ideology, Debates, and Issues

> Knowledge that finds its way into schools as the music curriculum is never neutral. It is the result of ideologically impregnated policy through which it becomes filtered to enhance and preserve the cultural and economic interests of the dominant social group. As such, it is a relay for certain social and cultural values.
>
> (Wright 2012, p.23)

> [The curriculum cannot be seen as] a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimate knowledge.
>
> (Apple 1996, p.22)

Wright and Apple above capture the pervasiveness of ideology in the construction and implementation of a curriculum. Within the Irish context, Stakelum (2005, p.215) claims that teachers' perceptions of musical knowledge are drawn in part from curriculum documentation, necessitating the following discussion. The historical development of the current primary music curriculum as traced earlier in the chapter clearly exemplifies how a curriculum is the distillation of ideologies pertaining to music education. It is imbued with a certain combination of values, aspirations, objectives, and ideals concerning students' musical development at the zeitgeist of the time. Indeed, the vision and design of a curriculum is inescapably a selective process, taking on certain elements and ignoring others. These choices are often acknowledged or justified (as is the case in the Irish context) as heritage, diversity, culture, or tradition, and, as Apple highlights above, these selections are not neutral and often typically hegemonic in nature. By their very inclusion in national policy on education, these selections are reified (Green 2014b), making them appear as unquestionable ideals for practice.

This synthesis and condensation of ideologies may come from a variety of sources; however, we know that some ideologies are accepted in a curriculum, and some are rejected through what Wright and Froehlich (2012, p.212) term a "selection and filtration process". It is the individuals responsible for the selection of ideologies that shape the structure and content

of a curriculum, and in turn shape how music is delivered and experienced by students. Policymakers and educational consultants certainly strive to create curricula that are sufficiently detailed, broad and accessible, while offering opportunity for adaption, extension and differentiation, all the while being mindful of current trends and discourses in educational research and theory. Nevertheless, these individuals are, to an extent, distanced from the classroom and its practice, resulting in a value-laden document with ideological positions that can be discordant with the community of teachers and students for which it is designed to serve. The anonymity of the writers of the curriculum further exacerbates the reification of hegemonic ideological structures (Gramsci 2011) as the impersonal nature of the curriculum means that it cannot be judged, agreed upon, or contradicted. At the same time, there is an underlying presupposition that teachers will embody its ideologies and manifest them in their own practice. Howarth and Griggs (2012) note that values and ideologies become common sense through a process of naturalisation. In accordance with Green's legitimation (2014b), it is through naturalisation that ideas gain universal validity for the members of a social field. Knudsen (2021) proposes that we need to perform critical analyses of texts (including curricula) that examine semiotic choice, absences, 'taken-for-granteds', and surrounding discursive practices to redress hegemony.

A conceptual distinction between curriculum and pedagogy is necessary in order to clearly understand the purposes and scope of the thesis. Moore (2000) considers that

> the separation of curriculum and pedagogy, like the separation of language and thought, may have some convenience value for analytical purposes, but will always remain somewhat artificial in practice.

(Moore 2000, p.150)

While the thesis primarily investigates pedagogy, or the 'how' of teaching, it is of considerable interest to explore the curriculum, or the 'what' of teaching. This delineation is noteworthy as it is beyond the remit of this project to critically examine the role of curriculum and its relationship with teacher ideological positions. However, a brief discussion follows that

speaks about current discourses regarding music curricula and how these discussions impact its structure and purpose.

One such debate concerns the aims of music education. One of the primary questions asked by Hallam *et al*. (2018, p.226) is whether a music curriculum should serve music learning or enjoyment, or both. Historically, music may have been viewed as a way in which to develop self-discipline, temperament, teamwork, and patriotism (Austin and Reinhardt 1999). The utilitarianist rationalisation of music was then replaced with proponents for the uniqueness of music as an art form in its own right. This aesthetically-oriented disposition resonates strongly with the aims of the current 1999 curriculum.

A second argument stems from the above debate surrounding the purpose of music education for society. While music is broadly regarded in contemporary society as an outlet for pleasure and recreation, this can have a knock-on effect in the interpretation of a music curriculum. Certainly, children's attention needs to be drawn towards the functions of music in society, but I would agree with the assertion that a caveat for the over emphasis on being 'relevant' in music curricula leads to a situation where music acts as a means to "entertain rather than educate" (Chadwick 2002 in Crawford 2017, p.42). It seems undesirable that music education could be reduced to such a diminished place within broader curriculum ideals. While we want children to be active agents in their own learning, the teacher is the individual in the classroom with a duty to guide and progress children's attainment, be it musically or otherwise. As such, due consideration must be given to the format a curriculum takes in outlining the process for this, without being over prescriptive or equally, laissez-faire in its format; a curriculum that is overly prescriptive may inhibit a teacher's sense of autonomy and agency and undemocratize the process of music making (as it is not possible to dictate a curriculum that gives credence to the wealth of idiosyncrasies in the musical lives of children), leading to uninspired teaching and unequal access for children to the music curriculum. Likewise, a curriculum that is generic and unspecific may lead to an opaque set of standards from which to

ground pedagogy, which, in turn, could result in huge variance in musical outcomes for students.

Debates around the content of music education constitute a third argument, with the argument for a knowledge-based versus a skills-based curriculum ongoing in educational literature. Indeed, it can be disputed that a curriculum should incorporate both facets; skills cannot be learned in a vacuum, necessitating some degree of knowledge. In the same vein, knowledge without skills is of little use to an individual if they do not know how to apply them. Musical Futures employs a skills-first, knowledge-after approach. This allows pupils to get involved right from their first lesson, engaging them from the outset.

In discussing content (be it knowledge or skills), Bernstein (1999, p.159) presents two useful modes of discourse: *horizontal* and *vertical*. Horizontal discourse generally refers to "knowledge, usually typified as everyday or 'common-sense' knowledge…likely to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory". Vertical discourse is typically a "coherent, explicit, and systemically principled structure, hierarchically organised…with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria" (ibid.) Indeed, the present Irish curriculum works largely on the vertical mode, in what it terms the 'spiral' approach, whereby concepts are returned to at each class level in increasing depth, enabling the students to progress to higher-order levels of thinking and skill acquisition. Few will argue that the progression of students' learning in this 'vertical' manner is a desired outcome for students. However, McPhail (2013) asks how a curriculum and pedagogy might be enhanced and made more horizontal within a necessarily vertical knowledge discourse, and, in doing so, considers how our students might experience a wider range of musical experiences and genres. By its nature, music in society is experienced horizontally, where students bring aspects of their home musical lives and apply them to the context of music education within schools. However, the amount of attention given by teachers to such sources of musical learning external to the classroom context is contingent on many factors, including the curriculum. If the curriculum

does not give space for the exploration of a variety of musical genres and skills, particularly those pertinent to the musical lives of our students, how can we deem it as truly meaningful music education? By not acknowledging the horizontal manifestation of music in society, it would seem than an ideologically dominant form of music is forced on our students that is doing them an in-service and injustice. Indeed, this could constitute a gap in curriculum content and pedagogies that alienate students' musical lives within and outside schools. Moreover, some authors agree that existing curricula do not mirror current innovations and developments of music as it is experienced outside of formal education settings (see Folkestad 2006; Green 2008; Crawford 2017).

While music is certainly appreciated within the narrative of curriculum documents, I would argue that it is not valued in practice. Consequently, the 1999 curriculum is losing currency with changing society, leading to its increasingly low status and marginalisation within wider curricular agenda. This may be attributed in part to an over-reliance on certain musicians and musical canons. Parkinson and Smith (2015) describe the seemingly opposed relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and the student perspective:

> A range of ideological and aesthetic values are encoded in the tastes, practices, and genre affiliations of musically diverse student cohorts. Some of these values may sit in contradiction to those inhering in curricula and pedagogy.

(Parkinson and Smith 2015, p.95)

Within the exemplars for music education within the curriculum, all discuss the use of western musical traditions and Irish music for use in the classroom. There is little mention of world musics or musical genres such as popular music. For example, in the *Primary Music Curriculum: Teacher Guidelines* document, it says that children who take private lessons on "piano, violin, or flute should be encouraged to accompany classroom singing and playing to enrich the class programme in listening and performing" (1999, p.41). The instruments listed are typically from western classical tradition and suggests a certain preference or value for these instruments. Suggested musical excerpts for study include several pieces in the Irish language

(Óró 'Sé do Bheatha 'Bhaile, Ailiú Éanaí, etc.) and pieces by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Verdi, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Rimsky-Korsako, etc. (ibid., p.139-145). Indeed, there are very few references that explicitly mention listening to music of other cultures within the teacher guidelines (e.g. p.57/58, p.100). While the content of music curricula may be hesitant to incorporate popular and world musics, the pedagogic models also have remained largely unchanged and unchallenged (Wright 2011, p.19).

In summary, debates surrounding the aims, purpose, content, and approaches of music education are ideological. It is important therefore to consider its role in teacher practice and more importantly, its reappraisal in formal educational contexts.

New Directions in Curriculum Development

Illuminated against the backdrop of growing discussion about curricular reforms at the primary level, the challenges identified in music education within the primary context throughout this chapter provide fertile ground for debate and indeed the grist for reappraisal of musical exploration and learning. In November 2019, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) held their national consultative conference on education which centred on the theme 'The Review of the Primary Curriculum' (November 15th and 16th 2019). On the 20-year anniversary of the 1999 curriculum, the INTO called for a reappraisal of the educative landscape and the suitability of this curriculum in meeting the needs of today's student population.

The Primary Development Team (under the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) announced that they were beginning to liaise and consult with teachers as to what the next primary curriculum might look like. In the envisioning of a new curriculum, Tom Walsh (2016) advises:

> In an era where curriculum is viewed as a social construction and where there is greater representative engagement in its development and review, further trust should be placed in the professionalism of teachers to use their judgement to construct and deliver relevant high quality educational experiences and outcomes for students.

(Walsh, T. 2016, p.13)

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Certainly, the 1999 curriculum had many innovations and strengths, including the holistic nature of learning and placing the child at the centre of the learning experience. However, significant societal changes in the intervening 20 years since the launch of the 1999 curriculum has led to supplementary documentation being issued from the NCCA to keep up with advancements in education. Documents pertaining to assessment, relationships and sexuality education (RSE), ethics religions and beliefs (ERB), and wellbeing have all been 'tagged on' to the existing curriculum. Each new addition in an already crowded educational agenda has overburdened teachers, leading to increases in occupational stress (Darmody and Smyth 2011).

At the time of writing, a new curriculum framework has been published, outlining eight principles overarching the proposed curriculum and seven key competencies it intends to develop. Interestingly, several of the principles, including *pedagogy*, *engagement*, and *inclusive education and diversity* resonate with the aims of this study. As will be explored in Chapter Eight, the Musical Futures approach has the potential to inform the implementation of principles articulated in the curriculum such as *being creative*, *learning to be a learner*, and *fostering wellbeing* competencies, thus showing promise for the inclusion of informal learning pedagogies in the new curricular framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated the study within the Irish context, detailing the challenges facing generalist teachers in implementing a music curriculum at the primary level. In addition, it has explored how the current curriculum influences teachers' attributions of music and has presented arguments surrounding the visualisation of new curriculum and pedagogies, in response to a changing society. It has also traced the historical development of the curriculum to its current iteration, while establishing how ideology mediates and is mediated by issues in music teaching for the generalist educator. Having identified that teacher beliefs, values and

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ideologies play a part in influencing teaching and learning, discussion will now turn to a further examination of the theory underpinning the thesis in light of this knowledge.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

As I have established thus far in the thesis, there are many factors that influence music teaching and learning practice for the generalist teacher, including teacher identity, beliefs, values, musical backgrounds and experiences, curriculum, initial teacher education, and most critically, ideology. These elements will now be framed through a theoretical lens, providing a means of unpacking the problem and a structure to bolster the findings later in the thesis.

Teacher Practice through the Lens of Bourdieu

Building on the work on Marxist and Althusserian ideology, Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) focused on the reproduction of ideology with particular reference to the cultural sphere. His work has transcended numerous domains, including education, anthropology, and sociology. Bourdieu's work is palimpsestic of Althusser's earlier work into interpellation, which will form much of the discussion in Chapter Nine. For example, the reproductive nature of ideology as conceptualised through Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser 2014) is extended in Bourdieu's work on *field*, *capital* and *habitus*, which converge the subjective and objective into a dialectic model, termed by Harker *et al*. (2016) as "generative structuralism". Nevertheless, Bourdieu's theory of practice is unique in that it diverges from Marxist and Althusserian conceptualisations, combining both subjective and objective structures. The dynamic interplay between these elements is useful in this thesis to conceptualise teacher practice in all its facets. In an objective sense, the individual is viewed within what Bourdieu calls the "social space"; this social space is comprised of multiple, interacting "fields" (Bourdieu and Nice 1977), including the "field of forces" and the "field of struggles" (1983, p.312). Reed-Danahay (2005) elaborates on these terms when they say:

> …a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces [contributes] to conserving or transforming its structure.

> (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.32)

The concept of the field in Bourdieu's work illustrates the network of positions within social structures that are organised around capital. It is the 'arena' in which individuals struggle to gain, trade, and monopolise types of capital.

In a subjective sense, the individual is shaped by the interaction between their capital and habitus. Capital is a broad term in Bourdieu's work that generally refers to "*all* the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation" (Bourdieu and Nice 1977, p.178). Bourdieu believed that capital dictated one's position within society and that the more capital an individual enjoys, the more powerful their position within the field. Unlike Marx however, Bourdieu extended the concept of capital beyond the economic sphere and identified cultural and social forms of capital as distinct from economic capital. Cultural capital can be further delineated into in three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalised. Embodied cultural capital refers to a "long-lasting disposition of the mind and body…which…implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, cost time, time which must be invested personally by the investor" (Richardson 1986, pp.17-18). Objectified capital denotes "cultural goods…appropriated both materially…and symbolically" (ibid., p.18) which could include objects of status, for example, cars, clothes, or technology. The third type of cultural capital is institutionalised, which generally concerns educational qualifications, or a "certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture…which has a relative autonomy vis-à-vis its bearer" (ibid., p.20). Capital takes time to accumulate, and its various forms influence one another. Thus, it has a distinct impact on one's position within the field. For example, an embodied form of cultural capital would be the ability to play a musical instrument in the same way that possessing a grand piano would be an objectified form of cultural capital. It is a signifier of class and capital. Institutionalised cultural capital could include completion of music exams and grades – cultural capital distilled and manifested on a piece of paper.

Undeniably, the three forms of capital are highly complex and interact with one another. For example, a family that tends to impart high cultural capital is one that has high economic capital to afford a piano and pay for lessons for their children. Cultural capital then begets social capital as they then enter a network of fellow piano players, attending exams, recitals, and performances, thereby enhancing their social capital. Social capital then begets economic capital as the children have made connections through piano playing with other bourgeoisie families (who have gone through a similar process) that will ensure they access jobs in profitable employment sectors. The whole process of imbuing this capital happens so seemingly organically for the children that it is reflected in their set of dispositions, influencing how and where they perceive themselves in the world and society. Bourdieu termed this set of dispositions as an individual's 'habitus'.

Habitus is defined as the "tastes, habits, norms, values, and traditions of a particular society or community of likeminded agents" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). An individual's habitus is a manifestation of their capital, played out in the field. As an individual may be a member of several distinct or overlapping fields, their habitus may manifest differently. For example, a person's habitus in their place of work (i.e. a field) may exhibit differently to that in their home and family (i.e. a different field). Another useful way to look at habitus is that it

> …focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being. It captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others.

(Maton 2014, p.51)

The experiences of an individual and their relative reactions are internalised and function to add various strata to their habitus (Burnard *et al.* 2015, p.84).

Bourdieu's unique theory finely balances structures (in the subjective sense) with agency (in the objective sense) through "the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality" (1977, p.72). To help understand his concepts and their relationship, he creates the formula:

$$[(Capital)(Habitus)] + Field = Logic\ of\ Practice$$

We can unpack this formula by saying that an individual's practice is derived from the relationship between their set of dispositions (habitus) and their place within the social space (capital) as exhibited within their current social setting (field). From this, the reflexivity and interplay between the elements of Bourdieu's concepts is demonstrated. We cannot understand the practice of an individual by looking at just one of the elements alone. Thus, it proves difficult in analysing practice as it necessitates the simultaneous examination of these combined elements. This is examined further in Chapter Seven.

Beliefs and Values

> Beliefs are powerful influences in our daily lives, functioning as filters through which we experience and interpret the world, frames for situations we face, and guides for our intentions and actions.

> (Shouldice 2019, p.189)

While curricula and governmental documentation tend to suggest teachers share the same beliefs, values and visions for education, in practice they do not possess a universally common set of values, abilities, aims and aptitudes. The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines axiology as the study of the nature of value and valuation, and of the kinds of things that are valuable. Positionality within the context of this thesis refers to where an individual's beliefs may lie within an ideological structure. Thus, the axiological positions of teachers have enormous variation from teacher to teacher, school to school, and even area to area in the curriculum. This multi-faceted view of teacher knowledge throws up conflicts that can create a tension with the macro perspective of homogeneity within the teaching population.

Initial teacher education and formative musical experiences both have a significant role in the establishment of teacher values in education with regard to music (Kenny *et al.* 2015). Such values may exist at an unconscious or implicit level until the teacher enters the classroom (Vartuli 2005). It is within the parameters of the educational milieu that teacher values function,

and as such the context in which the teacher operates will undoubtedly influence the manifestation and realisation of teacher values and knowledge. Some values may be challenged when the teacher is placed within a real-world context. Others may be reinforced or enhanced. More still may be discovered or unpackaged that were previously not considered by the teacher prior to entering the profession. For example, self-conceptualisations of teachers as 'musical' or 'unmusical' may be manifested (Mills 2005), which, as a teacher progresses through their career, may largely remain static unless they are challenged by a formative experience or individual, or unless the teacher critically reappraises their value systems.
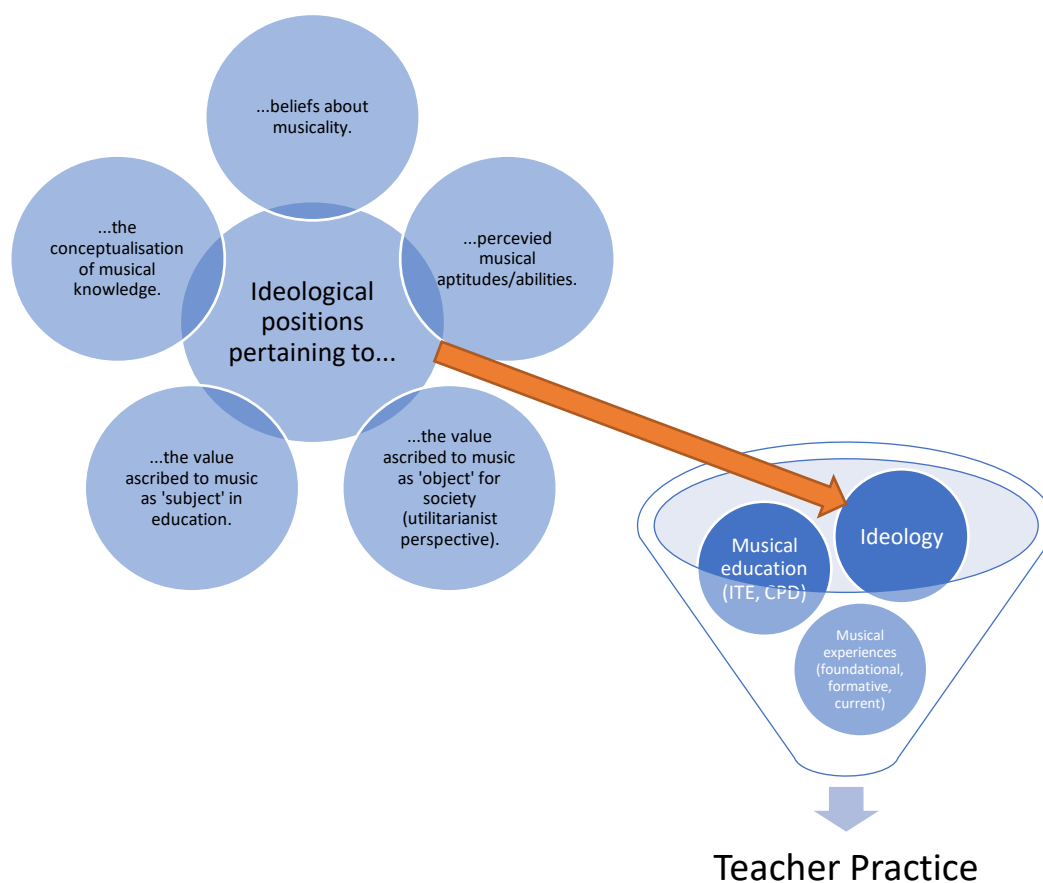
Figure 6: Visualisation of ideological positions, their influences, and their relationship on practice

There are numerous studies relating to teacher beliefs and values in music education (Austin and Reinhardt 1999; Wong 2005; Hourigan and Scheib 2009; Battersby and Cave 2014; Kenny *et al.* 2015). Although these studies attempt to portray the value systems of teachers,

many work from observations of teacher actions in practice and do not explicitly gather the descriptions and unobservable facets of the teacher experience. Thus, analysing teacher practice at the axiological level is challenging. In her thesis, Stakelum (2005) draws attention to this challenge when attempting to glean insights from teachers at the individual and micro levels, arguing that there is an assumption of homogeneity in teacher values, knowledge and practice at macro levels. Despite this assumption, teachers construct and interpret their practice in different ways with regard to how they understand what counts as music and what values they attribute to music in their lives and the lives of their pupils.

A causal relationship exists between teacher formative experiences in music and their value systems with regard to their practice. Indeed, in my previous research (Gubbins 2018; 2021), I found that the variation in the valency of beliefs and the axiological positions of teachers was considerable. For example, teachers spent noticeably less time on the composition strand of the curriculum in comparison to the performing and listening and responding strands, citing inefficacy in the area or questioning its value within the broader curriculum. One teacher even went as far as describing it as "airy-fairy", suggesting that it had little perceived value within the broader music curriculum and therefore not to be given as much consideration or attention by the teacher. This is just one example of the discord between teacher values and curricula, which mirrors other authors in the field (Stakelum 2008). From an Australian standpoint, Garvis (2012, p.164) notes that "while the majority of teachers suggested that the arts were important for children, they did not have time or the mastery experience to teach the arts". The association between self-efficacy and practice is significant: "the way that teachers perceive themselves in regard to their low artistic abilities connects directly to the level of effectiveness they demonstrate as arts teachers" (Alter, Hays and O'Hara, 2009, p.23). All of these authors raise the argument that there is a certain correlation between a teacher's personal prior musical experience, beliefs, and values and their confidence and self-efficacy in teaching it.

There are other value-based assumptions than the self-efficacy of teachers that act as barriers to the realisation of music education. Hoffman Davies (2008, p.25) lists seven common objections to the arts:

1. Issues surrounding the value of the arts (i.e. that it is appreciated but not valued)
2. that it requires a giftedness or talent
3. that there isn't enough time
4. that they cannot be measured through standardised testing
5. that they require expertise
6. that they are expensive to implement
7. that they will survive on their own through communities if schools don't practice them

Indeed, she goes on to explain how value is not held for the arts in and of themselves. They fall into a realm that is not easily measured or quantified, bringing with it unease for education systems who rely on empirical data to drive their initiatives and agendas. Consequently, practitioners and educators in the arts are having to ascribe a semblance of perceived value to such activities that do not lie within the arts media themselves:

> Instead of challenging a value system that excludes the arts, we scramble to demonstrate worth in terms of a faulty system of values. On the one hand, art is a language that cannot be translated. We cannot say exactly what we dance; we cannot sing what we draw. Each symbol system of art constructs meaning uniquely. Yet we rush to make art experience "valuable" by encouraging students to talk or write about what they dance or draw.
>
> (Hoffman-Davies, 2008, p. 47)

Dewey (2005) admonishes such a view of music and the arts:

> If all the meanings could be adequately expressed with words, the arts of painting and music would not exist…There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities…and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence.
>
> (Dewey 2005, p.77)

Some of these assumptions above are reflected in the findings from the study and indicate the influence of ideology on music education practice, which I will return to in Chapter Nine.

In sum, the range of ideological and axiological positions of primary generalist teachers are influenced by a host of interrelated factors. Notwithstanding their manifestation in practice, discussion now turns to two major influences on ideological positionings; the arena in which ideological positions operate (i.e. the teaching context) and the formative experiences of teacher identity (i.e. teacher training).

The Influence of Teaching Context on Practice

Teachers are part of two distinct worlds – the personal and professional. Their personal world includes the unique experiences, tastes, values, and beliefs with regard to musical knowledge. Their professional world constitutes the institution in which they must adhere to mandated requirements, in the context of the school, this relates to curricula and policy. This top-down hierarchy influences teacher practice in accordance with educational agenda beyond the locus of control of the teacher. Austin and Reinhardt concur with this assertion, stating that "there are strong connections among teachers' beliefs, their classroom behaviours, and the learning environment" (1999, p.18). Each teaching environment is unique and so it is difficult to trace how teachers navigate the construction and realisation of their own ideologies in an institutionalised and ideologised system.

Governmental documentation (at the macro level) will attest that the values of music education curriculum are distilled through the teacher's practice (at the micro level). However, Stakelum (2008) counters this notion, insisting that:

> …the selection and organisation of musical knowledge has been predicated upon a particular view of teacher knowledge, one that originated with the inception of the national system of education in the nineteenth century…there is a pressing need for the researcher in primary music education to break away from the straitjacket of the nineteenth century with its singular focus on easily identifiable skills or behaviours.

(Stakelum 2008, p.290)

She argues that the teacher should be given more authority and agency in enacting music education decisions based on the idiosyncrasies of their teaching contexts, thereby allowing for

the "richness of interpretations which teachers bring to bear on the curriculum" (ibid., p.291). Regardless of arguments as to the autonomy of teachers within their contexts, it is clear that the contexts themselves simultaneously influence ideology and practice.

Initial Teacher Education

The challenge of initial teacher education dually concerns the development of knowledge and the formation of an individual's identity as a teacher. Identity is a highly complex phenomenon, as I have already established, but one that has a significant impact on teacher practice. Student teachers come to their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with pre-existing beliefs about musicality (Espeland *et al.* 2021). While some may have experienced music education that was immersed primarily in Western classical music and/or Irish traditional music, for others, such musics may not align with their own 'lived' experience of music (which may often fall into the genre of popular music). In this way, these teachers' notions about music education are confined to genres of music of which they have little exposure to outside of the formal classroom setting.

Consequently, ITE has a critical role in addressing such ideologies, values, and beliefs about music education. Kenny *et al.* (2015) have contributed to the increasing body of literature internationally into student teacher experiences and their impact on teacher identity and self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond and Cobb 1996; Korthagen 2004; Sugrue 2004; Alsup 2006; Sammons *et al.* 2007; Rodgers and Scott 2008; Haniford 2010; Lopes and Pereira 2012; Onsrud *et al.* 2022). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate in detail the influence of initial teacher education experiences on the ideological positions of teachers. However, it is of considerable interest for the intents of the research to examine the ways in which ideologies are reproduced and their capacity for change within the educational context.

Ideology, Beliefs, and Values: Reproduction in Music Education and Capacity for Change

> Music teachers are part and parcel with the dominant ideological mechanisms of music education, although some may individually step outside this role in their everyday working lives. What they say and write about both music and music education, far from being understandable at face value, can be patterned into ideological structures with underlying, generating causes and overall effects.
>
> (Green 1988, p.57)

Ideologies and beliefs (mediated through musical experience and education) are the overarching structure that ultimately influence teaching and learning. Green (2014b) identifies three characteristics of ideology: *reification*, *legitimation*, and the *perpetuation of social relations*. Reification is the attribution of an abstract concept with thing-like properties, suggesting that it is "unchangeable, universal, eternal, natural or absolute" (ibid., p.4). Legitimation means that an ideology tends to be "morally justifiable" (ibid.) and reasonable/legitimate. The third tenet is that ideology helps to make social relations seem natural and unchanging, helping to explain our world to us (ibid.). If these three characteristics are present, it can be argued that the concept under question is ideologically based.

Bourdieu considers the education system as one of the "objective structures" in which habitus is manifested. The valorisation of certain ideological positions occurs in tandem to the de-valorisation of others with schools as the matrix of reproduction in many instances. If an individual's ideological position can be changed, one can argue that the individual's teaching and learning will change also. Henceforth, the thesis now seeks to investigate the capacity of the change of values in generalist primary teachers. This section details the processes by which change is facilitated.

Prolific authors in the field of educational change, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) in their book *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*, argue that for change to have the most profound impact, models of change need to incorporate both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches. Indeed, it could be argued that Musical Futures as an approach works

from both directions, as illustrated in Figure 7. Principles of the approach (as directed from top-down research-based practice) are grounded in the empowerment of teachers and students (enacted in bottom-up teacher practice).
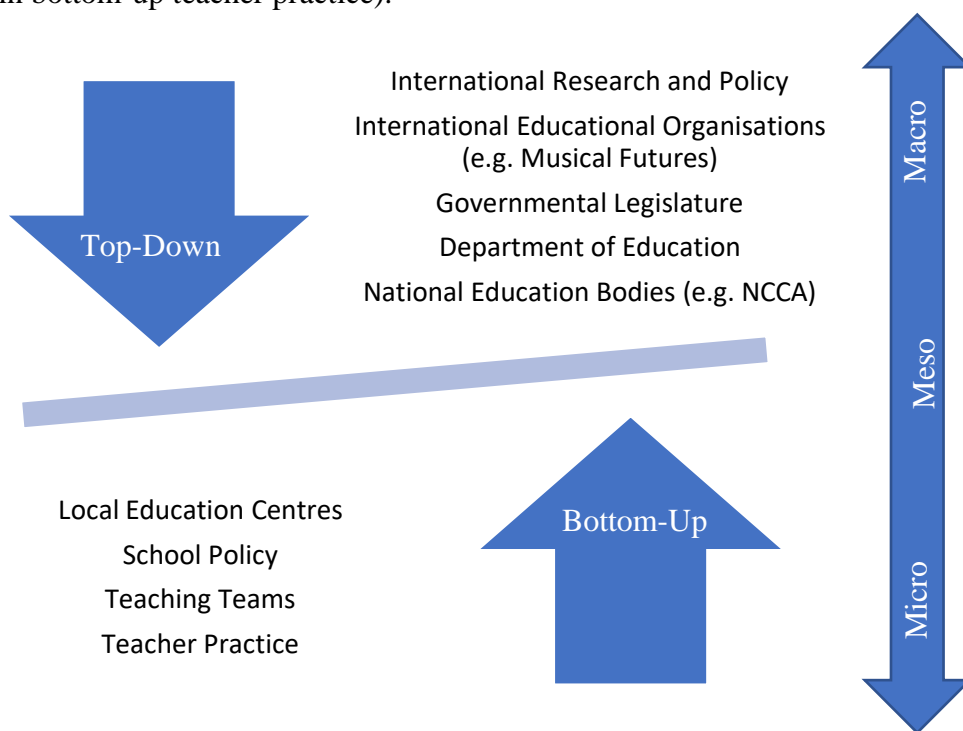
Figure 7: Models of educational change

Teachers are the primary agents of change. However, they can only enact real change given the right conditions. Hargreaves and Fullan go on to establish a formula (2012, p.89) for the enactment of change that takes into account the multifaceted and multifarious nature of change:

Professional Capital $= f^{13}$ [Human Capital, Social Capital, Decisional Capital]

---

[13] As per typical mathematical symbols, f stands for function. From Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Function_(mathematics)): A function is most often denoted by letters such as f, g and h, and the value of a function f at an element x of its domain is denoted by $f(x)$.

They state that professional capital is the currency of educational change, which is facilitated through the interaction of human capital, social capital, and decisional capital. Within the context of the school, human capital denotes "having and developing the requisite knowledge and skills", including that of the students, content, pedagogy, and emotional capability (ibid.). Social capital refers to the milieu in which the school operates, taking into account "the quantity and quality of interactions and social relationships" (ibid., p.90). Decisional capital mainly describes the ability to make "discretionary judgements…in circumstances where there is no fixed rule or piece of incontrovertible evidence to guide them" (ibid., p.93). They go on to say that from the teacher's perspective, the cornerstones holding up this formula fall into three categories: (i) continuous learning, (ii) collaboration, and (iii) a shared vision and moral purpose. For meaningful, far-reaching, and long-lasting change, they attest that teachers must enact all three cornerstones.

While Hargreaves and Fullan examine change at a practical level, this chapter wishes to examine change at the ideological level. From the philosophical perspective of change, part of the appeal of Bourdieu's work is that it argues against determinism by incorporating elements within it to account for individuals who can transcend their class boundaries. In other words, an individual's position in society is not wholly determined or fixed by their habitus and capital but is mediated by it. The reflexive interplay between habitus, capital and field is an important point to note in the facilitation of the change of beliefs, as Burnard (2015, p.84) notes, "the boundaries of habitus are permeable, allowing the habitus to respond to experiences". As such, there is capacity for teacher beliefs and practice to change. Reay (1995, p.357) remarks on the replicational/transformational nature of habitus:

> The range of possibilities inscribed in a habitus can be envisaged as a continuum. At one end habitus can be replicated through encountering a field that reproduces its dispositions. At the other end of the continuum habitus can be transformed through a process that either raises or lowers an individual's expectations. Implicit in the concept is the possibility of a social trajectory which enables conditions of living that are very different from initial ones.

(Reay 1995, p.357)

Mindful of the above, pedagogies such as the Musical Futures approach can serve to either confirm or confront aspects of an individual's habitus and either replicate or disrupt it (Burnard 2015, p.84), with the school and profession operating as a significant site (or field) for such processes. If an individual's habitus and field are well matched, they could be considered a 'fish in water'. However, this cannot always be the case and there will be times where an individual's habitus does not align well with their present field. This is what Bourdieu calls "hysteresis" or being 'out of touch' with time and place, and necessitates a change in habitus (Hardy 2014, p.127). As habitus is constantly changing and evolving in light of new experiences, an individual's position in their field is not determined.

> As a result of the *hysteresis* effect necessarily implicated in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that in which they are objectively fitted.

> (Bourdieu 1977b: 78)

Of course, change brings with it a degree of uncertainty. With regard to the implementation of Musical Futures for example, studies have shown that teachers express unease about bringing popular music into their classrooms for fear of losing control of their students (Beynon 2012). This unease may stem from the beliefs, attitudes, values and ideologies of teachers. Philosophical theories provide helpful ways in which to describe and discuss the formation, reproduction, adoption, and rejection of ideological positions. The work of French philosopher Louis Althusser identifies the concept of *interpellation* which is a useful framework for the visualisation of how ideological positions are changed. It is towards this concept that the chapter now looks.

On Ideology: Althusser

The word 'ideology' dates to the late 18th century, from the French word *idéologie*. It is derived from Greek *idea*, meaning 'form, pattern' and *-logos*, denoting discourse or compilation. Ideology is defined by Merriam-Webster as:

a) a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture

b) the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a socio-political program

c) a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture

These three definitions are all useful in understanding what is meant by ideology within the context of this thesis as they outline how ideology exists at the level of the individual, their interactions with other individuals, and how those interactions influence society on a larger scale. Contemporary discussion of ideology in educational discourse can be traced back to Karl Marx (1818-1883). Philosophers such as Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) criticised Marxist ideology's conceptualising framework and wanted to reconfigure it such that it took into account ideological theories for society at large, rejecting the notion of economic determinism (whereby economic forces determine, shape and define all political, social, cultural, intellectual and technological aspects of civilisation). Similar to Bourdieu's description of the education system as an "objective structure" that reproduces ideologies and Bernstein's pedagogic device to explain how education becomes a vehicle for social reproduction of political agenda (Wright 2012, p.30), Althusser argued that education systems act as Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).

It is within ISAs that ideology is replicated, since an individual, he argues, is "always already a subject" of ideology. Critics of Althusser's work (Hall 1985) would argue that his theory of ISAs do not take into account and individual's capacity for self-actualisation, that is, the ability to transcend ideological constraints and remove themselves from the ideological positions that they have become acclimated, i.e. how they subvert and resist systems of ideological domination and hegemony. However, his work is still useful in explaining how ideologies are replicated through the education system.

Althusser and Interpellation

The overarching aim of this study was to analyse the capacity for change in teaching and learning through an engagement with informal pedagogies. However, in order to enact change

in a meaningful capacity, it needs to be more than at a superficial level. An analysis of values and beliefs of generalist teachers in an earlier chapter identified that ideology is highly influential in shaping the teaching and learning dynamic. Thus, it follows that change must occur within the ideological positionality of teachers if it is to become manifest in their practice.

Exactly how change in an individual's ideological position occurs is the subject of Althusser's volume *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* (published in English in 2014). He defines ideology as "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (2014, p.181); it is a way of explaining the world by simplifying it, as it is not possible to see and understand the world without operating from an ideological position. While these imagined relations (i.e. ideology) are useful to understand and relay how social apparatuses operate, they are in fact just that – imagined - and thus, simplify reality which is always more complex than ideology alludes. Consequently, "what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations governing individuals' existence, but those individuals' imaginary relation to the real relations in which they live" (ibid., p.183). He continues his thesis that ideology has a material existence, similar to Green's concept of reification (1988, p.2). It is in this material existence that individuals can be subjects of ideology. To explain this concept, he coins the term *interpellation* to describe how an individual becomes a subject of an ideology:

> ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way as to 'recruit' subjects among individuals (it recruits them all) or 'transforms' individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) through the very precise operation that we call *interpellation.*

(Althusser 2014, p.190)

Like Bourdieu's hysteresis effect as mentioned earlier, interpellation occurs when an individual's beliefs and values do not align with that of their environment, causing a feeling of not 'being with the program', necessitating a change in beliefs in order to align with their environment. It is the moment at which an individual becomes a subject of an ideology. In his recent work that tracks the resurgence of Althusser's work for modern educators, David Backer

describes interpellation as "a moment of forced integration into [a] program" (2019, p.3), that can be "a gut-wrenching, difficult, unpleasant moment" (ibid., p.8). Elsewhere, he says that its impact is "like a slow drip that eventually forms a stalagmite" (ibid., p. 4).

Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy

Mindful of critics to the limitations of Althusserian ideology, Jean-Jacques Lecerle in *A Marxist Philosophy of Language* (published in French in 1991 and translated to English in 2006) extended Althusser's concept of interpellation to recognise that an individual has some autonomy over ideological structures. Indeed, as Backer attests: "The fixed subject position can be unfixed; in fact, it is always in a constant state of struggle over its composition in the balance of forces." (2018, p.9). He outlines the term *counterinterpellation* [sic] to describe the moment when an individual realises that they are not 'with the program' of the dominant ideology but that they actively go against this ideologic position. He goes on to say:

> Rather than large-scale dialectical movements these are minute dialect moments: the conversations, chats, and back-and-forths of everyday life which can constitute, deconstitute, and reconstitute our relations of production. These interactions can fix individuals in subjective positions through successful insults, insofar as the interpellation reproduces, through the speech act, an exploitative, debasing, marginalizing, alienating relation of production. A successful interpellation requires the message be encoded by the apparatuses of ruling classes properly and decoded properly by subject. But the background of struggle within which that interpellation has fixed the subject, the social formation and its balance of forces, implies the equal and opposite possibility for that subject's unfixing. The interpellation can be "returned, taken up, taken on, and revalued" through "creative exploitation".

> (Backer 2018, p.10)

While it is generally through interpellation that ideologies are reproduced in society, it is within counterinterpellation that an individual's capacity for change in resistance to hegemonic ideology is achieved. In other words, a counterinterpellation can be thought of as a change or shift in an individual's ideological position. As such, any teaching action that produces a counterinterpellation could be argued to be a critical pedagogy.
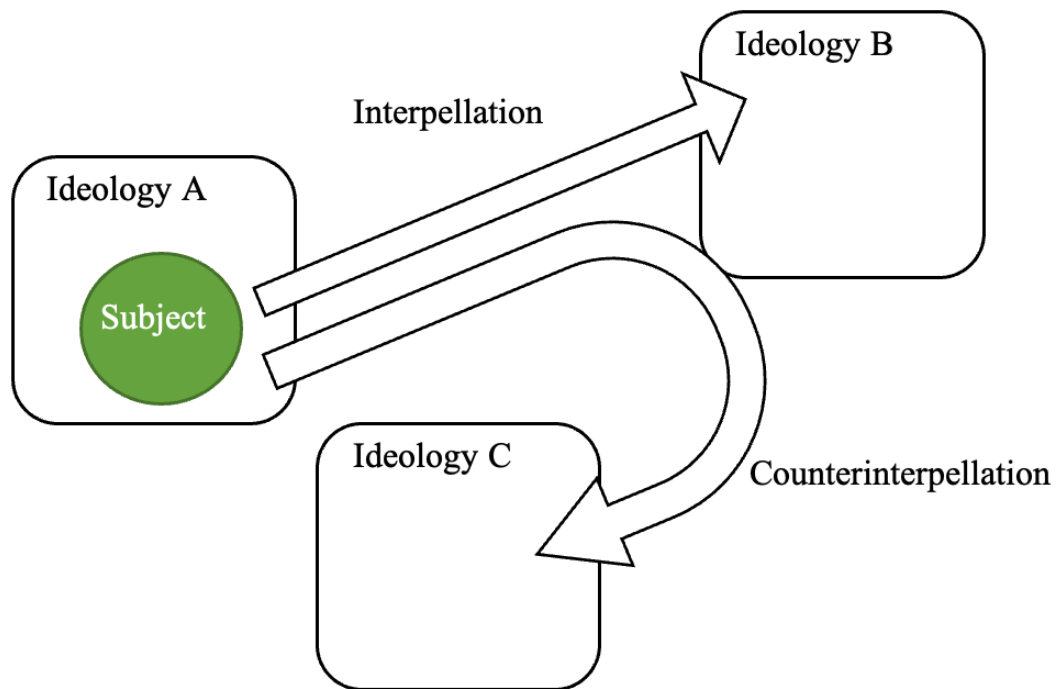
Figure 8: Simple diagram illustrating ideological interpellation and counterinterpellation

Following from earlier discussion in Chapter One, critical pedagogy originates from critical theory as derived from the ideas of Freire (2017), Apple (2009), Horkheimer and Adorno (Pongratz 2005), Giroux (2011), McLaren and Farahmandpur (2006), and Habermas and McCarthy (2015), and has been integrated into contemporary discourse in music education (see e.g. Green 2014a; Hess 2017).

The aims of critical pedagogy are twofold: to examine how power relations operate within education and; to propose educational paradigms that facilitate the emancipation of individuals through the constant negotiation of one's place in society using culture as the medium (Karlsen and Väkevä 2012, p.xviii). It implies the researcher "cannot remain content with recording and sketching the pure facticity of the societal status quo" (Pongratz 2005, p.155). Thompson (2017) defines critical theory thus:

> It is marked not by *a priori* ethical or political values that it seeks to assert in the world, but by its capacity to grasp the totality of individual and social life as well as the social process that constitute them. It is a form of social criticism that contains within it the seeds of judgement, evaluation, and practical, transformative activity.

Indeed, it is through "practical, transformative activity" in which critical theory and pedagogy vis-à-vis participatory case study research (see Chapter Five) that assumptions/values and a meta-analysis of the structures and problems inherent in a societal group or hierarchy can be revealed. These methods can empower communities to understand hierarchical and hegemonic structures and confront the hegemonic powers that exist within society. Seeking "a model in which learning and teaching exist in a dialogic relationship…[acknowledging] the value of students' lived experiences to their learning and [advocating] a commensurate change in the power balance in classrooms" (Wright and Kanellopoulos 2010, p.74). If critical pedagogy can be realised through counterinterpellation, Backer (2018) cautions the attribution of a moment as counterinterpellative:

> To take up and take on dominant ideologies and potentially alter the balance of forces of a social formation, speakers must study, learn, and teach in robust ways. It would require a non-negligible educational experience to successfully counterinterpellate. A person fixed in a position by the dominant forces of the social formation must learn what the contours of that balance of forces are, experiment with interventions, and decide to creatively exploit them in such a way as to potentially shift the balance. This taking up and taking on would require knowing the balance of forces as they are, conceiving of the weaknesses or tensions within that balance, and then successfully formulating a proposition or action which would push on that weakness such that it has a meaningful consequence. This process is entirely educational.

(Backer 2018, p.14)

As a form of critical pedagogy, Musical Futures has potential to challenge beliefs and values of music education (Powell *et al.* 2017), as the findings will show, particularly in Chapter Nine.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Having examined the relevant literature and formulating the research and embedded questions central to the thesis, it is now apt to outline and identify the research design. Denscombe (2009, pp.99-100) highlights the importance of a strong research design as (a) providing a description of the various components of the investigation (b) providing a rationale for the choice of research strategy in relation to the research questions and (c) explaining how the key components link together. Taking this into consideration, this chapter will explicitly identify the ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions or the researcher, justifying the inclusion of the tools and methods employed and preparing the way for Chapter Six to present how data was collected, analysed and synthesised within this thesis.

Towards a Common Conceptual Framework

> La conscience et le monde sont dormés d'un même coup.
>
> (Sartre, n.d.)
>
> Change the individuals and you change the reality.
>
> (Lincoln and Guba 2016, p.39)

Guba and Lincoln (1989) outline in their framework for ethical practice of qualitative research the need for reflexivity and authenticity. This encompasses inter alia authenticity vis-à-vis ontology in order to make the researcher and participants aware of the social constructions of reality. The philosophical position of the researcher is the foundation upon which the research is built; it informs the perspective of the researcher, the nature of the study, and the framing of the conclusions and thus, must be illuminated (Denscombe 2009, p.117). Hence, we must firstly establish a common epistemological and ontological stance from which to ground the remainder of the thesis.

Prior to exploring these positions, it is prudent to establish the meanings of ontology and epistemology for the purposes of this study. Ontology refers to the study of being, the nature

of reality and existence (Crotty 2020). Relativism constitutes the ontological view of this thesis; a relativist ontological position assumes that there is not a world that exists independent of the individual (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Mertens (2019) elaborates:

> Reality is socially constructed. Therefore, multiple mental constructions can be apprehended, some of which may be in conflict with each other, and perceptions of reality may change throughout the process of the study.

> (Mertens 2019, p.18)

By this, it is meant that the world is a construction of reality in the minds of the researcher and participants (Guba *et al.* 1990, p.27) and that multiple realities are possible (Berger and Luckmann 1966, pp.134, 169).These realities are "socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.102).

Epistemology is defined as "how we know what we know" (Crotty 1998, p.8) or "the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.230). It is inextricable from, and mutually dependent on, ontology. This is because an epistemological stance implies an ontological stance and vice versa, as Crotty notes: "to talk about the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of a meaningful reality" (1998, p.10). With regard to epistemology, a subjectivist stance rejects the idea that there is objective reality and that one can simply observe the world and produce knowledge. Humans cannot be dichotomised from the world and are therefore in the world, of the world, and with the world (Freire and Ramos 2017, p.54); consciousness and the world are simultaneous (Sartre 1948). Therefore, subjectivism assumes that knowledge must be understood as the combination of multiple social constructions of meaning (Mertens 2019, p.19). Furthering this point, knowledge is transactional (Berlin 1987), meaning that the existence of reality is dependent on the interaction between the knower and the 'to-be-known' and is filtered through the lens of the knower, thereby making it highly subjective. Thus, it follows that data, interpretations and conclusions are assumed to be founded in the contexts and

individuals distinct from the researcher.

From these ontological and epistemological positions, it can be assumed that "knowledge is not 'discovered' but rather *created*; it exists only in the time/space framework in which it is generated" (Lincoln and Guba 2016, p.40). This combined relativist-subjectivist stance situates the researcher's philosophical position firmly within the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm emerged from Husserl's phenomenology and the thinking of Dilthey, Heidegger, and other philosophers' hermeneutics. In agreement with Schwandt (2000), constructionism is defined by Crotty (2020, p.42) as "the view of that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context". Through the constructivist lens, knowledge is subjective and value-laden and justifications about the judgement of value denote knowledge that can be applied as a means to inform, transform, or enable change (Durant-Law 2005).

The Methodological Approach

Given the constructivist stance adopted in the thesis, Lincoln and Guba attest that the methodological approach "must be one that delves into the minds and meaning-making, sense-making activities of the several knowers involved" (2016, p.40). The investigation of teachers lived experiences and practice within the primary classroom requires the need for rich and contextualised data, thereby necessitating the focus to be on qualitative research.

Chapters One and Three discussed some of the challenges faced by generalist primary teachers in delivering a music curriculum, and, as has already been outlined, it is one of the aims of the thesis to address these challenges. Yin (2009, p.4) notes that the breadth of interpretations of case study research proves useful in utilising it as a paradigm. He goes on to distinguish the purposes of case study research as being explanatory, descriptive, and/or exploratory, with specific projects falling under one, more, or all such purposes. Indeed,

defining the purpose of the case study is contingent on the nature of the research questions being asked (ibid., p.10). If our ontological position views the world of teacher values and beliefs as mediated through ideological systems and their ensuing reproductive apparatuses, it thus follows that our epistemological position should seek to explore the ideological positions of teachers and the ways through which they are reproduced. Owing to the fact that in order to glean ideological positions we must engage participants in an authentic manner, I had to work in close contact with the participants, meaning that a more nuanced methodology within the case study research paradigm was necessary to reflect this atypical hierarchy. Moreover, the participants and I needed to learn about the process from an engagement with the process itself. From this, it was decided that participatory case study research would constitute the methodological paradigm for this study.

What is participatory case study research?

With its roots in case study research, there are myriad definitions of participatory case study research to be found in the literature. Across these definitions, several threads are to be found, with participatory case study research being defined as an attempt to understand the complexity of human life (Williams and Keady 2021), that addresses inequality in power relations and structures (Mabry 2008), through an interpretive process using the lens of the case as a bonded system within a wider context (Stake 1995; Stake 2005). Reilly (2009) presents a useful definition of participatory case study research for the purposes of this study as being:

> …fundamentally conceptualized as a social action, change-oriented methodology [that] promotes a dialogue between the local "insider" understandings of participants in a social context who are dissatisfied with the status quo and want change, and the general "outsider" understandings of social scientists and researchers.

(Reilly 2009, p.658)

Indeed, as a researcher approaching the site of study, one is initially an outsider coming to the participant's site. How then can they come armed with solutions to a participant's

concerns until they first understand the concerns? Thus, it follows that sensitivity and dialogue around the roots of the issues precedes collective action. This is fundamental in defining participatory case study research.

Transformational change is the intended outcome from this research paradigm, meaning that the impact of the change creates a certain restructuring of the current organisation with long-term, wide-reaching effect. This does not imply a complete restructuring of the current organisation, but instead to harness the aspects that are currently effective and work to enhance the aspects not as effective as they could be through the cyclical process of taking action and doing research. This is achieved through critical reflection on action:

> Participatory research is research that is fully collaborative and emphasizes deliberate participation, contribution, empowerment and emancipation of all relevant parties in actively examining some issue, which participants experience as problematic. An outcome of the research process is to change and improve the social situation under investigation, Participatory case research is designed to address specific issues identified by local people, and the results are directly applied to the problems at hand. Therefore, it is ideally *by* the local people and *for* the local people.

<div align="right">(Reilly 2009, p.659)</div>

Perhaps we can summarise that participatory case study research is a methodology underpinned by three central features: (i) an emphasis on social action and change through dialogue, (ii) the reduction of formal boundaries between traditional researcher/participant roles and (iii) a sensitivity to the culture, history, life and language of the participant community . This paradigm lends itself well to the purposes of the thesis as it finely balances the focus on social innovation and transformation (through its theoretical foundations) with an action orientation (through its methodological processes).

Democracy and the liberation/empowerment/emancipation of individuals are ideals of participatory case study research, as drawn from the works of Dewey (1916) and Freire and Ramos (2017) respectively. Such emancipation may arise from a problem, an idea, a community, or oneself. The engagement of participants within such projects can range on a ladder from non-participation to authentic participation, with the latter focusing on democracy and autonomy (Chevalier and Buckles 2019, p.22). Regardless of the visualisation of participatory case study research, participation can be viewed as a process. In this project, the process followed an established method or pattern for inquiry,

Figure 9: Participatory case study research overview (adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart 1988)

typically viewed as a reflective spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection, sequenced as phases within the project, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Each phase of the research reveals overlapping and interconnected threads across participants' data. Furthermore, the spiral design allows for a refinement of the process whereby the data guides the theory, and the theory informs the data as simultaneous drivers. This thesis and antithesis leads to powerful synthesis of deep, specific and useful findings drawn from a variety of sources, as can be seen in Figure 10.
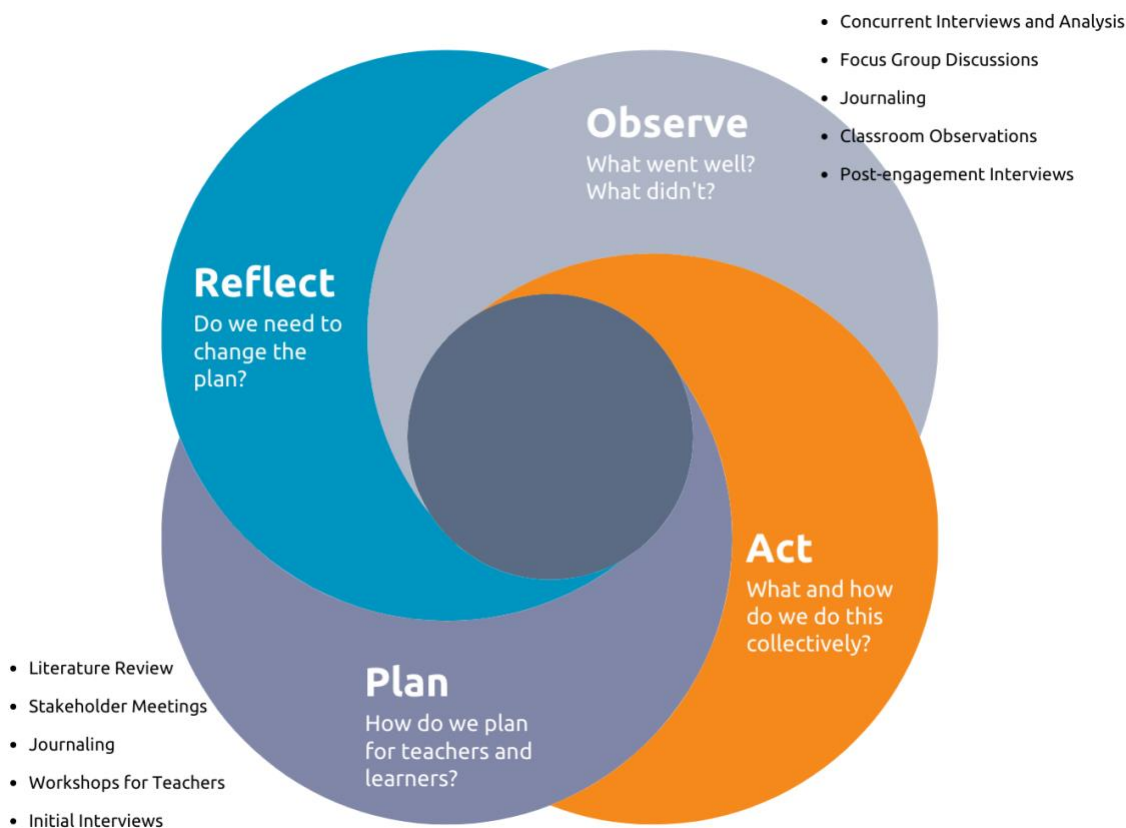
Figure 10: Phased methodological approach in detail

There are three central tenets of participatory case study research, as identified by Maguire (1987). Firstly, participatory case study research is an **educational process** between the researcher and participants. This focus on education alleviates the notion of the researcher coming in to 'fix' the problems of the community and show them the 'right thing' to do. The researcher will not have a full understanding of the complexity of the problem until they have engaged with the participant. In this way, the researcher is not coming to the site of research (in an elitist sense) with all the 'answers' or 'strategies'. It is through the process of critical dialogue (Freire and Ramos 2017, p.88) with the participant, that the researcher can arrive at solutions/strategies/approaches. Looking at this another way, it means that the researcher cannot impose their interpretation of the problem on the community. This would place the researcher in a position where they do not respect the participants involved as they would be seen as objects for the researcher's purpose. The 'humanisation' of participants, in the Freirean

sense, thus pervades the work of the researcher under this research paradigm (2017).

Secondly, **social investigation** is centred on engaging the research community. The cyclical process of data collection (see Figures 9 and 10 above) is necessary in this regard as each cycle of research will refine, nuance, and enhance the questioning, analysis, discussion and collaboration, thereby enabling the most authentic and useful data upon completion of the last cycle of research. Reflection at the end of each cycle to see where mistakes or potential validity concerns exist is crucial to the reliability and generalisability of the data (Guba and Lincoln 1989). The emphasis here is on the collective nature of the reflection, whereby the researcher (as researcher-participant) works in conjunction with the participant (as participant-researcher) to analyse and review the project thus far. As such, reflective activities such as journaling for both the researcher and the participant form central sources of data within the project.

Thirdly, **collective action** is critical within this methodology. Within the context of this project, the participant community is benefitting from exposure to a new approach to music education while the researcher is acquiring valuable data which will lead to the synthesis of strategies, findings, and discussion. To this end, the researcher becomes part of the community and works in symbiosis with them in the field. In other words, to have the best understanding of the community one must become a member of the community. In terms of this thesis, becoming part of the community entails an intricate understanding of the primary classroom and the current topics, challenges and issues faced by primary generalist music teachers in Ireland. Bringing my personal background as a primary teacher to the project undoubtedly aided in this regard to understand, empathise with, and interpret the participant voice in the most authentic manner possible. Building on this symbiotic relationship, alliance building between the researcher and participant is an essential requirement to ensure *collective* action. This means the participant must feel like the researcher genuinely understands and cares about their particular situation. This tenet of participatory case study research is shared with forms of action

research, including phenomenological and narrative studies (Creswell 2021). This means that the researcher cannot begin to engage with the participant already armed with the 'answer' and/or what they hope to uncover from the study. Instead, through the critical dialogue discussed earlier, they will conjointly arrive at the crux of the issue/concern and work together to arrive at an actionable and assessable strategy that addresses it.

Why participatory case study research?

The desire to enact change was one of the driving motivators to conduct this research. One of the distinguishing features of participatory case study research is its fore fronting of individual and collective social action and agency (Reilly 2009). From Freire's *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* (2017), the dissolution of the power structure (demarcation) between the researcher and participants informs us about how this paradigm operates as a methodological approach. The researcher immerses themselves in a given community, in this instance the school/classroom. They examine the nature of the experiences of the participants and engage the community for information. This information may present some challenges and issues as experienced by the community. The researcher then participates with the participant in resolving some of the issues at this community level. This gives credence to the fact that the teacher as participant has something that they can give in terms of contribution to the research, rather than just being a source of data for the researcher with their responses to survey and interview. Consequently, the lines between researcher and participant are reduced, as the researcher becomes the researcher-participant (researcher-participant), and the participant becomes the participant-researcher (participant-researcher).

Furthermore, the participatory nature of this paradigm ensures the 'buy-in' from all stakeholders involved in the project. Prominent authors in the field of educational change, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), attest that in order for educational change to come about, there are three necessary pillars: continuous learning, a shared vision and moral purpose, and

collaboration. On these points, engagement with this project for teachers resulted in continuous learning opportunities, as it provided opportunities for the upskilling of existing teachers. It also promoted collaboration between staff and other schools through an exchange of ideas and strategies, in turn creating communities of practice and accountability partners. Furthermore, the close working relationship between researcher and participant reflects a shared commitment and vision for the project, resulting in the most significant impact. Seeing this impact is an impetus for further and sustained engagement, thereby ensuring long-term change.

While there are many manifestations of participatory case study research in research contexts, there does not appear to be a single unifying framework to delineate what does and does not fall under this paradigm within the literature (Yin, X). Thus, the idiosyncratic nature of participatory case study research results in its implementation arising from the specific context which it is examining, and as such, environmental and research-based objective(s) are defining factors in the consideration of the methodological approach. In other words, the environment will define the research and the level of engagement of the participants; it is not a neutral endeavour. It is contextually-bound in that is not meant to just understand the site of participation, but instead improve outcomes for participants and the site of study. In this way, a counter-hegemonic narrative is created which seeks to break a solidified power structure/balances and offers the necessary conditions for change. One is not trying to create a new narrative in doing this, per se. Instead, they are trying to unpackage and understand how the current narrative came into existence, its impact on the individuals concerned, and collaboratively propose alternative ways of thinking. More on how the thesis proliferates critical theory is to be found within Chapters One and Four.

Recruitment of Participants

Owing to the barriers of working in-person with teachers and students arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the pilot cycle teacher was recruited using convenience sampling. A teacher

known to the researcher had expressed interest in the project when talking informally with them prior to their engagement. A Musical Futures online workshop was organised and delivered on 24th March 2021 by the researcher with the view to recruiting participants. The workshop invited Dr Gwen Moore to share her insights into the pilot study conducted in 2019 and was widely advertised on social media, teachers' organisations and by word of mouth. The workshop, which was attended by thirty teachers, provided an overview of the approach and its guiding principles, suggested resources suitable for use with upper primary level students (from the Musical Futures online resources [14]), and facilitated discussion. Following from the workshop, five teachers came forward who were interested in bringing the approach to their classrooms, all from the Munster region (south of Ireland). One further teacher colleague became involved from this group, bringing the total number of participants in the project to seven. These teachers were then assigned pseudonyms to personalise their participation across the findings: *Sally*, *Eileen*, *Winifred*, *Alice*, *David*, *Muireann*, and *Harriet*. The teachers ranged in age, gender, teaching experience, qualifications, and musical background, capturing a broad subset of the teaching population as a whole. Table 2 outlines some of the pertinent contextual and demographic information about the participating teachers and students in the project.

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[14] https://www.musicalfuturesonline.org/

Teacher Pseudonym	Relevant Background	Participating Class(es)	Number of Students	Urban/ Rural	DEIS [15] Status	Length of participation	Other school information	Strand of Musical Futures undertaken
Sally	• Principal of school. • Bimusical background - Traditional Irish in accordion and tin whistle and Classical background in violin and piano.	3rd-6th	13	Rural	No	10 weeks	Mixed sex	Everyone Can Play - Ukulele
Eileen	• Bimusical background - Traditional Irish in flute and Classical on piano. • Currently plays pop on piano for personal enjoyment.	6th	26	Urban	No	30 weeks	Mixed sex	Everyone Can Play - Ukulele
Winifred	• Bimusical background - Traditional Irish and Classical on violin and voice. • Regularly gigs for weddings/functions as part of a band.	5th	29	Urban	No	20 weeks	Girl's school	Everyone Can Play - Ukulele
Alice	• Classical music background - violin. • Music post holder within the school.	3rd	24	Urban	No	12 weeks	Mixed sex	Making Music - Body Percussion and Tuned/Untuned Percussion
David	• Informal musical background – took up guitar in college as a hobby within popular music genre. Did not engage in music lessons prior to this. • Now teaches guitar to students privately.	2nd	16	Urban	Yes Band II	12 weeks	Boy's school Senior School (1st to 6th classes only)	Everyone Can Play - Guitar

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[15] DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), which is the Irish word for 'opportunity', is a national programme to support schools who have a high concentration of disadvantage. This programme facilitates supports such as lower pupil-teacher ratios, increased funding, home and family links, and early intervention classes. More information can be found here: https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/4018ea-deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools/

Muireann	• Classed herself as 'unmusical'. • Learned Irish music on the tin whistle as a child but did not enjoy it.	3rd	29	Urban	Yes Band II	12 weeks	Mixed sex	Making Music -Body Percussion
Harriet	• Classical musical background - piano. Plays several instruments and has played "all over the world". • Music post holder within the school.	Special Education Teacher (SET) assisting in Muireann's class						

Table 2:Teacher demographic information overview

Participating teachers in the project were given free access to the Musical Futures online suite of resources, including the Making Music, Just Play, and Everyone Can Play bank of lessons, as well as the related catalogue of songs in these strands. Chatting with the teachers, they identified what area(s) they wanted to work on with their students which was impacted in part by the resources they had access to within their school context. I advised them where necessary and helped them plan and structure what the Musical Futures lessons might look like over their period of engagement in the project. Teachers were free to use the resources in whatever way they felt supported their implementation of the approach.

Each classroom implemented informal and non-formal approaches differently in their classrooms:

- Sally learned the ukulele with her 3rd to 6th class students using the Everyone Can Play resources. They learned the chords of C, A minor, F, E minor, G, and D as well as strumming patterns in 4/4 time to play along with songs like *Dance Monkey* by Tones and I and *Paradise* by George Ezra. They learned how to tune their instruments and composed their own strumming rhythms.

- Eileen's 6th class also learned the ukulele using the Everyone Can Play resources. They used some of the songs included in the suite of resources and also found some other play along tracks on YouTube to extend their playing. For Christmas, they sang and played *Feliz Navidad* with a strumming pattern they devised which was recorded for their school website.

- Winifred's 5th class primarily worked from the Everyone Can Play resources to learn the ukulele but also dipped into some of the Making Music section with body percussion and untuned percussion instrument work. She taught some lessons over Zoom with her students when school buildings were closed due to COVID-19. At the end of their engagement, they composed, recorded, and performed an original

composition, using ukuleles, percussion instruments, glockenspiel and voice. This was recorded using the Garageband application on iPad and edited for publishing on the school's social media channels.

- In Alice's 3rd class, the students worked comprehensively on percussion using the Making Music section with body percussion and tuned/untuned percussion instruments (for example, tambourines, maracas, and chime bars using the pentatonic scale). Having developed a strong sense of rhythm, their engagement culminated in a composition project using a beat grid and the elements of body percussion they had worked with to that point. Each student composed their own 4-bar ostinato using crochet and quavers rhythms as well as rests.

- David's 2nd class took on learning the guitar using the Everyone Can Play resources. They first learned how to hold and strum their guitar before moving on to learning the chords of G, C and E minor using the 'EZ Chords' method of dampening the lowest 3 strings of the guitar. David challenged the students to learn the full versions of the chords by the end of their engagement and they were able to play along to *Songbird* by Oasis and The Lion Sleeps Tonight by the end of their participation in the project.

- Supported by Harriet, Muireann worked exclusively on the Making Music section with her 3rd class using body percussion. The students worked on developing their sense of rhythm and tempo using the play alongs and used a range of body parts to create different rhythmic ostinati in response to the music they were listening to in class.

Mindful of the teachers' isolating experience trying to implement a new pedagogy without the support of their colleagues, I set up an online forum using Google Hangouts [16] for the participating teachers in this project to connect with other teachers in virtual format to encourage them to share their experiences with one another, allowing them to feel part of a

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[16] Google Hangouts is a communications service that allows individuals to take part in text, voice, or video chats as part of a group online.

support network. Here, I encouraged them to share their reflections on their own engagement and reach out to the other teachers for ideas and strategies for developing the approach within their classes and schools.

Validity, Reliability, and Reflexivity

Hammersley (1992) describes validity as the measure to which we have confidence in our results. Such quality of the data (Denscombe 2009) can refer to inter alia, the "honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher" (Winter 2000). While qualitative research can never be completely valid, it is important to strive for the maximisation of validity within and faithful to the specific paradigm of participatory case study research.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) put forward four criteria indicative of trustworthy qualitative data pertaining to validity and reliability: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. A number of measures were followed to maximise credibility. For example, the researcher was engaged with the participants over a prolonged period of time, with routine observation to maintain the research focus. Member checking of transcripts was conducted to allow participants to correct any errors or add/omit information post-engagement with the project. A pilot phase was conducted to test out the tools and process, for subsequent refinement. While it could be argued that using convenience sampling methods for the recruitment of the pilot teacher negatively impacts validity, it can conversely be argued that recruiting someone already familiar with the researcher eliminates the need to build up a rapport for the honest sharing of insights within the project. On this point of sampling, all other participants were recruited from expressing interest and volunteering to participate.

Central to the validity of the study is the positionality of the researcher. While other methodologies place the researcher on the outside of the topic of study as an observer, the orientation of the researcher in participatory case study research uniquely positions them in the

middle of the inquiry. As such, there is the possibility for the researcher to influence or corrupt the understanding of the site of study through their involvement. It is important to acknowledge this positionality through the process of self-reflection in the form of the researcher journal to mitigate against this comprising the validity of the data.

Triangulation of data is an important element in ensuring the transferability of data, as Cohen *et al.* (2007, p.141) note "triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint". In the thesis, data were methodologically triangulated - for example, teacher interviews, were backed up with reflective notes, and researcher field notes - to create rich, contextualised findings. Credibility was ensured through thorough background literature review.

Reliability refers to the "quality of the methods" employed (Denscombe 2009). While the mention of reliability is a contentious issue in qualitative research paradigms, it can best be thought of as a "fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched" (Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.149), thus influencing the transferability of findings from one context in informing another. To this end, the researcher conducted a thorough literature review pre-engagement in the field to examine what and how existing studies into the Musical Futures approach had done. Moreover, existing established good practices were also utilised to increase the reliability of the findings, for example, the triangulation of data sources and member checking as already mentioned.

While researchers undertaking quantitative studies typically refer to bias in research, confirmability is regarded as the qualitative equivalent (Creswell and Guetterman 2019, p.262). Reflexivity on the part of the researcher through an acknowledgement of study limitations and researcher biases is an important element in establishing confirmability and will be discussed in Chapter Ten. My close relationship to the project coupled with my personal interest in the area of music are personal biases that cannot be separated from my position as researcher.

Indeed, coming from a traditional music background and that of a primary school teacher were two distinct influences that certainly impacted the lens through which I approached the study design and data analysis.

From the point of view of the project itself, the 'halo effect' of implementing a new approach can result in an overly positive perception of Musical Futures approaches among the participants with the prospect of taking on something new. In synthesising and reporting the findings, the range of validity strategies as previously described mitigated any reporting biases.

Ethical Considerations

The investigation of the human experience of music teachers and students is central to this thesis and is intrinsically linked to ethics. In order to understand how musical values influence music teaching and learning, it was imperative to work with teachers, principals, students and parents throughout the project. Given the relatively small population of the primary teaching population in Ireland of almost 39,000 teachers [17], the need for sensitivity and ethical considerations were paramount. Approval was granted by the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) prior to undertaking any field work.

As a primary teacher registered fully with the Teaching Council, I was fully Garda [18] vetted and aware of the procedures for working with students in line with the MIC Child Safeguarding Statement. I also completed and passed the Epigeum Research Integrity Core Course and the Epigeum Human Subjects Protections Specialist Course in April 2020 to ensure that their understanding of research procedures and skills was up to date and in keeping with best practices in conducting research.

To ensure authentic and genuine participation in the project, the initial Musical Futures workshop was offered freely to primary teachers across the country to elicit interest in the

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[17] 2020 figures from *Education Indicators for Ireland* December 2021 https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/055810-education-statistics/ (p.10)

[18] This refers to An Garda Síochána, Ireland's police force.

pedagogical approaches. Further to these workshops, teachers were encouraged to follow up if they wished to partake in the study. I then contacted these teachers with additional information about the project. In this way, the participants came to the project voluntarily. It was arranged to meet with school principals (either virtually or in person) to explain the purposes of the study, provide detailed information sheets and consent forms, and discuss Garda Vetting and child protection procedures. Principal approval was then sought and granted for each school participating (see Appendix F). In one case, the principal was the teacher also taking part in the project. Following agreement from the principals, I met with the classroom teachers (again, either virtually or in person) to discuss the distribution of consent forms and information sheets for parents and pupils. Only when these were returned did the study commence.

Mindful of making participants' involvement in the project as easy as possible, the interviews were carried out within the participants' respective schools, at a time and location convenient to the participants. Information letters and informed consent forms were given to principals, teachers, and students (see Appendix F), detailing what was necessary for their involvement in the project and outlined any potential risks to human participants. Parents were also given information and consent letters (see Appendix F). Any individual who did not wish to take part at any stage was given the option to withdraw from the project.

Working with students under the age of 18, ethical issues arose with the involvement of minors and the protection of students involved in the project was a priority. In line with MIREC policy, parents/guardians were made aware of their child's potential involvement in the project and had to give informed consent before their child's participation in the study. Only children whose parents/guardians had given consent for their child to partake in the study were invited as participants.

Students themselves were not obliged to partake in the research but could still partake in the classroom activities. Information sheets were distributed to them to help them understand what they were being involved in and why. Assent forms were then read through and signed if

they agreed to take part. These were written in an accessible format and language for their age. Within these forms, the student's right to decline participation, or withdraw at any time was fully explained. Additionally, students were made explicitly aware that their names, school name, or any other identifiable feature would be anonymised when writing and/or disseminating the research.

While students were being interviewed, I ensured that students were never alone with me or put in any position or situation where they may have felt uncomfortable or pressurised into responding to a question that they did not wish to answer. I worked with students at a time and place chosen by the principal and/or classroom teacher, as deemed appropriate.

Some of the Musical Futures lessons were video recorded. Participants were informed that this was for the purpose of capturing the music making practices of the students and teacher. Teachers were given the option to decline having their lessons recorded and students who did not wish to be recorded were not be included in the video as they partook in the class lesson.

The individual interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded, and these recordings were used to ensure the information given by each participant was recorded accurately and not paraphrased or taken out of context. Every effort was made to ensure no identities were revealed on these recordings. The interviews themselves were reviewed to ensure that no sensitive personal questions were contained (see Appendices C, D and E). Although participants discussed their experiences of music teaching and learning, anonymity and confidentiality was ensured whereby personal data that may have identified individuals, other teachers or schools was omitted in any transcribed extracts of the interviews. When writing up the thesis, pseudonyms were also given to each participating teacher and student to protect their anonymity. I was the only person aware of who the pseudonyms represented.

As this is predominantly a qualitative study, it was the participants' opinions and experiences that formed the data. As such, every effort was made to make sure the participants felt comfortable at every stage of the research, and they did not have to answer any questions

they felt uncomfortable with. While there was no foreseeable risk to the participants of this study, participants were free to leave the study at any time and they were informed that their information would be omitted from the study and destroyed from my records. Teachers were provided with a copy of their interview transcripts before the thesis was written and they had the opportunity to remove any sections they were not happy with or add in anything further they felt was relevant.

Information letters (see Appendix F) were given to participants and explained where necessary so that participants fully understood their involvement in the project and the potential risks and benefits related to their participation. No gratuity or incentive was offered. Participants were given a week to read these forms and, if happy to partake in the study, signed and returned the consent forms (see Appendix F) to the researcher within this time. To protect participants, they were notified of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time, should they wish. They were also made aware that their name, school's name, or any other identifying feature would be anonymised in subsequent writing and/or publications.

In compliance with the Mary Immaculate College Record Retention Schedule, anonymised data may be retained indefinitely by the researcher. However, I as the researcher was the only individual with access to these records. Paper records were uploaded onto my password protected laptop computer and the hardcopies kept in a locked filing cabinet in my office. All digital files were encrypted and kept on my password protected laptop computer and backed up on my password protected hard drive for the duration of the study. Audio files of interviews were transcribed and destroyed immediately after transcription was completed to ensure anonymity of all participants. Data was only available to the participants and I and was never released to any third party.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data Collection Instruments

A range of data collection tools were utilised in this thesis to garner rich, contextualised data, reflecting the participatory case study research process.

Within the qualitative research paradigm, the interview is seen as a powerful tool that recognises "the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data…enabling multi-sensory channels to be used" (Cohen, *et al.* 2007, p.349). Pre-engagement interviews were conducted with the participating teachers to firstly gauge their current musical experience and background, identify challenges unique to their own teaching context, and establish what they hoped to gain from participation in the project. Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate for this project as they are "sufficiently open-ended to enable the contents to be reordered, digressions and expansions made, new avenues to be included, and further probing to be undertaken" (Cohen, *et al.* 2007, p.182). Questions generally followed a similar, open-ended format, avoiding any leading or ambiguous questioning (see Appendices C, D and E). These interviews typically lasted 20-30 minutes and established a 'baseline' of sorts to gauge changes in practice. In David's school I was able to briefly interview the principal to gauge the musical learning of students in the school generally (see Appendix D).

Throughout the project, I kept a detailed journal (see extract in Appendix B), which included any field notes, questions, comments, reflections, observations, etc. of interest to the study. Such use of journaling in qualitative research enhances the validity of the findings and acts as a means of triangulating the data during the data analysis process (Creswell and Guetterman 2018, p.261). This journal was handwritten, and each entry was dated and recorded chronologically to trace any changes in my thought processes as the project progressed. There were over 30 different entries, ranging from a couple of sentences to six A5 pages of notes.

Lesson observations occurred intra-engagement with Musical Futures. In general, observation affords the researcher "the opportunity to record information as it occurs in a setting, to study actual behavior, and to study individuals who have difficulty verbalising their ideas" (Creswell and Guetterman 2019, p. 214). Owing to the non-verbal nature of much of the music lessons, the young age of the students, and the dynamic classroom interactions taking place, observations yielded a rich source of data. Depending on the school and owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, these were facilitated either in-person or through video-conferencing platforms (i.e. Zoom). A minimum of one visit took place for each participating school, generally at the mid-point of their focused engagement in the project with observations lasting between 45 to 90 minutes.

A simple observation protocol (Creswell and Guetterman 2019, p.227) was used to assist taking field notes during lessons, which included both a description of the activities and a reflection about them (see Appendix A). A record of these were kept in my journal. During observations, I most often assumed the role of participant observer, taking part in the activities in the classroom setting and recording information (ibid., p.214). This involved observing the lesson as it unfolded, sometimes assisting the teacher and/or students as they engaged in an activity and concluded by chatting informally with the teacher and students about how things were going for them. In some instances, I was a nonparticipant observer, sitting on the periphery of the setting and making notes without becoming involved in the lesson. Here, I noted any observations, comments, questions, impressions, or points of interest in my journal as they unfolded. Occasionally during these classroom visits and informal chats, the teacher would ask for tips and strategies to promote engagement, or ideas to approach a certain objective, while other times it would just be an opportunity for them to speak more broadly and generally about the approach. With the permission of the school, teacher, and students, some of these observations were video recorded for reviewing at a later date.

The participating teachers were also asked to keep reflective notes as they engaged with Musical Futures. They were encouraged to write anything they felt was pertinent to their participation. Some wished for some guidance on what sort of things to write about and so I provided them with some focus questions and statements to assist in this regard. The volume and depth of these notes varied considerably from teacher to teacher, with some writing paragraphs while others just a sentence or two after certain lessons. Generally, these notes identified aspects of the lessons that went well or that the students enjoyed or described individual student success stories or difficulties arising from the lesson.

Post-engagement interviews were conducted at the end of the research phase for each teacher (see Appendix O for sample). The focus of these interviews was on unpacking what was learned from using informal and non-formal teaching and learning pedagogies, identifying any impact on practice going forward, and discussion of any barriers or facilitators to musical engagement. As with the pre-interviews, these took a semi-structured format to give scope for anything unplanned arising during the course of the interview and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Having built a rapport with the teachers at this point, they were encouraged to be honest and open with their comments, which Kitwood (1977 in Cohen *et al.* 2007) notes will glean the most accurate data.

Focus group discussions took place with cohorts of students in each class at the end of their period of engagement in the project, selected by the teacher. Focus groups are useful in qualitative research as "the reliance is on the interaction within the group who discuss a topic…yielding a collective rather than an individual view…that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview" (Cohen *et al.*2007, p.376). Between three and five students took part in each focus group and a total of seven focus groups were conducted. The focus groups were intended to give voice to the student experience of the project, focusing on what the students thought about the approach, what they learned, what they enjoyed, any challenges they noticed. As with the teacher interviews, these took a semi-

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structured format, lasting around ten to fifteen minutes each. As much as possible, I tried to get the students to talk to one another and not just respond unilaterally to me. Cohen *et al.* (ibid., p.374) note that interviewing children must be approached differently than interviewing adults, owing to their stage of cognitive and linguistic development. They further emphasise the need to establish trust and to ensure the interview is organised, structured, and conducted in an appropriate manner. Having met with the children several times prior to the discussion, the students were generally at ease speaking with me and eager to share their thoughts. This was further facilitated by working with the students in a group, thereby making the interview situation less intimidating for them.

Data Collection Timeline

Data collection took place during a focused period of engagement with each participating teacher and class. Depending on the school, this period ranged from ten to thirty weeks during the academic year 2020/2021. The pilot phase took place from October to December 2020. This pilot phase was used to test the data collection process under the plan, act, observe, reflect cycle (see Figure 9 and 10 in Chapter Five). It had been initially planned to conduct a phase of data collection per term of the primary school calendar. However, due to the closure of school buildings from January until March 2021 in line with national COVID-19 safety measures, most teachers were not in a position to take on the project virtually. One teacher however did try using Musical Futures with their students during this time. This resulted in the majority of data collection taking place from March until June 2021. An example of a typical data collection timeline for a participating school can be found in Appendix L.

Prior to a school's participation, the participating teacher and class was communicated through the principal. Information sheets and consent forms were distributed, explained, signed, and returned to me before any participation in the project. Initial queries or questions about the project were raised and addressed by the principal and/or participating teacher at this point. For

several schools, an additional workshop was organised to address specifically how informal and non-formal teaching and learning approaches might be best facilitated in the particular setting, including the mitigation of resource and timetabling issues. Teachers were provided with access to the suite of Musical Futures resources pertinent to their intended strand (e.g. *Just Play* or *Making Music*). Pre-engagement interviews were then conducted with the participating teachers.

As the teachers implemented the approach over their focused period of engagement, I followed up every second week to check in via email or message. The conversations generally identified what was going well, how the students were finding the lessons, what the teacher was enjoying, and what challenges or issues were arising. Teachers were encouraged to note these points in their reflective notes also.

At the end of their period of focused engagement, post-interviews and focus group discussions were conducted and I collected any reflective notes from the teachers. One final lesson observation usually took place, often taking the format of a 'showcase' of what the students had been working on during their lessons.

A more detailed breakdown of data collection in each school is featured in Table 3 below:

Teacher	Period of Engagement	Data Collection Details
Sally	30th September 2020 – 11th December 2020 (10 weeks)	Pre-engagement interview: 30th September 2020 Video-recorded classroom observations x2 (in-person): • 12th November 2020 • 4th December 2020 Post-engagement interview: 15th December 2020 Focus group interview: 15th December 2020 (with 3 students: Róisín 3rd class, Elliot 6th class, Lucy 6th class)
Eileen	16th November 2020 –	Pre-engagement interview: 14th November 2020

	18th June 2021 (30 weeks – part online, part in-person)	Classroom observations x2 (virtual): • 16th December 2020 • 17th June 2021 Post-engagement interview: 29th June 2021 Focus group interviews x2: • 14th June 2021 (with 4 students: Reece, Laura, Tony, Jane 6th class) • 14th June 2021 (with 3 students: Sam, Deepak, Nora 6th class)
Winifred	25th January 2021 – 18th June 2021 (20 weeks – part online, part in-person)	Pre-engagement interview: 20th January 2021 Classroom observations x2 (virtual): • 25th March 2021 • 17th June 2021 Post-engagement interview: 27th June 2021 Focus group interview: 17th June 2021 (with 5 students: Leah, Beatrice, Molly, Angela, Eimear 5th class)
Alice	12th April 2021 – 24th June 2021 (12 weeks)	Pre-engagement interview: 8th April 2021 Video-recorded classroom observations x2 (in-person): • 6th May 2021 • 10th June 2021 Post-engagement interview: 14th June 2021 Focus group interview: 10th June 2021 (with 5 students: Harold, Carrie, Zack, David, Mei-Ling 3rd class)
David	12th April 2021 – 24th June 2021 (12 weeks)	Pre-engagement interview: 12th April 2021 Principal interview: 23rd April 2021 Video-recorded classroom observations x2 (in-person): • 12th May 2021 • 15th June 2021

		Post-engagement interview: 21st June 2021
		Focus group interview: 15th June 2021 (with 4 students: Billy, Michael, Eamon, Iasac)
Muireann/ Harriet	12th April 2021 – 24th June 2021 (12 weeks)	Pre-engagement interviews: 5th May for both teachers Video-recorded classroom observation (in-person): • 22nd June 2021 Post-engagement interviews: • Muireann 24th June 2021 • Harriet 1st July 2021 Focus group interview: 22nd June 2021 (with 5 students: Ericka, Nad, Stacy, Riva, Sasha)

Table 3: Detailed summary of data collection for each teacher and class

Analytical Strategy

Bryman (2016) stresses the importance of having a clear framework to guide the analysis of data. Having allowed participants to articulate their perspectives and experiences freely and spontaneously, a significant amount of data was generated. Hence, the job of data analysis needed to be approached strategically and methodically, as Maykut and Morehouse (2002) suggest: "the task of the researcher is to find patterns within those words and to present those patterns for others to inspect" (p18). Owing to participatory case study research being the chosen methodology, general inductive analysis based on the principles of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was deemed the most suitable as it gives sufficient scope for the exploratory and investigatory nature of the thesis. Moreover, its objective aligns well with that of the research methodology:

> The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.

> (Thomas 2006, p.238)

Braun and Clarke reinforce this stance: "Inductive analysis is…a process of coding the data *without* trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (2006, p.83). Inductive reasoning (through the process of coding) generates salient categories of meaning and relationships between categories derived from the data itself, creating an integrated model that seeks to illustrate the findings in a coherent and logical manner. This is distinct from deductive analysis which sets out to "test whether data are consistent with prior assumptions, theories, or hypothesis identified or constructed by an investigator" (Thomas 2006, p.238).

I began by analysing the data manually at first to get acquainted with the process of data analysis before using any type of software. Bryman (2016, p.566) notes that qualitative data analysis is typically iterative, where "a repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis of data" occurs. Therefore, it was important to analyse the preliminary data corpus generated from the pilot cycle to inform forthcoming cycles of data collection and as the corpus expands.

Fielding *et al.* (1998) articulate that qualitative researchers "want tools which support analysis, but leave the analyst firmly in charge" (p167). In agreement with their statement, I decided to use qualitative analysis software (namely NVivo) to streamline the process of analysis. At this point, it must be noted that such software does not remove the researcher from the hermeneutical task at hand; instead, the software is utilised for efficiency and plausibility, rendering all stages of the analysis process as transparent and traceable due to its logging of data movements and coding patterns.

I then followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) analytical process, going through six discrete phases into analysing the data.

Phase 1: I proceeded to transcribe and review interview and focus group recordings. Video recordings were watched again, and observational notes were taken to compliment the initial observation notes in the researcher journal. Written teacher reflective notes and researcher reflective journal entries were both transcribed digitally. All anonymised transcribed

files were then uploaded into NVivo to begin the analysis process.

Following Bryman's (2016, pp.576-577) and Creswell's (2021, pp.273-274) suggested approach to coding, I reviewed the transcripts and data sources generally at first and initial impressions were noted, without interpretation.

Phase 2: Upon re-reading the transcripts, codes were then generated using minimal language (for example, *absence, illness, belief/value, success, challenge*). For the purposes of analysis, codes referred discrete 'incidents'(Glaser and Strauss 1967) or 'units of meaning' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) within the data. Data were often assigned more than one code, leading to a significant body of codes at the initial stages. Indeed, this process yielded codes in both descriptive and explanatory categories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp 334-341), meaning that categories were developed to a) understand the content of participant perspectives and b) interpret them into wider theoretical concepts.

Phase 3: Connections were made between codes and were grouped to provide meta-codes or categories (for example, *absence* and *illness* were grouped under *impact of COVID*).

Phase 4: These codes were then considered in relation to the embedded questions driving the research and the body of literature reviewed earlier in the thesis, giving rise to the refinement of categories. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) summarise this process:

> Using this method, the researcher simultaneously codes and analyses data in order to develop concepts; the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their properties, explores their relationships to one another, and integrates them into a coherent explanatory model.
>
> (Taylor and Bogdan 1984, p.126)

Some of the codes related well to the questions, while some gave dimension to phenomena previously unencountered, as was the case with the aforementioned COVID-related codes. A sample of the codebook arising from this process can be found in Appendix G.

Phase 5: These codes then formed part of wider ideas or *themes*. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82) provide a unifying discussion on what they call thematic analysis. They clarify: "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and

represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set". These themes relate to the research focus and build on codes identified in the data that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of the data to enable them to make a contribution to the literature relating to the research focus (Bryman 2016, p.580). A code tree or concept map was developed (see Appendix I) that illustrates how the codes were synthesised into categories and then themes as they related to the research questions. Table 3 summarises the phases and tasks of the process as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87).
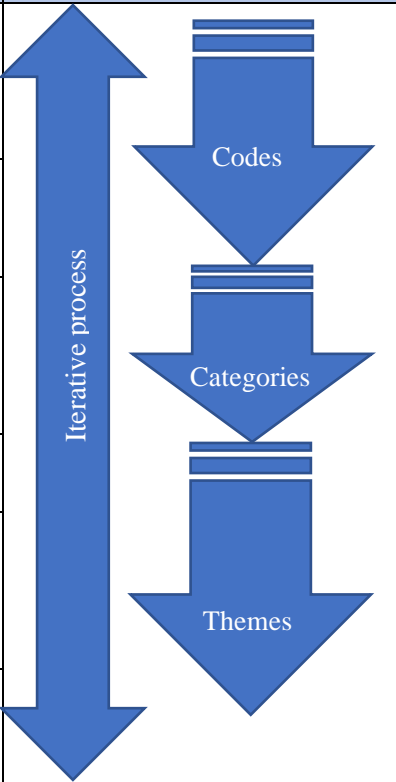
Analytical Process	Description of main tasks	
Phase One **Familiarisation with the data**	Transcription, anonymising, and cleaning of data. Importing of files into NVivo software. Reading and re-reading the data.	
Phase Two **Generating initial codes**	Open coding across all data.	
Phase Three **Searching for themes**	Categorisation of codes into potential themes. Gathering data relevant to each potential theme.	
Phase Four **Reviewing themes**	Relating themes to initial codes and research and embedded questions.	
Phase Five **Defining and naming themes**	Refinement of themes within the literature and the overall narrative of the research. Creating a code tree to broadly illustrate concepts.	
Phase Six **Producing the report**	Selection of vivid and compelling extracts for inclusion in the write up of the findings.	

Table 4: Outline of the analytical process (from Braun and Clarke 2006)

Preface to Forthcoming Chapters

The following three chapters situate the findings within contemporary discourse. They are divided into three levels, beginning with factors influencing practice at the level of the teacher (micro), before examining wider influences (meso), and ideological concerns (macro). This structure is useful in visualising the process of change as it was exposed on these three levels, or *fields*. It will allow us to take the findings and 'dilu
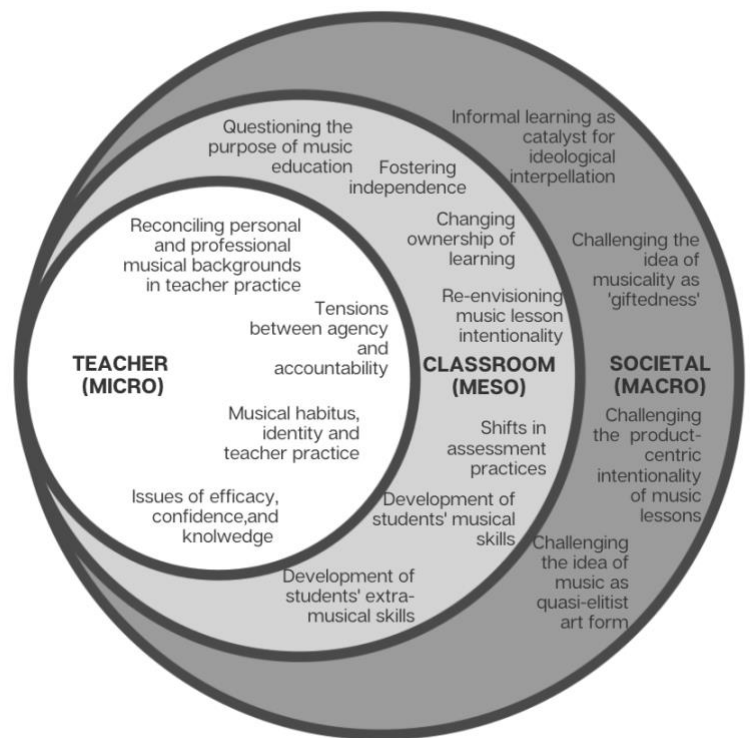
Figure 11: Levels of analysis

individual teacher practice (micro), the school-based vision and ethos for music (meso) and the Irish primary music curriculum and guiding principles (macro), This model is helpful in explaining how teachers translated their own CPD from the initial workshop on 24th March 2021 into classroom practice, as it is mediated through several layers. Aligning with these lenses, the forthcoming chapters have been arranged and structured into three themes:

- Teacher habitus as/at the nexus of teacher practice

- Informal learning and non-formal teaching: Reappraising music education

- Informal learning as catalyst for ideological interpellation

A concept map/code tree of these three themes was created (Appendix I) which indicates how they relate to a) the codes built up from the first phase of coding b) the research and embedded questions and c) micro, meso, and macro levels of the understanding of change (colour-coded). Music-making through COVID-19: An Epiphenomenon also featured strongly in the data which will now be addressed in its own right.

Music-making through COVID-19: An Epiphenomenon

Further to Chapter One, it would be remiss not to address the impact that the COVID-19 global pandemic has had on children's experiences of music education. There was a significant amount of data generated in relation to COVID-19 within the project, constituting a thematic finding of its own that will be briefly explored here.

The presence of the restrictions was never far from conversation with all teachers, and it impacted many aspects of the teaching and learning process. As an illustrative example, I will present how the project took shape in Sally's class. However, similar issues and points of note emerged across all the teaching contexts.

Certainly, the first observational note entered in my reflective journal points to how stark the reality of the restrictions were as children engaged with Musical Futures.

> As I entered the prefab classroom, I was met with the sight of four long rows of desks, facing the front of the room. A child sat at each desk, originally meant to seat two, tuning their own ukuleles. The teacher greeted me at the door as she was removing her gloves from the distribution of the ukuleles to the children and was sanitising her hands before picking up her own ukulele to tune.
>
> After greeting the class, I followed the narrow pathway indicated by yellow warning tape on the floor which directed me to a seat at the corner of the room, in keeping with the school's COVID policy. The teacher began the lesson with the class.

In Sally's class, it was clear that the classroom layout was not conducive to peer interactions and the social dimension of learning and playing music together. Sally informed me that their tin whistle classes were not taking place this year and that percussion instruments hadn't been used because she "hadn't got around to spraying them down". Her students who participated in the focus group explained how they hadn't been singing this year and did "some humming thing on board" with their teacher in one music lesson. COVID-19 presented organisational and logistical challenges also:

> Sally: The actual physical - I suppose with COVID and everything - just giving out the ukuleles and storing the ukuleles and bringing them back. Before it might be a thing they could have all just kept them at their desk. It would just have been easier to do it or the giving out wouldn't take as long and everything. So that's a tiny thing, I suppose, but it's just a management thing that took time. So like, often, I'd think I will do a bit of it now and then

look at the time and realise that by the time I'd have them given out given back, that was challenging.

Leading up to and throughout the research phase, I tried to mitigate against as many potential issues arising from restrictive measures as possible. I created instrument and resource packs for each of the 13 students in Sally's class that included the instrument, a pick, a tuner, and a chord poster. This minimised handling of materials by the teacher. I devised a numbering system and record chart for all the instruments used by the students to avoid sharing of instruments (see Appendix K).

Sally too made several decisions regarding the implementation of the project. Tuning was one of the most obvious issues. In line with social distancing, she was not able to tune the ukuleles and so the students had to tune the instruments themselves. While she had showed them the process at the start of the project, many students still hadn't learned how to do so, thus affecting the class' sound:

> Sally: Tuning...[laughing]. So when we used violins in the past or whatever, I just tuned them all and gave them out. But I was reluctant. I wasn't doing it for any other subject so I said I wouldn't you know, I wasn't going to do it for this either, so we didn't. You know, you could hear it then [laughing]. Yeah, it hurt my ears. At a certain point it was taking too long so we said look we'll just get the fingering right. They didn't seem to hear it like. It didn't stop them playing, you know, they were still strumming away, they had the fingers in the right positions.

My reflective notes after an observation session furthered this point:

> I questioned them after the lesson were they able to 'hear' if something didn't sound right and they seemed to say no. Some commented on the fact that it was hard to hear their own ukulele when everyone was playing together.

It was unclear whether they the tuning issues couldn't be heard as they were concentrating on the technical/fine motor elements of playing, they had not given enough attention to tuning the instrument beforehand, or some other reason.

In the lessons observed, all teachers utilised whole-class workshopping and instruction as the dominant method of learning. The 'haphazard' and 'serendipitous' nature of small group work learning was relatively absent in the observed lessons due to health and safety measures in line with COVID-19 guidance policies. Moreover, as mentioned by Sally below the increased

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rate of absenteeism on such a small class size affected the progress of the students:

> Sally: Student absences was a factor. I tried to do it on days when most children were in. And like, that wouldn't be a time maybe I had planned to do it so you had to rearrange the timetable and rejig things and stuff for that so that they'd all get that experience because I didn't want them falling behind since it was such a nice and unique thing to do that they'd all get the experience of it.

Despite all of the impediments, the teacher and students were still able to engage with the approach in a meaningful capacity. One can only surmise that the findings might have been somewhat different had this project occurred without the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remaining positive and opportunistic however, this vastly different classroom dynamic presented opportunity for reflection on the part of the teacher and appreciate what could have been done in music education prior to the restrictions. The teacher envisioned how the project would have progressed if COVID-19 were not a key concern, stating that she would have been able to do more groupwork, improvisation and composition if the students didn't have to keep socially distant.

Other teachers, such as Winifred, adapted to the move to online learning as school buildings closed down. Here, she notices some advantages in remote learning for her students while also learning alongside them:

> Winifred: We started it on zoom, because we were in the lockdown for COVID. I thought that was kind of difficult to do through zoom, because you know, the delay when you're teaching it, but I also thought it was great for them, because we got to give them the ukuleles to go home and practice at home. So I put up video clips of myself doing the different activities, and they would watch them and play along on seesaw or whatever. And then on zoom, we got them to mute their mics. So I was playing along and they were playing along with me at their own pace, which was great.

Alice mentioned how the pandemic had forced her to upskill in the area of ICT. In her post-engagement interview, she went on to describe how music had been put on the "back burner" due to the pandemic and she was facing increased resistance at bringing musical activities into her school as music co-ordinator. For her, Musical Futures provided a concrete solution to this issue. Indeed, several teachers commented on how the instrumental lessons were a favourable option given that students could not sing in classrooms due to the increased aerosol dispersion and fears of increased transmission of the virus. They also mentioned how Musical

Futures was something that students really looked forward to, citing that students had been "missing out on a bit of fun this year" (Muireann).

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic posed an unprecedented barrier to music education within the context of this project but also within the teachers' schools and classrooms. However, it also provided unique insights into alternative forms of music making in response to health and safety concerns, demonstrating the creativity and flexibility of generalist teachers in facilitating music education despite highly uncertain and ever-changing circumstances.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the data collection instruments utilised in the research project, explaining their function, and justifying their inclusion within the context of the study. It traced the specific timelines of data collection for each participant over the course of their engagement with their class and also outlined the analytical process and strategy followed in examining the data. Prior to the presentation of the findings, it has explained how the themes are presented in the forthcoming chapters and a brief rationale for their presentation in this format is included. The chapter concludes by presenting the findings arising from the COVID-19 pandemic on the study and its impact on music teaching and learning.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TEACHER HABITUS AS/AT THE NEXUS OF PRACTICE

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings that relate to teachers' musical backgrounds and experiences and how these manifest as habitus within their practice. I begin by examining the connections between teachers' personal and professional musical backgrounds. Next, I examine the tensions at play regarding aspects of teacher agency, identity, and efficacy as they arose within the participating teacher data. To conclude, I discuss the implications of these findings in light of current discourse in the field.

In particular, the following research questions are addressed:

- What are the musical experiences and prior music education of generalist primary teachers?

- How do these musical experiences and prior music education influence teacher beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of their practice?

In presenting the findings of this chapter, it will serve useful to explain the title. The word 'nexus', derived in the 17th century from the Latin *nectere/nex-* meaning 'bound' is defined by the Oxford Languages' Google dictionary as:

a) A connection or series of connections linking two or more things
b) A central or focal point

This dual definition captures how habitus is both the nexus *at* teacher practice (connecting its discrete elements), and the nexus *as* teacher practice (the focal point of teacher practice) as will become apparent throughout the chapter.

When presenting comments from teachers or students, some sections may have been shortened. Where this is the case, an ellipsis indicates where additional comments have been removed to enhance the flow of prose throughout the findings.

Musical Backgrounds and Generalist Teacher Practice: Reconciling the Personal and the Professional

As discussed in Chapter Four, Bourdieu's tool of habitus enables the interpretation of distinct influences on teacher practice, namely primary (background, parental influence) and secondary socialisation (schooling, professional and societal influence). For many of the teachers, the findings illustrate the interplay between their personal and professional experiences from a music education perspective. For Sally, Eileen, Winifred and David, it became apparent that the influence of their musical backgrounds and experiences was a significant factor in their practice as music educators. Prior to the implementation of Musical Futures, these teachers' music education practices largely revolved around the maxim of 'using what you know, to teach what you know', emulating traditional hierarchical practices typically expected for primary teachers (see Creech *et al.* 2020). For example, Sally grew up in a bimusical culture (see Chapter Three), whereby she received lessons in Western classical piano and Irish traditional music on tin whistle, piano accordion and violin. Her experience ranged from playing solo classical repertoire to playing in groups and bands with her traditional background. This breadth and depth of experience impacted her professionally with regard to her classroom practice. Routinely, she harnessed her musical background to inform her content and pedagogical knowledge.

> Sally: I'm happy enough, I suppose in my own knowledge of rhythms and the basics of musical knowledge, but I could do with a refresher course at this stage it's been so long! [laughing]
>
> Researcher: Would you say that, because you have prior musical experience growing up that that has helped you in your ability to structure music and plan for it?
>
> Sally: I'd hope it would. One of the other teachers would have less confidence in what she was doing and in other years, she would have asked me to take the music class in her classroom and she'd swap with art – not one of my favourite areas. You know, so we're playing to each other's strengths. It would have given me more confidence, I suppose. I would take less time to – I wouldn't have to really read into the explanation of the teaching of certain musical–concepts – or so I thought maybe I should have! [laughing]

Her confidence in this area was clear as she mentioned how she offered extra-curricular music lessons to her students after school also and had high hopes regarding her involvement

in this project on how her students would respond.

> Researcher: What do you hope to gain for your school, staff and students by engaging with this project?
>
> Sally: I suppose…to deepen my knowledge and have more broader experiences so that I can transfer those into the classroom and give the children a deeper learning experience, and more varied I suppose from my own. Not just from my own skill base, you know, that there's something else that's been added.

Similarly for Eileen, her strong personal bimusical life was a driving force behind her interest in music education, which motivated her to pursue a music specialism during her teacher training. Winifred identifies the influence of her own music teachers on her practice:

> Winifred: Well, I suppose because I've had lots of different experiences with different genres, I had many different teachers as well. I definitely had 10 or 11 different violin and singing teachers and things over the years. So I would have picked up knowledge and ideas from all of them as well which kind of helped me when I was teaching if I use some of their theories and things when I'm teaching myself.

For David, finding music later in life has motivated him to bring musical experiences to his students from as young an age as possible:

> David: …myself, I don't know why I didn't but I never played guitar at primary school, even though I absolutely [emphasised] loved music. It was one of my favourite subjects that I did each week. But for some reason – I don't know why I didn't – I suppose looking back, if I had had the opportunity to do that in primary school, I would have taken it with both hands, you know?

Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field and their interrelatedness (1977) demonstrates how a teacher's high level of musical habitus (including musical experiences, lessons, examinations, and tastes) influences their teacher practice and their musical behaviour and attributes (see also Moore 2012; Moore 2021). Habitus, in this instance, is a manifestation of accrued capital and helps us understand each teacher's position in the field of the school and consequently, the dispositions their students hold regarding music education. Harriet's personal and professional musical experiences have become so enmeshed over her years of teaching, that her habitus and capital position her as the musical leader within the field of the school. She makes the connection between the two explicitly clear:

> Harriet: I love music. It's just shaped my whole, you know, life really. As a student, I made money for my music. I played piano in several places. And I played for dinner in restaurants, I went to France with a group of musicians playing music. So it has just been a huge part of my life. So obviously, it lends itself very well to teaching. So here now, as I'm an assistant

principal in school, and my special area is for music, and a special duty post for music and the arts.

For Alice, Musical Futures served as a way to reconcile her personal and professional musical background and experience. As an advocate for music education, she was tired of "pushing [music] all the time" within her school and is now excited about the prospect of the approach growing among staff. In a sense, Musical Futures acted as a bridge to embed her personal love of music in her practice.

The reflective notes kept by both Sally and Eileen as they engaged with Musical Futures again illustrated a combination of their strong musical and pedagogical knowledge as they were able to clearly identify students who were struggling rhythmically and put measures in place to support them, such as peer modelling, individualised feedback, and deeper analysis of rhythmic patterns with the students. Although the approach was novel, their personal musical backgrounds served useful in supporting their students' learning as they engaged with Musical Futures. Clearly both teachers were adept at merging their personal musical experience with their professional careers.

In contrast, Muireann identified her personal musical experience to be quite limited, which in turn has impacted her practice. She admits "I wouldn't consider myself a bit musical – as in I HATE doing music at school." In this way, we see an inverse case of Bourdieu's formula [(Capital)(Habitus)] + Field=Practice. Her practice as music educator relied heavily on what she had experienced in her own primary music education, which encompassed singing traditional Irish songs and being forced to compete on stage playing tin whistle tunes that were "drilled into me because you have to be able to play them without notes in front of you". Her aversion to music stems in part from her self-identified lack of cultural capital in Western classical music pedagogy:

Muireann: I don't know this Do-Re-Mi thing like. As in I can't sing doh now, I don't know what it means. So, the rhythm sections in those Right Note books, I could actually do those but I couldn't do that do-re-mi thing so I just skip over that bit.

Interestingly, the Musical Futures resources served to facilitate a wider range of musical

activities for Muireann's students and encouraged her to re-evaluate her outlook. In her post-engagement interview, she described how she was "dying to" get going again in the new academic year with the approach and that she would be "flying now next year" having become familiar with the Musical Futures resources.

It is clear from the findings that a teacher's musical habitus has a strong influence on their understanding of music teaching and pedagogy. While the relative strength of their habitus influenced professional musical practice and the way in which they adopted Musical Futures, the approach itself often brought about a reappraisal of practice for teachers who already had a strong existing musical background. Describing what elements of her practice had changed from engaging with non-formal teaching, Sally identified that this process gave her the impetus to reflect on her former practice. She explained how she had gotten fixed into a similar pattern for teaching music over the years:

> Sally: My practice is brutal to be honest [laughing]. I was after getting over reliant on Dabbledoo [19]. That had written out what you needed to do. You'd turn it on and there's your lesson and you're home. My other practice was tin whistle, which I've been teaching for years. So that was kind of set, you know. I've a certain way of teaching tin whistle – get out the tune, learn the notes, practice it, we're done. Whereas this was completely different. It was breaking down in the chords. You know, you had your resources. So there was a bit more planning… But it definitely – it kind of focused my–practice I suppose.

Prior to engagement in the project, Sally's practice was very much guided by achieving a level of technical proficiency and mastery in the selected tune and appeared removed from the playing of tunes for enjoyment ("get out the tune, learn the notes, practice it, we're done"). This could be due to her experience as a learner across both Irish traditional music and western classical genres where the product is frequently emphasised over process. It could also be interpreted as being closely related to generalist practice and the influence of accountability within the teaching profession. In this quote however, it is evident that engaging in Musical Futures had informed her willingness to reappraise her pedagogy.

Moreover, Eileen was encouraged to reflect on her previous practice and examine

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[19] Dabbledoo is an Irish company that has produced an interactive music program for primary schools. More information can be found here: https://dabbledoomusic.com/p/about-us

elements of how she taught music which may have become static.

> Eileen: I suppose there's a few things like, so I would have taught recorder before but I was very comfortable teaching that because I played the flute. So I think just having the musical experience and knowledge myself in playing the recorder, I would have been very, very comfortable playing that. Whereas with the ukulele, I only knew about three chords before starting the Musical Futures programme. And, you know, I didn't have time to practice a lot…Whereas with Musical Futures, my own ukulele playing definitely improved because I was I was practising along with the children and practising myself – like it was actually quite fun to practice away myself with the programme… So it then allows me to teach – everything, it just becomes easier.

Interestingly, one of the biggest obstacles holding Eileen back from teaching the ukulele prior to her engagement with Musical Futures was her perceived lack of competence in the instrument (even though she already knew some chords). Here, it would seem that the social reproduction of musicality within the bimusical culture she was exposed to (Irish traditional and Western classical) influenced her assumptions about one needing to 'master' the instrument in order to be able to teach it. This is indicated by her comfortability in playing the recorder as she already had the "musical experience and knowledge" which she deemed to be an essential prerequisite to teaching. As she articulated, Musical Futures brought about sense of enjoyment and what could be described as a personal renaissance of motivation for music learning.

Navigating Tensions: Agency, Identity, Efficacy

Clashes between habitus, capital, and field play out quite frequently in the primary classroom, notably regarding music education. As we have already established, the habitus of the teacher is born from the interaction between their individualised forms of capital and field. Colleagues and students from a host of different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds have the potential to bring rise to tensions of the manner described above. These tensions can influence an individual's perspective of music and music education and its position in the world, relative to their own lives, and can actively reinforce or hinder musical participation and involvement (Wright 2015).

Drawing on the findings, this discussion of the reconciliation of the personal and professional musical lives of teachers has identified and categorised several tensions at play

between aspects of agency, identity, and efficacy, warranting further discussion. Within the context of this project, Musical Futures stimulated a reappraisal of teacher practice, highlighting how these aspects impacted and were impacted by teachers' confidence, engagement, understanding, and implementation of the approach. These three aspects will now be examined in turn.

Agency: Tensions within Accountability

Bourdieu's habitus has the potential of generating a wide range of possible actions; it is the "transforming machine" directing an individual's course of action (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, p.87), or in other words, agency. Thus, to understand how teacher musical experiences and prior music education influence beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of their practice, an exploration of the concept of agency is important. Philpott and Spruce trace discourse of agency and structure to Gidden's (1984) concept of 'structuration' and Priestly *et al*.'s (2015) 'ecological' models (in Wright *et al.* 2021, pp.288-299). While there are strong arguments as to the philosophies which theorise the concept of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse them. For the purposes of this thesis, I consider the concept of agency with specific reference to the sphere of education, thereby referring to agency as the "active contribution [of teachers] shaping their work and its conditions" (Biesta *et al.* 2015, p.624). Teacher agency is the source of frequent tension in educational discourse, in particular in light of increasing accountability, performativity, national curriculum strategies, prescriptive curricula, "oppressive" inspection and testing regimes, governmental circulars, and emphasis on paperwork (Biesta 2010; Priestley *et al.* 2015).

The work of Bourdieu again proves useful in articulating the tensions at play apropos this notion. Habitus is Bourdieu's conceptual tool to reconcile social structure and individual agency (Maton 2014, p.49). Indeed, his alignment of structure and agency exposes the dialectic

between 'externalising the internal' and 'internalising the external' (1977, p.72). That is to say, the environment of the school is internalised in the individual's habitus while the action of the teacher externalises their habitus. Bourdieu *et al.* encompass this phenomenon succinctly when they refer to habitus as "a structured and structuring structure" (2010, p.167). Mahar *et al.* (1990) further elucidate the interplay between structure and agency within Bourdieu's work:

> Bourdieu's contribution is, however, unique, in that the theory of practice which he proposes lies within the context of real lives – using habitus – and at the same time incorporates a theory of domination as existing within social fields. This method, which we argue is most suitable termed 'generative structuralism', provides useful openings to the contemporary social scientist.

(Mahar *et al.* 1990, p.21)

Of course, there are many structures at play when we talk about music education teacher practice. Music education is realised through the curriculum (which is a structure that embodies ideological and cultural traditions and values) within the school (with its own operative structure) with the music itself requiring a structured understanding of its own. These many layers of structure are all reacting and interacting simultaneously. The logic of music education's implementation is only made clear through the practice of the individual teacher. By this, it is meant that the teacher is the physical manifestation of the hierarchy of structures in place in society and education. At the same time, the teacher is a product of structures and an agent with their own motivations and values. The influence of the teacher's musical background as previously mentioned gives them agency to negotiate the curriculum. Thus, there is a constant dichotomous struggle between structure and agency. In saying this, the concept of habitus as a structuring structure for agents in the field is not new within music education (Moore 2012; Burnard *et al.* 2015), but is one that has not been explored within primary generalist practice.

For all teachers in this study, the struggle for agency was evident. For example, when discussing what supports would be useful in implementing Musical Futures, Sally's engagement with external demands of curriculum and assessment was apparent:

> Sally: I love paperwork and I love ticking lists or whatever [laughing]…would you tick off in terms of rhythms, or like their sense of rhythm?...long-term, you know…It would be easier just to tick off, you know, like doing maths, they can do E minor or C.

While this comment indicates Sally's diligence in ensuring the monitored progress of her students, it again highlights the influence of accountability within teaching in what could be described as "performative" practice (Ball 2003; Lawy and Tedder 2012). Moreover, it signals Sally's potential assumptions guided by her musical habitus. Within the Western classical tradition (which she learned growing up), the idea of filling the 'empty mind' is reflected in how she approaches the teaching of music lessons. Probing further into this area later in the interview, her innate interest in the music emerged which seemed to contradict her earlier words about the need for structure and accountability:

> Sally: Yeah, I'd say the teacher would need some autonomy… I just kind of ran with it and got overexcited, but you know, I was kind of going by myself – I kind of wanted to learn it myself and I realised that they can't do this and that I'm the only one here enjoying this! That only happened once [laughing] You do get carried away and you want to keep going with it but I had to rein it in. I was excelling but there as nobody coming with me [laughing].

It would seem that there was a balance to be sought between fulfilling Sally's own need for engaging with the music and creativity, while still maintaining the role of teacher and the accountability that comes with that position. This is compounded by the apparent need for a certain level of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman 1987). The fact that she realises she got caught up in the content of the lessons and raced ahead of what the class were capable of demonstrates the tension at play between structure and agency and triggered for her a reappraisal in what it means to teach music.

Moreover, Alice framed the struggle between the position of music in the primary school with her own interest in the area, making her perception of the attitudes of her colleagues vis-à-vis music clear:

> Alice: Okay, well, people would say, you know, we have to do Drumcondras [20] at the end of the year. Music is never going to be on a Drumcondra, so what's really the point?

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[20] These refer to one type of standardised test, generally completed at the end of the year in the areas of English, Gaeilge, and Mathematics. More information can be found here: https://www.tests.erc.ie/primary-paper-tests

In this comment, Alice specifically mentions standardised tests at primary level which are usually conducted close to the end of each academic year. Though they have no influence on whether students can progress to particular secondary schools such as systems within the UK and Northern Ireland (O'Flynn *et al.* 2022), they only focus on literacy and numeracy or 'core subjects'. While assessment in music education is often thought of as "problematic" (Fautley 2010) historically due to traditional assessment methods analysing a limited range of instrumental skills in performance, its absence within standardised testing schedules such as the 'Drumcondras' above points to music's minimised status within the upper years of primary schooling.

Similarly, the prioritisation of other subjects similarly emerges in Eileen's context. For Eileen, her aspirations for music education were hindered by the constraints of time in a busy school curriculum and school day:

> Eileen: I think that the school day is just exceptionally busy. And sometimes it's hard to have the time to fit everything in. So I think often, while you might have the best intentions in the world, and you'd have the best plans, it's just there are some things that are a little bit out of your control from a time point of view, it's sometimes hard to get what you need to get done done…Whereas other days, if you're caught for time, and you're trying to do your English, Irish and Maths, and then you're trying to prepare all your things for that and then you don't have time to prepare your resources for music, then you might just not teach music, or you might just resort to doing a simple rhythm activity or a song or something like that.

Eileen's agency was impacted here by not only trying to find the time to teach music, but also the priority of other 'core' subjects to be covered during the school day. Interestingly, the suite of Musical Futures resources assisted with preparation in this regard and enabled her to incorporate more music into her teaching day as she could just "click in and it was ready to go".

On this note, our understanding of the sociological drivers of agency is deepened in part due to the pragmatic nature of the Musical Futures approach. During the project, participants' agency (or lack thereof) emerged as a "result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together" (Biesta and Tedder 2007, p.137). For participants, the realisation of agency had been impacted by the school musical

climate and culture, either positively or negatively. For example, management within Eileen's school regarded music highly within the lives of the students which was mirrored in the wider staff's outlook:

> Eileen: The principal of our school has a huge interest in music, she's really musical herself. And she really sees the benefits that music offers pupils. … I remember the principal saying that her main goal was to start every day with a song because she recognised that like music uplifts people. And she just felt that, you know, children would be starting off their day in such a positive way if they were starting off with a song. So I suppose music is a huge part of our school. But it's primarily I think, because the principal has such a strong interest in music... all the teachers collaborate well together, and we're on board to help as much as we can.

In contrast to the situation presented at Alice's school, this comment stresses the importance of effective school leadership in highlighting the importance of music within the school. As "gatekeepers" (O'Flynn *et al*. 2022) managing the operation of student learning, principals have an enormous influence on what is valued and prioritised within the educational concerns of the school.

On this point, Winifred spoke about the positive musical culture present in her school and how it fosters agency:

> Winifred: I'm kind of lucky in my school. Definitely the senior side of our school. We're all teachers who have musical experience. We all play instruments, we're all involved in different groups. And so it just works very well.

If we return to our initial definition of agency as the active contribution of shaping work and its conditions, we contrastingly see in Harriet's school that the school climate presented seems to stifle agency:

> Harriet: And for me, it's always so difficult to get teachers to take on teaching music in the school. I've been trying. I've brought in music programmes before. I've gone in myself into the classroom… We've tried several different approaches…. At the moment, we're using the Folens programme…it's a bit of a crash course, every now and again to colour ten pages in a row or something, you know yourself. That's not teaching music at all, really, at all. So for that reason, I'm kind of saying, look, okay, that programme looks like we're teaching, but we're not really.

It is interesting that Harriet deems the music teaching taking place in her school to merely be a token gesture and it is unclear why this is the case within her context. It would appear that she is battling an uphill slope in trying to firstly get teachers to teach music and secondly to teach it authentically ("colour ten pages in a row").

The feeling of agency was empowering for Alice as she engaged with the project and gave her a renewed motivation despite her earlier comments about the inhibitive school musical climate. Speaking about her aspirations for music education within the school going forward, her strong sense of agency had conferred a renewed purpose on her:

> Alice: Post-COVID, I'd hope that we'd try out a lot more songs and that we would do little melodic ostinatos using the chime bars that are on the Musical Futures. I would hope that the choir would be up and running again and we will be able to base so much work on songs, doing little harmonies with the C, E, G, and D, F#, A, getting some of the band members involved. I see so much you could include from Musical Futures, if you were starting from scratch in school and music. You don't have to even have music established, it's got a huge amount of benefits. And the children will recognise the songs. You don't have to be able to sing them all. It's like a karaoke is there for you waiting, you know? So it's really got a lot of potential for primary schools.

The findings highlight how tensions surrounding agency are triggered from a variety of sources, including curriculum, time constraints, and musical climate. Despite these tensions, agency is key driver in influencing practice among teachers. Tracing the structural and agential factors impacting the participating teachers' practice before and after engagement with Musical Futures demonstrates the potential for the approach in the enhancement of agency.

Musical Identity

Issues of teacher identity are deeply intertwined with practice. National and international literature is substantial in this area of study (Russell 1996; Wenger 1999; Korthagen 2004; Sugrue 2004; Alsup 2006; Sammons *et al.* 2007; Deegan 2008; Isbell 2008; Haniford 2010; Jenkins 2011; Freer and Bennett 2012; Bates *et al.* 2014; Kenny *et al.* 2015; Chua and Welch 2020; Tucker and Powell 2021; Yang 2021; Paananen 2022). Additionally, there is no scarcity of research into identity specifically in music education (Hargreaves *et al.* 2002; Hargreaves and Marshall 2003; Austin *et al.* 2010; Lamont 2011; Natale-Abramo 2014).We know that identity is contextually, relationally and emotionally-bound (Rodgers and Scott 2008, pp.733-737), and undergoes constant shifts through socialisation with others (Isbell 2008). Thus, it is shaped by habitus, field, and capital.

Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald (2002, p.5) posit that "the concept of musical identity

enables us to look at the widespread and varied interactions between music and the individual".

They use two terms to delineate the variation in identity projections. Identity in Music (IIM) is

> the conceptualisation of self based on the cultural or social roles applied in music [including] the general roles of performers, composers, and teachers as well as specific details, such as instrument played or music preference.

<div align="right">(Kelly-McHale 2013, p.198)</div>

This is distinct from Music in Identity (MII) which denotes

> the result of the process of using music to develop identity. This category positions music as an important element in the development of self-concept - how we define ourselves in terms of context or domain and self-esteem - the evaluative measure that individuals place on themselves.

<div align="right">(ibid. p.199)</div>

For teachers who have a clear sense of MII, it is logical that they will have a corresponding IIM as one needs to identify the role of music in their wider identity before they can interpret what that specific musical identity is. Such identities shape teacher values and beliefs with regard to music, as well as their "implicit views of the nature of music in the school" (Hargreaves *et al.* 2007, p.667) and can act as manifestations of "possible selves" (Creech *et al.* 2020).

David's identity as a music teacher is reflected in his own non-formal music background, musical identity, tastes, and what he enjoys from music personally:

> David: …that's the one thing that I find as a teacher that I try my best to come up with a broad range of songs for the boys to learn. But at the same time, with the songs that I do enjoy myself. They're huge fans of Oasis now, you know? [laughing]…they feel really cool when they learn songs that you know, their parents, they go home and say, Oh, I learned 'Live Forever' from Oasis or something like that,. They're buzzing going home. Yeah, I would definitely draw on my own musical tastes and interests as much as I can anyway.

In this comment, it is evident that David considers a broad range of repertoire that both he and the children will enjoy. When the children relate to his musical tastes, he relishes in them "buzzing going home". His hope for his students is that he can use Musical Futures approaches to inspire them to pursue musical endeavours as they go forward in life, signalling a desire to instil a sense of MII:

> David: I think an initiative like Musical Futures sounds great to give them the enjoyment and

the willingness to keep music on in their life, and hopefully then when they get into the second level, or possibly even third level that they might have that interest going.

Alice, drawing from her own strong sense of IIM similarly commented on fostering MII within her school and the struggles of this concerning the wider school musical climate:

> Alice: Every child has the ability, that's my opinion. So I wanted every child to have access to music once they left primary school in our school. I also brought in music days so music could be seen as a fun and acceptable thing, not just something for somebody who's playing music every now and again, it's for everybody. I wouldn't consider myself a professional musician, but just some teachers feel that music is only for people who are able to play something or able to sing something but that's not the way I feel.

Alice's identity was not impacted by attrition within her teaching context. Indeed, it would seem to spur her on further to foster MII among the students in her school. Teachers like David and Alice who had a clear IIM and sense of MII were able to situate such identities in relation to agential and efficacious factors. For example, Eileen was acutely aware that her IIM was not that of a ukulele-player and worried that her ability to teach this instrument would be impeded by this. However, informal learning pedagogies relieved some of the pressure on her to know it all and 'lead from the front' (Wiggins 1999) for her students and enabled her to give it a go, despite her aforementioned concerns:

> Eileen: It was always on the back of my mind to learn the ukulele myself and to implement it with a class, but I was never confident enough to give it a go. There was always something kind of holding me back a little bit. Whereas now it would be the one thing that I would absolutely love to keep doing every single year no matter what class I had, within reason, but I wouldn't necessarily have to do it with sixth class. I'd be very comfortable teaching it to younger students. So that is something that, I suppose is really positive for me because I was very slow to introduce a new musical instrument that I wasn't very familiar with to a class. I was always quite comfortable teaching music. And I feel that I would have picked up a good few techniques. I think I mentioned in a previous interview that my specialism is in music education, and I would have observed music teachers teach in the States. So I would have picked up a lot of strategies from them. But I think as I alluded to earlier, it's just I'm so much more confident and comfortable teaching because you have this really good resource supporting you so my time doesn't have to go into making the resource or figuring out what I need to teach or which chords to do next, because everything is there.

It would appear that Eileen's formal experiences in music education have created a set of assumptions and ingrained, 'accepted' musical practices for her about music education whereby one needs to be explicitly shown and taught how to play an instrument before they can themselves teach it. This presents a conflict for her as she deems herself to be musical yet is inhibited by this assumption in exploring a new area of music with her class. It could be argued

that there is a connection here between her musical habitus and the reluctance to learn something new in front of her students. This connection is one that has been explored in recent research of 'boundary crossers' who traverse the popular-classical divide, highlighting how classical training can hinder popular music creation and performance (see Hill 2021). Eileen's experience in the project was so positive then perhaps because Musical Futures enabled her to uncover a possible 'musical self' as the environment supported the "exploration of past and present musical experiences as performers, creators, or listeners" (Creech, Varvarigou and Hallam 2020).

Muireann's identity did not align with that of a music educator. She professed herself that she was not musical and couldn't sing and that the prospect of teaching music lessons was daunting for her. For Muireann, any aspect of her musical identity that she did speak about resonated strongly with the perpetuation of Irish culture and heritage, passing on old Irish songs to her students that she herself learned as a student. When asked what she felt were the most important parts of a music curriculum, she said:

> Muireann: God, I dunno....the most important part of the music curriculum. Well, I'd love to be able to belt out a few songs at the end of it. That probably isn't what most teachers would think, but I always say, you know, when you're adults, you're having an old sing-song, at least you could sing an old song or two, you know?

Guided by her habitus, Muireann's comment here highlights how she assumes music is valued just for its entertainment purposes, indicating that it is not for everyone to be musical. Interestingly, Muireann, who didn't consider herself as being musical, attributed this to the fact that she believed she didn't have a good singing voice. As singing is such a major perceived component of the primary music curriculum, it is logical that she would assume that to be able to teach music, you need to be able to sing. This resonated with Alice's earlier comments about her perceptions of other staff member's attitudes towards music. Such negative connotations ascribed to music education stem from wider ideological influences which will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

Efficacy: 'Play(ing) to your Strengths'

The third tension relates to teacher efficacy, which is the belief in one's ability to organise and carry out a certain task (Bandura 1997). Efficacy can work to promote or inhibit the manifestation of music education, contingent on the capital enjoyed by an individual and relative to their habitus and position in the field. In generalist practice, efficacy impacts, inter alia, pedagogical strategies employed, quality of student feedback, time devoted to instruction, feelings of stress, teacher expectations, as well as the promotion of positive student beliefs and self-efficacy (Gibson and Dembo 1984; Parkay *et al.* 1988; Tschannen-Moran *et al.* 1998; Goddard *et al.* 2000; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001).

Since Bandura's work, international research has grown to look at teacher self-efficacy in a variety of domains, including music education, much of which has already been discussed in Chapters One and Three (Hennessy 2000; Seddon and Biasutti 2008; Hallam *et al.* 2009a; Russell-Bowie 2009; de Vries 2013; Garvis 2013; Zelenak 2020; Regier 2021). As such, this issue is not unique to the study and has been reported extensively in international literature.

Efficacious beliefs varied across the data. Harriet captured a prevailing problem regarding teacher efficacy within primary generalist practice in her school:

> Harriet: Well, first of all, you see, I think the biggest problem, teachers don't have confidence in their own ability to teach. Because it's an area of expertise, they will always look for somebody to support them. They don't like to be left alone. And if they're left alone to teach music, they're going to teach a song. That's it. That's as far as it's going to go.

From the comments above regarding expertise, we can see that the area of efficacy is inextricably linked to knowledge, competency, and confidence. Several teachers also noted this link with regard to their practice and the practice of other teachers:

> Eileen: some teachers definitely do not feel confident in teaching music whereas I do feel confident teaching music because I suppose I do have a background in music and I understand the basic theory and things like that and I like it…I would say the majority of teachers in my school feel that they find teaching music quite daunting because they don't have the knowledge of the theory and things like that.

> Harriet: it's very important to have someone in the school who understands music and who's motivated and wants the school to have music and is interested and wants everybody to have the opportunity. The support to the teacher to feel you can do it, everyone can do this, you're able to do it.

> Winifred: But having a musical knowledge, being able to read music, being able to understand rhythm and tempo and everything helps hugely in the classroom, because I think it's very hard if you haven't musical knowledge to come in and teach music or to follow the music curriculum in schools. It's very difficult if you're if you don't have the prior knowledge going in to teach them.

Across all these teachers' comments, the desire to exhibit efficacy as a music educator is clear and feeling efficacious was explicitly linked with having strong musical knowledge and skills. Thus, it could be argued, a teacher's efficacy, as exhibited by the teachers in the project can have a distinct influence on their practice. David's confidence in his ability to teach music (which he said is his favourite part of the curriculum to teach) sees him timetabling it multiple times a week and even working with older students after school to teach guitar. Sally similarly teaches music after school and takes another teacher's music lessons for her during the school day while that teacher covers her art lessons, explaining how they are "playing to each other's strengths".

For teachers who hold high self-efficacy in their ability to teach music, the idea of 'playing to your strengths' appears to be commonplace. Both Winifred and Harriet mentioned how their teacher colleagues also swap their classes based on what they are confident in teaching. Winifred likens this situation to her personal experience:

> Winifred: I'm not a footballer. I've never ever kicked a ball in my life. So if I've been told in the school that I have to, like, you know, get involved with the football team I'd be freaking out because I just don't have that knowledge… I would avoid football because I don't play football…I think it's the same in music, they don't play an instrument, or they may not sing so they think, oh, I can't do music. So they just avoid it. They mightn't teach it at all, or they just sing a song there for Irish or sing a song, whatever. And they consider that music done.

Indeed, she goes on to describe the paradoxical scenario where a teacher who may not hold high efficacy in relation to music education being less likely to teach music and attend CPD in the area, thereby further decreasing their chances of developing efficacy. We know from the literature that enactive mastery experiences are one of the ways that contribute to the development of efficacy (Bandura 1997). Therefore, absence of opportunities to develop efficacy means a negative efficacy-cycle can prevail. For teachers such as Muireann, who do not regard themselves as having high self-efficacy regarding music teaching, Musical Futures provided a "foolproof" way of generating these mastery experiences and increased her

confidence in her ability to teach music.

Discussion

From the findings, it is clear that there is considerable variance in the musical backgrounds and experiences of teachers. This variance provides much material to interpret and provides a baseline of sorts from which to analyse to what extent beliefs about music education and musical ability can be affected using non-formal teaching and learning approaches.

Teachers' musical experiences ranged in terms of exposure (the amount of music education they experienced over the course of their lifetime), format (what form this education took), extent (the level to which their education reached), valence (the perceived positive or negative nature of these experiences) and engagement (their current involvement in music personally). For some teachers, such as Sally, Winifred and Harriet, their musical experience was significant across all these elements in both classical and traditional genres. For others such as Alice and Eileen, their experience was significant in classical and traditional genres respectively. David's case was unique in this study in that he only became exposed to music in secondary school but continued his interest in the area to the present day, primarily in the popular music genre. In contrast, Muireann was exposed to traditional music from a young age but seems to have not maintained this musical involvement through to her adult life, either due to negative musical experiences (as indicated in her pre-interview) or the format these experiences took.

Why is it important to understand these musical experiences? We know from Bourdieu's tools of field, capital, and habitus, that practice is a product of the interaction between these elements. Consequently, understanding the translation from personal musical experiences to classroom practice and vice versa is important. It could be argued that the amount of capital enjoyed by an individual is a predictor for their capacity for the facilitation of meaningful music education practices and in turn, student experience and attitudes towards music. Interestingly

in their pre-interviews, all of the teachers who presented extensive musical backgrounds and formal music education talked about the development of their musical skills outside of the formal education system, either in private music lessons, group music lessons, or informal learning through sessions or gigs. Overall, these experiences seemed to have had the strongest influence on their musical identities. Being familiar with these kinds of music educational experiences can create assumptions and/or biases about music education and its potential in primary school. For example, there appears to be an underlying assumption that music education in primary school cannot develop the types of skills that extra-curricular music learning can (this will be discussed further in Chapter Nine). The fact that each teacher participated in this project despite knowing the impact of their involvement on their time and practice indicated a willingness on their part to reflect on their musical habitus and identify ways to enhance their music education practice.

Shulman (1987) conceptualised teacher knowledge into three distinct components: subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge. However, music education is unique in that in involves knowledge of educational concepts and pedagogies, but also knowledge of music itself. Cutietta (2007, p.13) notes the unique and subject-specific challenges of creating quality music educators: "music education is a unique discipline in higher education. First, we must develop a knowledge base and two separate skill sets: that of a musician and a teacher". This can lead student teachers to harbour feelings of inadequacy and a lack of confidence in teaching music, believing that there are specialist skills in music distinct from other areas of the curriculum (Hennessy 2000, p.188). In Hennessy's research, these "fixed attitudes" (ibid., p.191) were compounded for generalist teachers on placement in primary schools. The student teachers involved identified music as being 'very technical' and worried about the concept of 'teacher as performer' which was seen to be attached to music more so than any other subject. Anxiety to perform, coupled with the notion that musical subject knowledge correlates to the development of confidence, results in a

"mismatch…between students' prior experience and understanding, and what current practice proposes" (ibid., p.192). For several teachers, including Sally, music pedagogy had become static and she felt she was stuck in a rut of sorts (Ross 1995) as she had not had the opportunity to expand her knowledge base.

Compounded by conflicts of agency and efficacy, it is often difficult for teachers who have an extensive musical background and identity to teach music in the manner they would like. Agency can be stifled through curricula and school policy (as Sally identified), resources (Eileen), and school climate (Alice), while efficacy can be hindered through lack of CPD opportunities (Winifred) and school climate (Alice).

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the role of teachers' musical backgrounds and experiences and the impact of these on their practice. Just as Bourdieu's concept of habitus is the reflexive 'structuring structure', this chapter title tries to unpack the duality of teacher habitus being the nexus of practice and the driving force underpinning practice. It has situated teachers' conceptualisations of self against the tensions at play between issues of agency, identity, and efficacy using habitus as a useful lens to interpret how these elements mediate and are mediated by practice; they are inextricable from how music is taught and thus their exploration is necessary and critical in establishing how beliefs may change, which will be the subject of further discussion in Chapter Nine. The primary focus of this chapter has been on the pre-existing experiences and beliefs held by the teachers as music educators within this study using Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus to visualise and explain how teacher practice is the manifestation of these interacting elements. The next chapter will expand our focus and look at wider classroom dynamics and how informal learning has brought about shifts in the realisation of music education for both teacher and student.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INFORMAL LEARNING AND NON-FORMAL TEACHING: REAPPRAISING MUSIC EDUCATION

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the findings from the wider lens of the classroom, as well as the students' perspectives. Returning to some of the parameters defining informal and non-formal learning (see Figure 1, Chapter Two), this chapter examines the classroom dynamics as they shifted in response to engagement with Musical Futures, with particular attention given to the ownership of learning and the intentionality of the music lesson. It also outlines changes in assessment practices as well as exploring the musical and extra-musical development of students through their participation in the research.

Negotiating the Space and Place of Music

Musical Futures generally resonated with the participating teachers as an effective approach to music education. Many teachers including, Sally, David, Harriet, and Eileen identified that its implementation in their particular teaching contexts announced a departure from their existing musical practice, implying that informal learning pedagogies were relatively new. From this lack of familiarity, the equivocality of what it means to 'do music' threw up questions about its space and place within the school, as will be discussed in this chapter from both teacher and student perspectives. By space, I mean the physical classroom space, as well as the time to include music education within the classroom. These give rise to concerns of the place of music, which hereafter refers to the position of music within the broader curriculum, incorporating elements such as musical attitudes, purposes of music education, assessment, and facilitation of the student voice.

As an example, David and Winifred were of the view that for informal learning to occur, the teacher needs to have some existing musical knowledge to tacitly guide students' musical progress, arguing that such musical intuition and set of musical problem-solving skills is distinct from other general pedagogical approaches. Thus, they believed that existing musical backgrounds and experiences presuppose the ability of a teacher to facilitate informal practices.

Conversely, Alice, Harriet, and Eileen believed that informal learning opened up the process of musical exploration, relieving the teacher of some pressure to know it all. Regardless of their beliefs as to the necessity of musical knowledge in the facilitation of informal learning, it would appear that the teachers were enabled to critically reflect on the space and place of music within their settings.

Mindful of the above, discussion will now turn to examine to what extent can non-formal teaching and informal learning pedagogies using Musical Futures approaches facilitate changes in teacher beliefs and practice. This is one of the embedded questions underpinning the thesis and generated several themes in the data. Findings generated under this embedded question include: the purpose of music education; fostering independence; ownership over learning; intentionality of music lessons; and assessment in music. Each theme will now be examined in relation to the facilitation of shifting beliefs surrounding music education.

Place and Purpose of Music Education

For most of the teachers in the study, enjoyment emerged as one of the most important aspects of the music curriculum. Specifically, that the children were enjoying themselves in a hands-on manner. Unpacking this further with the teachers revealed their beliefs about the purposes of music and music education within the primary classroom. When it comes to negotiating the place of music, discussions of the integrated value of music within broader agenda initially arose quite strongly, as distinct from the intrinsic value of music in and of itself. This resonates with other investigations into the perceived purposes of music education (Gubbins 2021). In other words, music was generally seen as an aid to other aspects of the holistic development of the child.

For example, the role of music within the classroom was clear for Harriet as she identified how music assists with other areas of the curriculum and children's growth, including wellbeing and fine-motor skill development. At the same time however, she describes a

paradoxical situation that despite teachers teaching music lessons, children are not really learning music:

> Harriet: …the actual music itself [pause] the teachers will teach a song, or they'll play music or something like that. There's no real music education taking place to be honest with you, you know, in the classroom, I suppose as part of the curriculum. Yeah, you know, we have a lot of it in the school. We've a load of creativity, we've a lot of that. And yeah, the children get great opportunities but in the classroom, the teacher themselves, they need a programme.

Ross (1995, p.185) identifies such "pseudo arts teaching" as a prevailing problem in arts and music education. In Harriet's school, it would appear that despite an awareness of this issue, no resolution had, as yet, been reached. As she participated further in the project and spoke about her general impressions of non-formal teaching approaches, Musical Futures seemed to have demonstrated some promise in this regard:

> Harriet: The teachers, they don't know how to start with the serious elements. They don't want to start. And then if they're starting negatively, the children are going to tune out. So I think … Musical Futures flips it over.

Here, Harriet suggests the potential of non-formal teaching approaches in starting the process of teaching music in a positive manner and thus teaching music in music education lessons.

Not unlike Harriet's attribution of music's purpose to other areas of school, in Alice's practice, music can be integrated across the curriculum to support less confident students:

> Alice: I find that sometimes you can get a lot out of children who might be a little bit shy. The creative subject brings out something in those children that they feel less embarrassed, because maybe everybody is at that point….I often find…integrating music…you're going to get a lot more out of children. It's a great starting point, as well as being a whole subject in itself. So I always try to encourage maybe the quieter children that I see. You know, they can have some amazing ideas that some of the more established musicians can't so that's what I'm trying to do.

From the two classroom observations conducted in Alice's classroom, it was clear to see all students being given an opportunity to contribute in a musical way to the lesson. Alice integrated technology for certain students with learning needs to arrange a body percussion composition to great effect. They used laptops to compose a short rhythmic idea on a beat grid that I created with Alice's input and drawn from the online Musical Futures resources (see Appendix M). Talking informally with one such student in her class myself, they were able to

use the grid to scaffold their explanation of their composition to me. In this way, that child was able to authentically participate in the music lesson.

As music leaders in their respective schools, both Alice and Harriet were aware of the value of music in the life of the child and the importance of teaching music musically. In both cases, Musical Futures helped open up that process to students and the wider school community.

On the same token, a change was evident in Eileen's practice regarding the purpose of music education to foster lifelong musicianship. Speaking about her wishes for her students as they move on to secondary school, she said:

> Eileen: I think that it would be fantastic to hopefully equip them with the ability to play an instrument, and hopefully, it might encourage children to continue with it in secondary school. I'm teaching sixth class, and so it'd be great if they could continue playing the ukulele or maybe they might move on to the guitar or something else that. They might pick up another instrument, but it would be a lovely skill for them that might develop into a lifelong interest, hopefully for some of the pupils.

Similarly, this aspiration for David's students through his music lessons was also apparent as he hoped they might choose music as an area of study at secondary and even third level. For both of these teachers, their purpose of music education was to create musicians and develop the necessary skills to facilitate this process, subject to their students' ages and stages of development.

Fostering Independence

Cognisant that one of the underlying principles of the Musical Futures approach is that students learn from and with each other (see Chapter Two), the theme of fostering independence was identified from several teacher interviews. At a practical level, Sally's students gradually became more conscientious in maintaining and tuning their instruments.

> Sally: They got better as you know, they had total responsibility for their ukulele and of tuning it or whatever. They minded them very, very well. You know, getting that sense of responsibility. And even the memory - trying to remember what number you were - that took a while [laughing]. But they got into it.

On a more interpersonal level for Eileen, a significant shift in the classroom dynamic occurred. She was surprised at how impactful allowing the students to take more control of the

lesson was.

> Eileen:. I think I was able to put a lot back on the kids. So I would ask them a lot, like, you know, how do I do this?…I was really focused on…getting the kids involved as much as possible…It's funny, it was a little bit strange, at first, and you kind of forget that the kids are so well able, once you give them the opportunity…I realised how capable they were it just became a lot easier for me to continue doing that so it was great. So it wasn't really me leading the learning, they were leading the lesson as such. It was nice as well because I had a particularly quiet class…what was really nice was one child might say something and another child would pipe in and add to what they were seeing… it's really rewarding as well to see how much they know, and how much they enjoy it. So rather than you being the one always talking at them, just letting them speak and have a voice it is really rewarding. It was really lovely.

In this comment, the emergence of peer learning is noteworthy ("another child would pipe in and add to what they were seeing") as it signals a noticed change in classroom interactions, particularly on the part of the student. Eileen praised the Musical Futures resources in facilitating this shift from directed to more independent learning within the classroom environment:

> I'm so much more confident and comfortable teaching because you have this really good resource supporting you so my time doesn't have to go into making the resource or figuring out what I need to teach or which chords to do next, because everything is there. So it has put the focus on my actual teaching and my strategies and definitely putting the onus on the children for sure that I really found that once I gave the children the opportunity, then I realised that they're so capable, and that I need to do that more and possibly not just in music, but give them the opportunities to lead the lesson. I suppose the territory is a little bit uncertain when they do that, but it's just so rewarding to how much they've picked up and how competent they are when you give them the opportunity and it's lovely for the kids to learn from each other in that kind of an environment as well.

Having initially signalled her concerns in teaching the ukulele when she was about to begin the project, the idea of relinquishing control was daunting as she feared it might lead to behavioural issues and that the lessons wouldn't go smoothly. However, it is clear from the segment of her post-interview above that once Eileen gave responsibilities to the students, she saw the beneficial effects in terms of independent learning and musical opportunity, empowering her to continue. It is interesting that it took participation in the project for Eileen to notice her students' 'capability', which was perhaps undiscovered due to their quiet nature as she mentioned previously. Marking a significant change in her practice towards a more constructivist approach to learning, this has implications generally for how teachers manage and direct the music lesson in a way that promotes student independence.

A similar process occurred for Winifred, in which the increase in student independence was matched by the relaxation of her own expectations to be the 'expert':

> Winifred: I think I kind of managed to let myself go with it too…No I left them off themselves. I actually think the Musical Futures lessons very much became the children were leading the learning, you know? Because I think they realised that we were all learning together and I wasn't an expert in in the area of ukulele. Now, I would be good at music, but they knew that I didn't know it, which I think was huge for them, because they felt they were showing off and they were the ones teaching me. And I learned a lot from them and they learned a lot from me.

Placing herself in the position of student alongside her pupils gave Winifred an appreciation of what it is like to learn again. David too came to a realisation that his students would appreciate the process of becoming a musician much more if they had an active role in leading the learning. When asked if participation in the project changed how he understood music education, he said:

> David: Yeah. I suppose it did. Like in terms of primary schools, and the music curriculum, it definitely shaped my thinking in kind of getting the children more involved. Like I said in my reflection, getting them more involved in the music making process, as opposed to me standing up at the top playing the guitar, and them, you know, rote learning the song and the lyrics - which is great, I mean, of course, they have to do that as well - but getting them to actually take ownership of the song and being able to take part in it and actually realise like…they just take it for granted that I go up and just play away, but when they have to do it themselves, they realise there's a lot to it but it can be learned. So, I suppose, giving the children more ownership and being able to use simple strategies like the start and stop signal.

In this comment, it would appear that where David's practice had been previously marked by him as the 'expert', his role has now changed to one that encourages students to become active agents in "the music making process". This not only grants the students increased independence, but a greater awareness of the work and effort involved in learning an instrument.

Alice shared an interesting story about her class on this theme:

> Alice: I came in one day after break…I said what's going on here? [They said] oh, we're doing our music. Before they wouldn't really have participated in music outside of just the curricular area. Whereas now they're trying out these beats at lunchtime. I could have gone ballistic maybe but didn't [laughing]. I said, right, it's Musical Futures. I was delighted really. And then one of the adults who was taking care of them said I couldn't stop them and I said it's Musical Futures, it's ok, it's fine. Hopefully it'll go around the school as well.

This speaks volumes about how motivated the students were that they were continuing their music lessons outside of instructional time and while the teacher wasn't there.

It is clear from the findings that while fostering student independence in the music

lesson sometimes initially presented as a challenge for teachers, committing to it brought about positive changes in students' musical experiences. The fact that teachers picked up on these benefits may motivate them to continue relinquishing control and increasing independence in this manner.

Ownership of Learning

In a similar fashion, engaging with informal learning pedagogies raised questions about the nature of the ownership of learning within the classroom context (Folkestad 2006; Isbell 2018). Findings from this research resonated strongly with those of Moore's (2019) study that Musical Futures approaches proliferated democratic and inclusive learning experiences. Many teachers in their pre-interviews identified that their students being "actively engaged" in music lessons was one of the most important elements in a music lesson. Post-participation in the project, Eileen speaks of a reimagined ownership of the learning process with her students, where active engagement on the part of the student was clear:

> Researcher: Would you say that Musical Futures had a positive impact on their transferable skills?
>
> Eileen: I think, I suppose definitely the fact that they were helping each other. I think for me, as I said, they were such a quiet class, that it really helped me encourage them to talk more and to feel more comfortable to contribute to discussions, and I think, you know, really reiterate to them that like what they were saying was really valuable and, as you said, I was actually learning from their responses. So I think definitely they exceeded my expectations in that regard. Their confidence, for sure, definitely improved or increased. Listening, concentrating, their engagement. And I think as well, I didn't expect so many students to want to continue playing the ukulele.

It would appear that Eileen realised her students' capabilities which had been initially masked by their quiet nature. The benefits arising from allowing students to take ownership of the learning were manifold, not only in terms of improvements in their musical skills, but also extra-musically.

One of the key learning moments for David was the potential benefits derived from student ownership. His entire approach shifted from him being a 'sage on the stage' to allowing the students gain a deeper appreciation of musicianship through active engagement in music

making:

> Researcher: Has the Musical Futures approach changed your practice in any way?
>
> David: Yeah. I suppose it did. Like in terms of primary schools, and the music curriculum, it definitely shaped my thinking in kind of getting the children more involved. Like I said, in my reflection, getting them more involved in the music making process, as opposed to me standing up at the top playing the guitar, and them, you know, rote learning the song and the lyrics - which is great, I mean, of course, they have to do that as well. But getting them to actually take ownership of the song and being able to take part in it and actually realise like - they just take it for granted that I go up and just play away, but when they have to do it themselves, they realise there's a lot to it but it can be learned. So, I suppose, giving the children more ownership and being able to use simple strategies like the start and stop signal.

The reconceptualization of the relationship between teacher and student was a thread also running through Harriet's interview. She describes a positive new classroom dynamic that was created through the engagement of her and her colleague in non-formal teaching, thereby influencing both the student and teacher experience in a mutually beneficial way:

> Harriet: I think just the success that the children experienced from it gives the teacher more confidence and makes the teacher feel more successful in her approach as well. So it's a two way thing really. It's like a new relationship between the teacher and the students - like a shared experience. It's new and they're doing it together and they're learning together.

Winifred summed up these shifts in ownership succinctly:

> Winifred: …it's a programme where everyone has the opportunity to experience success, whether you're a musician or not beforehand is irrelevant, because it's all about the collaborative learning process and learning together.

Indeed, the focus on collaborative music making emerges strongly in all of these teachers' practices, due to the relinquishing of control and the transfer of ownership of the learning to the student. For many of the teachers, the realisation that students were more capable musically than they had initially imagined signalled the considerable positive influence of informal approaches on teaching and learning.

Intentionality

Running through the teacher comments from the last three themes above, the intentionality of the lessons is one that has not yet been addressed. The intentionality of the lesson refers to what the mind is directed towards during the learning (Folkestad 2006). In informal learning situations, "the activity steers the way of working/playing/composing" (ibid. p.142). For many

teachers, a shift in musical activity from a pedagogical-framing to a musical-framing (Saar 1999) took place, with the focus on playing and making music in the latter and the focus on learning how to play and the contextualisation of knowledge in the former.

This was witnessed in Eileen and David's comments about music lessons becoming about fostering a lifelong interest in music and facilitating musicianship. It was also apparent in how Winifred let herself go and placed herself in the position of student alongside her pupils when learning the ukulele. This change in the orientation of the mind during the music lesson marks a significant reappraisal of practice.

Assessment

> Assessment is about building a picture over time of a child's progress and/or achievement in learning across the *Primary School Curriculum*. Information about **how** the child learns (the learning process) as well as **what** the child learns (the products of learning) shapes the picture.

> (NCCA 2007)

Building on the increased ownership of students in the learning process, assessment in music education practices underwent parallel shifts. In previous Musical Futures research, Green (2008) identified that an area for further investigation was how teachers utilised assessment methods while implementing the approach, suggesting that they might be continuing to draw on existing strategies in their practice. From an Australian perspective, Wilson (2019) made some strides in this area by examining the impact that whole school assessment policies have, and the considerable influence measurable performance indicators have on a school's musical education programme in their effort to remain competitive. However, competitiveness in primary schooling in Ireland is not of major concern. Wilson does go on to argue how Musical Futures approaches challenge this view, postulating that tacit, formative assessment strategies are the largest part of assessment used in MF lessons. Within this study, there is inherent potential to contribute to international discussion on assessment using Musical Futures

approaches.

In the interview data, most teachers identified that they had initially focused on teacher-led, summative forms of assessment, including questioning and teacher-based tasks and tests (NCCA 2007, p.13). From the literature, Swanwick (1999, p.84) criticises such methods and argues that assessment in music should align with the subject itself, reflecting the "rich layers of musical experience [and taking into account] what pupils are *doing* and what they are *learning*". For example, written tasks do not reflect a musical activity and he favours a strategy that is more natural to the act of music making. Fautley (2010) has similar reservations about focusing predominantly on summative forms of assessment which tend to focus on looking back on past achievement rather than looking forward. David addresses this notion in his interview, commenting on the use of worksheets in the music lesson:

> David: I'm not dissing any of the resources out in the books, but I just generally don't use them. I find that like, they're really engaged and enjoying it when I'm playing the guitar and they're getting stuck in. Whereas if I gave them a sheet from a book to, you know, work on such a stave, or something like that, or the notes, they just...I don't know if that's the thing about the literacy, whether the literacy element of it all is so boring. But I think it's more like that, I don't know, they mightn't get the same enjoyment out of it when they're using worksheets and things like that, you know what I mean?

Harriet has similar concerns about using workbooks for music lessons, noting the challenges associated with a prescribed set of activities for teachers who may have limited understanding of musical theory. It would appear that the pressure to get the book 'done' during the year outweighs the opportunity to engage in music making that would be appropriate for both teacher and student:

> Harriet: …we use 'The Right Note'. Okay [pause] Can I say it's working? It's working on the junior side, we'll say from juniors to second. After that, it all goes to pot [laughing]. All I can say really, to be honest. It's easy for them…up to second class. But third to sixth, the theory gets more difficult, and all of that, and the teachers, they look at it, and they just avoid it to be honest with you. They don't feel they have the confidence to deliver it. It's something that they kind of do on a Friday at the end of a month, a crash course. They'll colour 10 pages at a time, you know?

Changes in the teaching approach and lesson content understandably brought about changes in how student learning was assessed. Through their engagement in non-formal

teaching, teachers' ideas of assessment in music education opened up to include more of a variety of assessments, including student-led forms of assessment. Winifred and Alice noted how they used technology (iPads and laptops) to record, notate, and listen back to compositions. Sally mentioned seeing potential in using the Musical Futures resources to create checklists and rubrics. From classroom observations of Eileen's lessons, peer-assessment and self-assessment strategies were witnessed despite the fact that she noted that teacher observation and notes were her primary assessment tools. It is unclear whether she didn't consider these as genuine assessment strategies or forgot that she was including them routinely in her practice. From classroom observations for example, she encouraged the class to gauge where their own playing was at to see if they were able to challenge themselves with the full chord fingering rather than the easy version. She also provided easy and more difficult strumming patterns and invited the children to choose which pattern to follow depending on what they felt they would be able for themselves. She praised the resources, commenting on the fact that they were so visual taking the focus from the teacher having to demonstrate, thereby freeing the teacher to go around the room and assist struggling students:

> Eileen: …in terms of assessing, it definitely helps so much that the programme is doing the work and you're able to see what the kids are doing. That really is what was so helpful - that you're not the one trying to show them the chord and they can't even see your fingers, where they are and things like that and you're trying to focus on doing it yourself that when it's there on the screen, you're able to completely have all of your attention on the kids and how they're engaging with it.

Winifred's assessment appeared to occur quite organically, in response to challenges arising from the musical task. This reactive and intervention-based style of assessment combined peer and teacher methods, with the effect of enhancing student competencies, aural and negotiation skills, as well as fostering attitudes of independence:

> Winifred: Well, yeah, they used to help each other. So if I was up at the top of the room and we were doing a chord. And one of the girls used to say this all the time, like if the person beside her was doing the wrong chord, it used to get to her that, you know, she couldn't do the right one. So I used to put up say, two chords on the board and said, right, we're learning these ones now, we're looking over them. Work with your partner, you have two or three minutes to actually practice it, make sure you get it right. So they'd be helping each other. One person might know it and one person mightn't. But then when they were demonstrating it to me, two of them would be playing it back. And I'd say, Oh, yes, that's correct, or whatever. It was a quicker way than going around to each person individually, to see if they

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were getting it right or wrong. And so they'd play in groups of twos, threes, or whatever. And, yeah, it was the same with the chord progressions. Like I'd put up different ones on the board and say, right, you can practice them now for a few minutes, then you're gonna perform them. They'd perform them then in groups of fours - their pods like - and I was able to kind of assess then do they have the chords or do they not have the chords? Do I need to go over the strumming patterns, or the chords?

Alice's assessment practices significantly changed. Indeed, she sometimes did not intervene with assessment methods while the students were carrying out a musical activity, instead trusting that the learning was taking place regardless of her input (Philpott and Spruce 2012).

Alice: It was more child-based, whereas before, if I was doing it, it would have been all teacher-led. But I didn't need to have as much input. I didn't need to have as much because there was such a foundation laid with the Musical Futures so I thought definitely from my point of view, it's very effective.

Across all teacher data, the range of assessment methods expanded to include a wider range and style, indicating a change in the function and position of assessment within music teaching and learning.

The Student Experience and Voice

Discussion in the previous section about ownership over learning segues appropriately into exploring the student experience of Musical Futures as a teaching and learning approach. It would be remiss not to include the student voice within the teaching and learning process in this project, when the facilitation of positive musical experiences is at the heart of everything teachers do as music educators. This is in response to the embedded question: to what extent can non-formal teaching and learning pedagogies using Musical Futures approaches enhance music learning and pupil engagement in the primary classroom? Under this question, the themes were categorised as follows: experiencing success; development of musical skills; development of extra-musical skills; and barriers, challenges, and obstacles to music education.

Experiencing Success and Noticing Progress

> I mean, I learned that my fingers are capable of more than I thought they are.
>
> (Deepak, 6th class pupil)

The theme of experiencing success ran through both the teacher interviews and student focus group data. The successes experienced by students were powerful learning opportunities musically and extra-musically. It was clear that the Musical Futures resources were certainly a tool to facilitate this as all teachers were highly complementary and positive about them. Teachers identified the layout, clear visuals, variety of songs and backing tracks, ease of use, range of content, and pace of progression within the resources as crucial to not only their own experience of using them but also the students' enjoyment of the lessons. Below are some examples of the students' experiences of success:

> Jane (Eileen's 6th class pupil): I like it because if you keep on learning the rhythm you'll get better and better, like every day. Like when we first started no one could really do it but when we came back everyone kind of picked up on it. So if we kept going and going then I think we would be really good.
>
> Molly (Winifred's 5th class pupil): I realised that it's actually much easier to learn ukulele than I thought. I thought it would be like much harder. It's actually quite easy.
>
> Iasac (David's 2nd class pupil): I always like music and it's fun but it was really hard but I got better at it…

From my classroom observations in Sally's class and from informal conversations with her students after lessons, not only was I witness to their weekly development and progress, but the students themselves were able to see it too. They were able to identify areas of their playing that they needed to work on from week to week and were also able to track their own progress since the beginning of the project. It would seem that the clear structure of the resources scaffolded and enabled this for both the teacher and the students. This portion of the focus group transcript charts Sally's students' self-identified progress and learning strategies:

> Roisín (3rd class pupil): The first week it was a bit hard because I didn't know any of the notes, the chords. But after the weeks , I got most of the chords and then I started to get better at them.
>
> Lucy (6th class pupil): Switching the notes kind of fast in certain songs at the start was really difficult. But like at the end of this week, it was actually easier because I just knew the notes

and where they were.

Researcher: It was kind of in your memory was it?

Lucy: Yeah

Researcher: So it was hard at the start. And would you say now that you've done it for a couple of weeks is there something that's still hard?

Lucy: Probably like switching from D to G.

Elliot (6th class pupil): I don't really mind when you play just one chord. Like if you're doing all the 1, 2, 3, 4 and then change, I find that hard.

Researcher: So you're happy when you're doing just doing one chord and then you're getting ready for your next chord? And is there anything you found that made it easier to get to play the rhythms?

Elliot: Sometimes I just tried to change a little bit before it.

The experience of success appeared to be quite prevalent in Winifred's class, due in part to the positive attitude both she and her students upheld throughout their engagement:

> Winifred: I think yes, like, as in they all experienced success in some way, whether they're the best in the class at music or whether they're not, I think they all had a positive experience, but nobody was coming out of it upset that they couldn't get the chords. They didn't even realise half the time that it wasn't perfect, because they were enjoying it so much. So I think it was great in that way that there was nobody going in dreading it because they weren't good at it. I don't think anyone ever said once Oh I'm not good at it. Whereas other subjects, you take out the book or whatever, and they're like, Oh, I don't want to do this, I'm not good at it. So I think that was a positive, that there was nobody going in with a negative experience of the programme or music didn't have a negative impact on them.

Ascertaining what was the main contributing element to this success, many teachers and students cited the repetition embedded in the Musical Futures resources as a key feature that helped reinforce the learning. Indeed, this links back to the findings from the CIDREE report outlined in Chapter One regarding what teachers wanted from an arts resource.

> Muireann: what I can say from doing it - and it's old-fashioned in one way to say this like - but repetition works. You repeat it the few lines, you practice the few lines, then move on, then the groups like. I mean, it's what I've been doing for the last 20 years, like, as regards other things that people kind of say these days, Oh, that's outdated saying the tables together, you know, things like that. But like, it does work like [laughing].

Eileen also attributed the repetition as key to success, adding that the gradual increase in complexity provided an appropriate level of challenge for her students:

> Eileen: What I thought was really beneficial I suppose in terms of the kids learning the instrument was the repetition. There was lots of repetition involved, which just gave them,

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you know, all the practice that they needed. And it seems that it really kind of consolidated what they were learning, and also how it got progressively harder. So I suppose from the first day we did it, everyone was able to fully engage with it, fully participate, and it just got progressively harder. It wasn't too challenging. It was just right for them.

This experience of success was mentioned time and again across the teacher interviews, teacher reflective notes, classroom observations, and student focus group data. However, I now wish to probe further into the specific areas in which success was experienced. A comprehensive review of the literature conducted earlier in Chapter Two revealed that engagement in Musical Futures has benefits for children's musical and extra-musical development. The findings from this study resonate with those of international studies in this area (Green, 2002, 2008; Folkestad, 2006; Feichas, 2010; Jeanneret, 2010; Jeanneret *et al.* 2011; Hallam *et al.* 2018; O'Neill and Bespflug, 2012; Wright *et al.*. 2012; Evans *et al.* 2014; and Moore, 2019) and will be outlined in the next two sections.

Development of Students' Musical Skills

Cognisant of the foundational principles of Musical Futures discussed in Chapter Two, the development of student musical skills is a core feature of the approach. Indeed, Atkinson (2018, p.274) attests that students be encouraged to "think, feel and act like musicians" in their music education (p.274). Creech *et al.* (2020, p.54) agree with this view and highlight the intrinsic motivation that can ensue from facilitating this process:

> …learners are more motivated to persist with learning when the tasks align with who they understand themselves to be and who they would like to become (Hock *et al*. 2006). Therefore, when learning an instrument aligns with students' personal goals, for instance, to play a favourite piece of music, to join and ensemble so as to be with friends, or to write an original songs, children may be motivated to invest significant effort in their instrumental learning.
>
> (Creech *et al.* 2020, p.54)

They go on to say:

> …musical possible selves may be best supported when school leaders and teachers validate the multiple musics and ways of musicking that children and their teachers encounter both in-and out-of-school.
>
> (ibid., p.57)

Certainly, Musical Futures aligned children's home musical lives with their musical learning in school. In her reflective notes, Sally quoted how her students enjoyed playing "real tunes" as they got further into the project. Many other students mentioned to me in informal chats after lesson observations the enjoyment that came from learning the songs they would hear and sing at home. The fact that several of them could play along to them now on an instrument was identified as being very exciting and motivating for them.

Listening skills

One of the core skills developed through informal learning pedagogies was that of listening. Children's aural skills were honed to listen for chordal, rhythmic, and melodic patterns, as well as changes in rhythm and pitch:

> Nora (6th class pupil): I suppose I like the chords are like exact lines and you can tell by ear that there's an exact strumming way that you can't do two ups in a row, stuff like that.
>
> Eimear (5th class pupil): …over the time, like, people got better, so that they would know Oh, she's playing A minor and not C. And they're like, Oh, yeah, cuz I can hear it now that they sound different. So over time, like it got better so we wouldn't really have to be confused anymore.

Teachers similarly identified developments in children's aural skills:

> Winifred: Yeah, like, with the tuning they used to come up, and say, Oh, I'm listening - Actually, listening was a huge thing. It's something I wouldn't focus on as much like normally, but I'd play a chord, and they'd have to guess what the chord was, rather than me just saying, play the chord C or D. So I suppose they were learning how to identify chords as well as like how to actually play them, which I think is huge in music. And they'd come to me with questions like say, Oh, I'm learning this chord at home, I'm not sure if it's quite right. I might not know the answer. So we'd look it up together. And I'd say oh, this is where your fingers need to go or whatever.

Winifred went on to speak about how students listening skills were tested in the tuning of their instruments:

> Winifred: Tuning it - some of them learned to tune it but others didn't. We only had two of the electric tuners, so I kind of got them to learn how to tune it through listening. So I'd play the correct note, and they'd keep twisting the cord until they got it. So I think that's a huge skill that I wouldn't have ever focused on. Before like, I'd just say this is it, this isn't it, you know? So I think it was nice for them to get the opportunity to try and figure out themselves, is it right or wrong? What do I need to do to fix it?

Again, Alice's students became attuned over time to subtle differences in the music:

> Alice: they noticed when the music was changing, even though the patterns were the same.

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They noticed if there was a different version on and they were asking can we go back to the other - they just clicked with it.

Classroom observations revealed how the students demonstrated skills of listening to one another as they negotiated how their playing fit in with the group, for example:

Zack (Alice's 3rd class pupil): You can tell if you think you can stay with the beat properly.

One of David's students demonstrated clear improvement in his aural skills, as he noted in his reflections:

David: One boy who found it hard to keep to the beat initially really surprised me at the end. He showed the class how the beats work on MF and how the numbers light up to show which beat should be strummed. He excelled at this after a while.

In Winifred's class, Leah identified strategies she employed to improve her playing, based on the development of her listening to peers:

Leah (5th class pupil): There's just one thing as well like, if people around you were playing the wrong thing, it was really confusing. That really can't be fixed I know that but yeah it was really confusing [laughing].

Researcher: What did you find helped you to get better at that? Did you just like ignore what they were doing? Or did you concentrate on your own thing? What worked to make it better?

Leah: I kind of like tuned my ears to just listen to [our teacher]. So then, like I kind of ignored them.

In Muireann's class, Riva was able to distinguish when she wasn't playing in time with the rest of the class:

Riva (3rd class pupil): I don't like how when you're doing the clapping, you get off beat, then you try and get back on beat and then it's over.

Researcher: What can you do that helps?

Riva: You can do it a bit louder so others can hear you.

Across all of these students and classes, the development of listening skills in multiple modes and domains emerged strongly.

Instrumental skills

The findings demonstrate that engagement with informal learning pedagogies clearly impacted children's instrumental knowledge and skills too. Sally's students cited notable improvements to their skills in playing an instrument:

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Roisín (3rd class student): I would say that Musical Futures is very fun, and it's easy to learn the ukulele. If you thought a chord was too easy and you're in school, you could do two chords in a day. We were learning how to do basic chords first, and then we got to harder chords, like D or D minor, or G. There also...if there was an easy chord we would say oh, let's have a chance of another one.

Researcher: Do you want to add to that Elliot or Lucy?

Lucy (6th class student): Basically, if someone asked me I'd say like at the beginning you're doing easy chords and then you keep elevating up to certain strings and if you're like stuck on a chord or something, you'll just go back on that one and learn it and then like you learn to switch the notes easily, and then they should be able to play a song then.

Moreover, it would appear that students have gained a clear grasp of musical vocabulary and terminology from their regular exposure to it during the project. For example, Alice noted that her students had a "greater awareness of the language of music".

In addition, motor skill development was highlighted by Harriet as arising from engagement in the Musical Futures approach, including "fine-motor skills, gross-motor skills, left-right orientation, hand-eye coordination". Alice commented on how students were more "body confident", with Sally saying in her reflective notes that the lessons were "great for body co-ordination movements". David too recalled how one student "lit up" when he finally was able to curl his fingers to form the chord on the guitar correctly. The repeated exposure of students to using their fingers and bodies in movements unfamiliar to them seemed to have enabled them to develop this important skill in instrumental playing.

Musical Attitudes

A shift in attitudes towards music education occurred for several students as they participated in the project. Angela, a 5th class pupil in Winifred's class, said:

Angela: I learned that I want to learn more instruments and not just sing. I learned that I'm way more into music than I thought I was.

Sasha, in Muirean's class, stated:

Sasha (3rd class pupil): I learned that if you don't like it and you start it, you might actually like it so it encourages you to try something new.

Several teachers also commented on how engagement in the project had altered student

outlook with regard to music education in a more positive light.

> Harriet: And they loved it, you know? So it was just this...suddenly they realised that they were building skills that they didn't know they'd be able to do. They were so involved, I think was the main thing. It was just so interactive and great fun. You know, they loved it. They really did.

> Sally: I think it was positive, you know, it was a positive experience for them and a positive experience in music, like they ACHIEVED something. They can play chords on the ukulele. That's something they can take with them in life. And they can successfully do it. Some of them know them without even thinking about them, you know, like, they don't have to consult the sheet. One little girl is even getting one for Christmas like so I think that's a huge success, you know, that we've sparked her interest in it. Like, if you've impacted one pupil and made a difference to them. So hopefully she'll continue with that…They've got just such a positive attitude to music. And I think the fact that at the end they could actually strum along with songs they actually knew really helped them. You know, it made it really relevant for them. They're weren't just doing random chords they thought they were strumming out like pros. I think from that point of view it was really positive for them and they really looked forward to playing the ukuleles.

> Winifred: I think a lot of them realised that music is a lot more fun than they thought it was. And it was a lot easier than they thought it was because it was.

In the comments above, it would appear that the students have become more intrinsically motivated to learn an instrument. From Deci and Ryan (2013) we know that this type of motivation is powerful in changing attitudes, in this instance towards music education.

Reverberant of other studies (Moore 2019; Wright 2015), changes in musical attitudes, coupled with enhancements in listening and instrumental proficiency brought about significant impact on the development of students' musical skills.

Development of Students' Extra-musical Skills

Extra-musical development occurred in every class, including growth in confidence, wellbeing, relaxation, autonomy, independence, groupwork, memory, and concentration. On the development of extra-musical skills, some common threads were identified across the findings. Firstly, the confidence of students seemed to have grown in all teachers' estimations.

> Eileen: I think my class felt really privileged. They felt really special because they were the only class in the school playing the ukulele and they were really proud of it. And even small things like when we went down to get the ukuleles, how they carried their ukuleles, you know, the strap of the case across their shoulders. You could see that they were just really proud. And it was nice for their confidence as well.

The approach yielded individual and specific benefits for a student with special needs in Alice's class, empowering that student to become much more involved in musical activity in

the classroom:

> Alice: Well, as I said, there was there was one boy. He was always kind of standing out at the side and would not do GoNoodle [21], you know these very child friendly interactions but was this a very sporty child and was very quiet. He's now talking to a lot more children, he's putting his hand up, he's more confident. He came up on his own to conduct one of the Musical Futures grids another day…Another little boy has autism in the class and I found that the instruments at times were just too much for him. But he grew in confidence and other children were telling me this boy, he really wants to come up and do his Musical Futures. I could see it in him himself. They've all come on in leaps and bounds. They're really enthusiastic about this. And I couldn't speak highly enough of it. Obviously, as a teacher, you have to put in as much as you can yourself. But still the kids will let you know pretty fast if they like it or not. They definitely really liked it.

While general levels of student confidence were enhanced, confidence to perform in front of peers musically was similarly observed:

> Winifred: I think the ukulele is one that you know, it's an accompanying instrument. It'll encourage them to sing as well. Kids who wouldn't have sang before now have the comfort and the confidence to sing holding another instrument. They feel kind of more confident with it - one child actually said that to me. She has a beautiful voice but would never wanted to kind of sing in front of the class. I've heard her at different things before but she wouldn't put the ukulele down. At the end of the year she sang in the talent show with the ukulele and it's something she wouldn't have done only that she had learned the ukulele. And she told me herself, Oh, I feel so confident now that I have the ukulele with me when I'm singing. It's like, you just have that extra comfort blanket or whatever, when you're performing.

Later in the interview, Winifred said:

> Researcher: Was there any other transferable skills that you noticed Musical Futures developed?

> Winifred: Confidence I think was just a huge one. We would have a nice kind of mix in the class of all abilities and everything. But, definitely, it gave confidence for the kids who I wouldn't hear from as much in the class, you know, to speak out and things. But when they had ideas and knew that everyone's was valid in the programme, you know, it gave them the confidence to share more.

Secondly, the related areas of wellbeing, mindfulness, and relaxation came to the fore as benefits from an engagement with informal learning approaches. Sally highlighted this as one of her aspirations for a music programme with her students in the pre-interview:

> Sally: Maybe they're not even understanding the intricacies of the actual classical music but that they know that they like something and why they like it, and that they can form pictures in their heads of what it is, rather than just the picture they tell you of an orchestra, you know, actually playing the music - that they can use their imaginations and kind of use it as a release and a kind of a mindfulness exercise that they're using it to relax.

Indeed, these aspirations seemed to have been realised in discussions post-engagement:

> Researcher: Would you say that would there have been any benefits on students'

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[21] GoNoodle is a website that incorporates a range of interactive music, dance, and creative videos for teachers to use in the classroom. More information can be found here: https://www.gonoodle.com/company/p/who-we-are

behaviourally or emotionally in the classroom?

Sally: Well it calmed them. Like if they were giddy. I thought a whole load of ukuleles is going to drive them over the edge now on a Friday evening [laughing]. But they'd to concentrate so much on it was they were concentrating and it calmed them down. It didn't give them the opportunity to kind of mess or get hyper.

Researcher: They were so focused on the task at hand.

Sally: That's it yeah. They were so into trying to get the chord right and move on to the next chord, or whatever was coming up that it really, really held their attention, you know. So it kept them calm throughout the day, and probably improved concentration as a result.

Eileen also noted the relaxation element of participation in the project.

Eileen: And other students just said, it was really nice for them to relax a little bit, it was a really nice break from other subjects like maths and things like that. So they really looked forward to playing ukulele on Fridays. I didn't really expect them to, you know, I suppose perceive it as a little bit of a break. I did think that they would enjoy it. But it was just I think, just being able to take your mind off different worries that they had, that they actually identified that as a benefit themselves.

From the student perspective, one of the most profound comments emerged from the focus group interview with one particular student. Lucy, an unassuming girl in 6th class had this to say about her experience of learning to play the ukulele:

Lucy: I have a bit of anxiety. I liked playing it, because you know, the noise of it and then as well I'm kind of shaky. So it helps me move my fingers things and kind of relaxes me a bit. Basically, when I move my fingers, like I'm already in kind of control, and I know like, when to stop. So it's not as difficult as it used to be.

This same girl told me that she was getting a ukulele for Christmas.

This emphasis on the wellbeing facet of music may be due in part to the increased discourse around this area of children's development in governmental policy and curricular agenda in recent times (see *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* [22]).

Thirdly, teachers felt the students' autonomy, independence, and groupwork skills were enhanced as they took ownership of their instrument:

Sally: They got better as you know, they had total responsibility for their ukulele and of tuning it or whatever. They minded them very, very well. You know, getting that sense of responsibility.

Alice: Definitely, they were independent, they were able to make up a little composition on their own. Hopefully going into fourth class that they will have heard a lot more musical terms. And that they'll be able to bring that forward… So I've asked them to work in pairs. And I've asked them to work in groups. And they enjoyed it, and they were more confident about it. They were coming up to the board, they were more engaged in pairs, and in fours. The whole class have been involved. There's been no fights about it. They all wanted to partake. And I was really, really delighted. It was lovely to see them smiling, complimenting

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each other on what they've achieved as well. They couldn't wait. They couldn't wait to show it off. So, you know, everybody's hands has been up. And I've seen, you know, a very positive impact from it.

Eileen: I suppose definitely the fact that they were helping each other. I think for me, as I said, they were such a quiet class, that it really helped me encourage them to talk more and to feel more comfortable to contribute to discussions, and I think, you know, really reiterate to them that like what they were saying was really valuable and, as you said, I was actually learning from their responses. So I think definitely they exceeded my expectations in that regard.

Finally, Eileen, Alice, and David also listed improvements in memory and concentration, which were similarly found identified in students' comments. Here, in Sally's class:

Roisín: I think it's easier to concentrate because you can have to change chords.

Researcher: Yeah, your mind has to be switched on all the time, doesn't it?

Roisín: Yeah

Lucy: Yeah, with listening. Because when [our teacher] tells us to stop with the ukuleles, everyone stops at the same time. So like, you're kind of used to it now when she says it.

Researcher: And was that hard at the start to do that?

Lucy: Yeah because certain people might be talking. And if someone was talking, and then she mightn't notice if you had your hand up something, but now she'd be like looking around and things because even with the ukuleles, she's looking around to see if everyone has stopped.

And again, in Muireann's class:

Ericka: I would say that Musical Futures is really good just don't give up while doing it. Just do it and concentrate on it.

The extensive range of extra-musical skills that participation in the project developed was unexpected but very welcome from the teachers' perspectives.

Challenges, Barriers, and Obstacles

Not all children made the same progress with Musical Futures. While COVID-19 and increased student absences did have an impact on progress, teachers did notice some discrepancies among student rates of development. For example, Sally noted in her reflections that she could "clearly see gaps/difference in ability developing". From my own observations, particularly towards the end of the research phase, I could see that some students were not playing at the same level as others within the class. Regarding differentiation, she found the approach difficult to cater to

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all rates of learning simultaneously when they all were playing along to the same track. She had asked me at one point to offer some advice for this and I suggested breaking the class into groups and each group taking just one chord, which would free up their fingers to focus on the rhythms first before trying to change chords. She utilised this strategy in subsequent observed lessons to positive effect. However, differentiation still posed a challenge:

> Sally: Well they all started at the same base level, you know. It was a new instrument, and they all started from the start. Now, some of them would move faster through it than others. You know, there was differentiation needed as you went on, significantly. How it catered for that I'm not 100%. I know you showed me just doing on chord with one group and keeping it. That did work, I suppose. Starting at a base point it did, but like the children that would have had knowledge of like another instrument or something would move quicker towards it, you know, or grasp it quicker. So, there would be differentiation needed alright.

Differences in learning were felt by the students too. The pace of instruction became an issue when students were absent:

> Elliot: I think it's a bit hard when like say if you miss a day and then the next day everyone would know the chord and you wouldn't know what it is so they're all able to play it.
>
> Researcher: And did you have that experience? Were you missing for a day?
>
> Elliot: I think one time yeah
>
> Researcher: How did you catch up on what you were missing?
>
> Elliot: I just kept playing the chord a lot and just learned how to.
>
> Roisín: When I was out and for a few days, there was too much people not in school. So we couldn't do the ukuleles.
>
> Researcher: And how did that make you feel?
>
> Roisín: Upset

Strategies such as peer learning to make up for this lost time were not possible do to COVID-19 protocols.

Musical Futures positively impacted both the children's musical and extra-musical skills. Students and teachers alike were pleased to have been exposed to the approach and were interested in continuing on this pathway of musical development.

Discussion

The Musical Futures approach was adopted and adapted differently in each participating

classroom. While the previous chapter examined the teacher at the micro level of change, widening the lens to look at the meso classroom level and the interactions between teacher and student adds another stratum to understanding the extent to which change of beliefs is facilitated by using Musical Futures approaches.

From participation in the project, music enjoyed a renewed position within the teachers' and students' days. It encouraged teachers to question existing beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices pertaining to the subject. Scrutinising the findings, it is apparent that beliefs surrounding the purpose of music education were subject to re-evaluation for many of the teachers. Some teachers such as Harriet and Alice saw music as a tool to enhance learning across the curriculum while others such as Winifred wanted children to experience music and the feeling of being a musician in its own right. These orientations manifested subtle differences in how the approach was adopted by teachers. From an informal chat with Anna Gower, consultant for Musical Futures UK, the idea of a 'one-size-fits-all' pedagogy is impractical and unattainable (Gower 2020, personal correspondence). Indeed, she would argue for the avoidance of using the term *the Musical Futures approach*, instead saying *Musical Futures approaches* to reflect the range of experiences brought about through informal learning pedagogies. Such a range of experiences was evident in the case of the participating teachers and students.

Returning to Folkestad's delineation of informal learning and non-formal teaching in Chapter Two, it is important to note that while teaching may never be informal, that is not to say that teachers cannot create informal situations in which the process of informal learning can occur. It would appear that the shift observed in the intentionality and framing of the music lessons using Musical Futures approaches acted as a facilitator of this process. Most notably in Winifred's case, the ownership of learning moved towards a model of "non-linear, cooperative learning, controlled by a social group rather than by an individual" (Campbell 2001, in Feichas 2010, p.50), whereby "students…are allowed opportunities to enter the educational setting at

any time, explore topics immediately of interest to them, and contribute to the path of instruction" (Isbell 2018, p.40). In this way, teachers gained a newfound appreciation of the students' experience in the learning process and reflected this in how they approached their music teaching, resonant of D'Amore's (2014, p.44) words: learning is caught rather than taught, done 'with' and 'by' students, not 'to' and 'for' them. This is why much of the discussion centred around the transfer of ownership, fostering independence, and the relinquishing of control on the part of the teacher, promoting democratic and inclusive pedagogical ideals (Moore 2019) and re-envisioned learning partnerships.

On the theme of assessment, the extent to which music is assessable is contingent on an acknowledgement on the part of the teacher of the complexity of musical experience in general (Swanwick 1998, p.2; Fautley 2010). This is compounded by the value assigned to that which is assessed and the biases in meanings embodied in much of existing assessment strategies, many of which are not representative or illustrative of learning in music education (ibid.). Although debates around assessment in music education are complex within the literature, in the context of this project, how do the changes in assessment procedures and practices though informal learning approaches as already outlined facilitate changes in beliefs about music education? Assuredly, moving from traditional assessment methods to a more flexible and 'musical' view of assessment in music education has the potential to change practice in this area. Moreover, incorporating students into assessment practices is a powerful and meaningful tool in developing their creativity, musicianship and musical thinking (Bolden and DeLuca 2022). Encouraging them to critique their own performance and the performances of their peers (in a constructive manner) serves as more useful in developing their listening skills than a teacher judgement; they become "'insiders'" (ibid., p.88) allowing them to develop their own musical ideas and values. Figure 12 below presents a graphic from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment which illustrates the range of assessment methods from those led by the student themselves to those primarily led by the teacher. For the participating teachers,

the move generally included a shift from generally summative forms of assessment (teacher
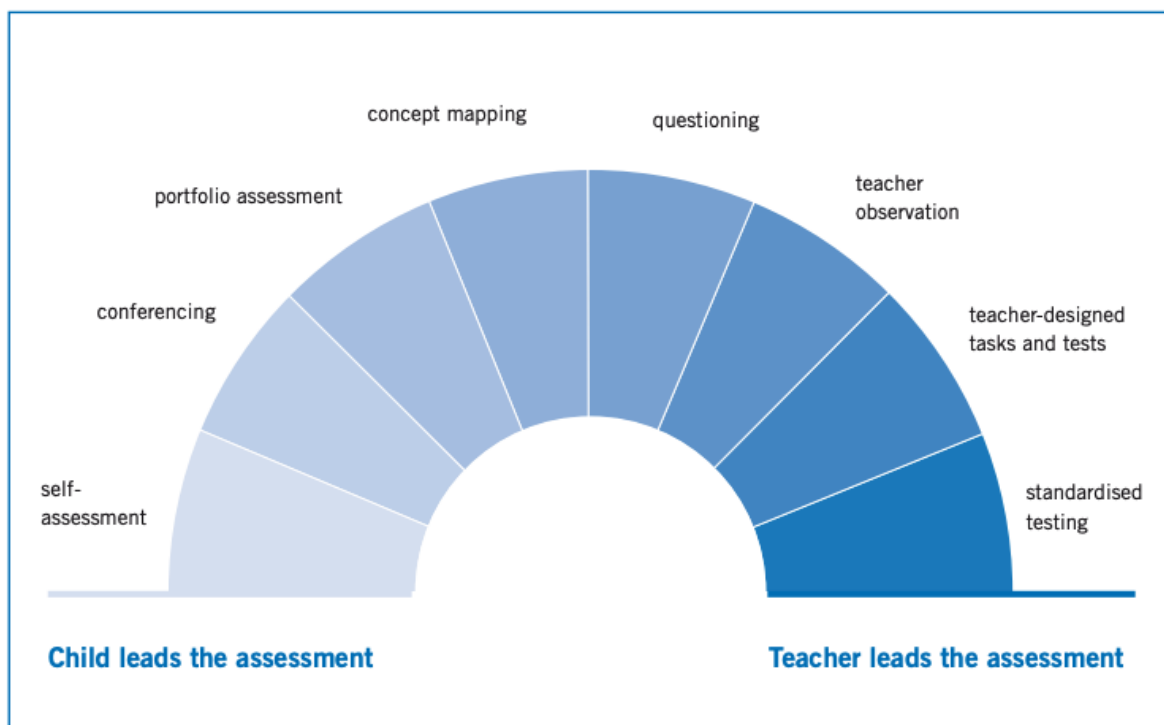
Figure 12: Continuum of assessment methods (NCCA 2007, p.13)

observation, tasks, and tests) to more formative forms of assessment (self and peer-assessment).

Assessment in this re-envisioned format aligns with the transfer of ownership of and autonomy over learning from the teacher to the student. Bolden and DeLuca (2022, p.275) posit that such assessment for learning can "bypass traditional challenges associated with creativity assessment thanks to its focus not on *evaluating* but on *nurturing* creativity through formative guidance from teachers and peers". For example, from the findings it was clear that Winifred used assessment in this way to powerful effect and both she and her students could see the effect of this in terms of motivation and engagement in the musical activities.

Moving then to discussion on incorporating the student voice in the project, the student experience may not initially seem like an important aspect to be explored and understood within the context of a thesis that examines teacher beliefs and values. Nonetheless, upon probing further into this area, it becomes apparent that in order to understand teachers' beliefs and values about music education, they must be understood within the context of the practice. The student experience is inextricable from this practice and thus, it is logical that if the student experience

is generally positive and brings about changes in the musical participation and engagement, teacher beliefs and values have the potential to shift in line with the outcomes for their students.

With reference to student motivation, the playing of "real tunes" by the students was a key motivating factor for them. We know that students enjoy increased motivation to engage musically when the perceived value of the subject is in line with their own values (Eccles and Wigfield 2002). Much of Green's research into the inherent and delineated meaning of music in *Music on Deaf Ears* (1988) offers insight into how this is of benefit to students. The inherent meaning of music is the relationship which sounds are construed as making with one another (ibid., p.12). This encompasses inter alia the elements of form, structure, harmony, rhythm, and pitch. Delineated meanings refer to the relationships and connotations these sounds have extra-musically (ibid., p.26) The children already hold positive delineated meanings for this genre of music, and as the inherent and delineated meanings are inextricably connected, the children are naturally poised and inclined to delve into the music's inherent meanings, its syntactical and stylistic dimensions at the most rudimentary of levels.

In conclusion, the reappraisal of practice triggered through an engagement in non-formal teaching and informal learning brought about many positive benefits for both teachers and students. Teachers renewed motivation in this area manifested in the experience of success and considerable progress in their students' learning. Student development of musical skills such as listening and instrumental skills were in tandem with the development of extra-musical skills such as concentration, motivation, groupwork, wellbeing, and independence. Changes in the ownership, control, and intentionality of the learning in the music lesson heralded a re-envisioned classroom dynamic where teacher and student are learning new skills together.

When it comes to negotiating a space for music, time, resources, and differential rates of progress emerged as obstacles to whole class musical participation and engagement. Engaging in Musical Futures approaches and in particular, the *Making Music* resource section, these concerns were mitigated due to the perceived high-quality and depth of the resources.

Having now examined the teacher and student interplay in the changing of teacher beliefs and values, discussion will now turn to looking at the influence of ideology in this process.

CHAPTER NINE

INFORMAL LEARNING AS A CATALYST FOR IDEOLOGICAL INTERPELLATION

Introduction

This chapter examines the capacity of music education to reproduce axiological and ideological positions within the wider societal system and will identify some of the ways in which such axiological and ideological positions are reproduced, with particular reference to the work of the seminal philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990). Bourdieu (1930-2002), was in fact a former student of Althusser and refined several of his professor's theories, applying them to the cultural sphere, as was examined earlier in this thesis. Further to this examination, I explore the role of the school and the teacher in the reproduction of ideological positions, with specific focus on musical beliefs and values. This is in response to two of the sub-questions underpinning the study, namely:

- To what extent are teacher beliefs and practice (teaching and learning) influenced by ideologies of musical value and ability?

- To what extent can non-formal teaching and learning pedagogies using Musical Futures approaches facilitate changes in teacher beliefs and practice?

Using the theoretical concept of interpellation, I consider the potential for shifts in ideological positions as expressed in beliefs and values within the context of the findings.

Informal Learning as the Catalyst for Ideological (Counter)Interpellation

In this section, I highlight how teachers occupy a unique position within the ideological apparatus of the school and as the bearers of social structure. The concept of interpellation as outlined in Chapter Four defines the moment at which an individual either becomes a subject of an ideology or actively rejects it. The interpellations that teachers are subject to and also bring about work to make schools sites of ideological replication and/or counterinterpellation. Some fascinating interpellations have been generated in the findings which show the change in the teachers' ideological positionings with regard to music education. These interpellations are concerned with the idea of musicality as giftedness, music as an elitist art-form, and the

emphasis on product within the music lesson.

Ideological Position 1: Musicality as 'Giftedness'

While Glover and Ward (1993) and Heriksson-Macaulary and Welch (2015) would argue that everyone is musical and has innate ability in music from birth, there is a prevailing assumption among teachers that not everyone is musical (Henley 2017) and that musicality is an innate and native talent (Jaap and Patrick 2015). Unfortunately, inspiring cases such as that of Vicki in Russel's article (1996) are scarce. Throughout the findings in this thesis however, one such ideology that was challenged was the idea of musicality as "giftedness" (McPherson 1997). How teachers consider musical ability and its implications for education have been subject to a steady stream of research, with Hennessy (2000) reporting that students consider musical ability as stable or fixed rather than malleable. Biasutti warns that such a predetermined view of musicality "can lead to low expectations of teachers' future as non-gifted pupils and it determines a cycle of low expectation in the development of musical skills." (2010, p.64). Rodriguez (2009, p.37) speaks about the difficulties teachers have with providing music lessons to students with their current conceptualisations of musicality: "What it means when we call someone 'musical' is rarely the sum of the relatively few factors we can measure accurately, therefore present in the school curriculum". For example, Muireann equated being musical with being able to sing and professed "I can't sing to save my life". This belief, rooted in ideological assumptions of singing ability with musicality, has impacted her music practice throughout her career, a belief in which she is not alone (Heyning 2011). Rodriguez goes on to describe how we often attribute musicality to being able to read music, utilise musical vocabulary and articulate musical preferences. Parallel to Green's "critical musicality" (1988, p.14), Rodriguez describes musicality as "one's demonstration of explicit and implicit skills and understandings to communicate musical ideas", and that this "process of individualisation is not a typical goal of traditional music instruction" (2009 p.37).

In this study, teachers' beliefs about musical ability generally resonated with those found in the literature. Through an engagement with non-formal teaching, interpellations occurred for teachers regarding who they deemed as musical and what it means to be musical. For Sally, her expectations for one 6th class boy, Sam, taking part in this project seemed predetermined from her pre-engagement interview:

> Sally: Music I think is something you know - I have a load of sixth class boys. You know, song singing and things like that don't go down well sometimes. It's trying to get things to interest them and trying to pick the right song or pick the thing that kind of motivates them to do it is sometimes challenging.

It emerged that this position was apparently challenged from conversations with the teacher intra-engagement, as can be seen in the following excerpt from my researcher journal:

> One girl in particular seemed to really enjoy the lesson (Roisín) and I could see her smiling and looking at me regularly throughout the lesson. She seemed really engaged and hitting the rhythms and changes accurately. As one of the youngest in the class (3rd class), this was very reassuring to witness. Chatting informally with the teacher after the lesson, she said that this child was from a very musical family and that she was a 'good' student. She said that she 'wasn't surprised' that this girl would take to the ukulele as well as she did. She compared her to one of the 6th class boys who is similarly doing well picking up the ukulele but who 'isn't academically inclined' so it came as a surprise to her to see him doing so well.

The difference between the expectations for Roisín and Sam in this extract demonstrates the assumed connection made here by Sally between academic ability and musical ability. Also, the idea that musical talent is inherited influenced Sally's expectation for Roisín within the music lesson. By contrast, as one of the boys, it was perceived that Sam wouldn't benefit from this experience, perhaps because of an assumption of boys not liking music and not being as academically strong as girls. However, it is clear that Sally went through an ideological interpellation from the transcript of her post-engagement interview:

> Sally: Well there was one or two children that would struggle with concentration. You know, and I was surprised that one of them turned out to be our top ukulele player. He'd no problem concentrating on the music like, it was something that interested him, you know, and he really, really excelled at it. Once he put his mind to it, he really, really just got it. Like I knew he was kind of musical. But he never really had the opportunity to do something to that extreme and also he struggles in other areas of the curriculum such as reading. But it didn't impact this, you know. It was an area he achieved success in and he was delighted with himself. And he knew who he was good at it, that kind of a way.
>
> Researcher: And what was it maybe about the approach that sparked that interest could you figure it out?
>
> Sally: He liked the instrument anyway, you know. They're kind of a popular instrument, the ukulele. But definitely the approach - it's the visual again, you know. He would be kind of a

visual auditory learner, you know, and it was the interaction with that. He would struggle to read written things and books would turn him off. So like the fact that this was just moving all the time and was telling you what's coming next, you know, he'd a lot to concentrate on. And it wasn't boring him. It was kind of interactive, and he enjoyed it.

It would appear that Sam had been 'written off' in terms of his musical potential due to the intersectionality of his academic difficulties and his gender and, for the teacher, her expectations about his musical ability were assumed to be in this category also (Green 1988). For her, the shock of him turning out to be the class' "top ukulele player" is a moment of interpellation here. She believed (and was subject to the ideology) that certain people can be musical, and others cannot and her assumptions that guided this assertion were based on gender and academic ability. Returning momentarily to Bourdieu's theory of practice, students are positioned within the field of the classroom according to several interrelated factors. However, their positions can remain relatively fixed in this field. Music education creates in essence an entirely different field with the positions of the students completely readjusted and subject to repositioning and recategorisation. Sally above was still working from the academic field in guiding her habitus and interactions with the class. When the positions of the students within the musical field did not match her preconceived notions, this threw up conflicts and surprises for her. One would hope that her beliefs about musicality have been challenged and that her assumptions about who can be musical have changed. These ascriptions of musicality will, in turn, be mirrored in the students' musical self-concept.

Notions of this "talent myth" (Shouldice 2020) were prevalent in Winifred's beliefs about musicality too. She was surprised at how well one student responded to informal learning pedagogies.

> Winifred: Yeah, I think some of the kids as well in the class who wouldn't have been very musical and would have been maybe quiet in school or had learning difficulties or anything, it was kind of a chance for them to shine. Like there was one or two girls in the class - now one in particular, she plays the guitar at home - but she would be very nervous to like participate in anything in the class, especially if it's her on her own out loud, like speaking out loud, or answering questions out loud. But because she had the guitar knowledge, she was able to transfer her skills to the ukulele and became quite good at it. So children were asking her for help, you know, and she felt so confident then and she was coming up to show me things - you know, I'd say oh, I don't know how to do this, and she was showing me - so I think for those kind of children, you know, they got to experience success in ways that I wouldn't have realised what's gonna happen, you know, in the programme, so that was good.

Similar to Sam's case in Sally's class, this student's musicality had been presumed lacking due to her shy personality. Clearly Winifred's beliefs about this student's musical ability, and indeed that of her class, were challenged. Having a strong musical background herself, Winifred had initially assumed that teachers who were not 'musical' would struggle with teaching music:

> Winifred: I also think that like a lot of teachers - now I could be wrong in saying this - but I think a lot of teachers think like, if they don't have enough knowledge in the subject or if they don't like the subject, that's kind of it. They just think, oh it's too hard to teach it. I know I have that attitude with certain subjects. I wouldn't really want to teach them if I feel I don't have as much knowledge in that area as others but I think people who don't play an instrument or aren't musical think that you have to be musical to teach music. But like, there's so much you can do without knowing how to read music at all, you know? They just need to be shown how to do that, you know. I think I've seen that in the teachers coming in doing teaching practice. They kind of freak out, oh God I don't know how to teach music. With the music inspector, they don't know how they're going to get through it. But then when you break it down and teach them a lesson that has nothing to do with singing, or nothing to do with playing an instrument - it might be clapping games, or a rhythmic exercise or something they realise oh music can actually be very fun, and easy to do, if they're shown what to do. So yeah, I definitely think it's professional development for teachers is very important actually. I kind of didn't realise until recently.

The emphasis Winifred places on knowledge as an absolute prerequisite to teaching music may stem from her extensive music background within the classical genre. From using the Musical Futures approach, Winifred's viewpoint had changed ("there's so much you can do without knowing how to read music"). As a potential method of overcoming a lack of confidence and/or knowledge in teaching music, she also signals the importance of explicit modelling of pedagogies and strategies. It would appear that she realises that 'giftedness' is not necessary to be able to teach music.

Moreover, David's ideological position on musicality underwent a similar interpellation:

> Researcher: In your opinion, does Musical Futures have equal benefit for all students?

> David: …in my experience, the children with behavioural issues, really enjoyed it as well as the average learner or the high-achievers too. Like the high-achievers who are good at most of the subjects that I do in school with them, were well able for the tricky chords at the very end. And as I said, one fellow was able to do very good chord changes from chord to chord, so it benefitted him. The average players were able to maintain those chords and strum on the beat, which was really important. And then you have the weaker fellas who were still able to take part - maybe didn't get the strumming absolutely correct, but they were able to hold down the chord. So I do think it had equal benefit to all of them, even if they weren't all, you know, playing as well as each other.

Not unlike Sally, David's equation of musical ability with academic talent was challenged. Those who academically might have been classed as "weaker fellas" demonstrated an aptitude for learning the guitar that came as a surprise to him. Before participation in the project, these students may never have been given the opportunity to learn an instrument. However, David clearly expresses the benefits from engaging in non-formal approaches for these students, as well as his whole class.

From the students, ideologies of musicality as giftedness were manifest in comments about music being hard and something you must be good at already before you do it in school. For many of them in the focus groups, they remarked at how much easier it was than they had imagined:

> Jane (Eileen's 6th class student): I liked how easy it was to pick up. Like a lot of people in the class don't have musical experience. And it was very easy to pick up. Like, if you missed a day of school, and we were doing it and you came in the next day you'd know exactly know what to do.
>
> Molly (Winifred's 5th class student): I realised that it's actually much easier to learn ukulele than I thought. I thought it would be like much harder. It's actually quite easy.
>
> Iasac (David's 2nd class student): [Musical Futures is] about learning easy music without doing it the difficult way.
>
> Sasha (Muireann's 3rd class student): I would say that when you're doing it you're basically going to be making music. It doesn't matter if you're good at musical instruments because it's not that hard. It's really easy. Like it doesn't matter if you're not good at guitar because you can easily play with your body.

The fact that such comments were prevalent among the students too suggests that the idea of music as giftedness has been embedded in the children's perception of music. Musical Futures encouraged both teachers and students to revisit these assumptions of musical ability, triggering interpellations surrounding this ideological position. Moreover, these comments indicate the accessible nature of Musical Futures approaches when pitched appropriately for students.

Ideological Position 2: Music as a Quasi-elitist Art Form

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Ireland's unique socio-political and socio-cultural context has resulted in a bimusical culture (Moore 2012; O'Flynn 2005; 2009; McCarthy 1999), whereby

tensions exist at an ideological level about musical value and attention given to traditional-classical genres within curricula. While the flexibility of the primary curriculum facilitates pluralistic and intercultural music for selection and study, it is largely at the discretion of the teacher which genres/canons are selected. Issues of "binary opposition" between Western classical music and other musical genres results in the marginalisation and/or exclusion of other types of music within school music curricula (Kallio 2017, p.330). Thus, students are exposed to musical canons in keeping with the teacher's music values, resulting in a hegemonically and institutionally driven curricular agenda (Parkinson 2013). Green uses the term "musical fetishism" to describe the valorisation of certain musics (i.e. Western classical) purely for their perceived value, perpetuated by bourgeois aesthetic ideology (1988, p.86). This fetishism places Western classical music in a realm of its own, as it is believed to have the properties of universality, eternality, complexity, originality, and autonomy, and is thus reified, legitimised, and perpetuated by social relations (Green 2003). By comparison, other musical genres often do not fit in neatly with the terms and concepts ascribed to classical music and can be thus disregarded as worthy of study within certain music educational curricula. Such musical affiliations, Green argues, are often unique to certain social class groupings that do not resonate with everyone. This places the teacher in a position where the selection of music within a curriculum works to reinforce the aforementioned hegemony and musical fetishism, while simultaneously alienating students' personal musical experiences to that which is not deemed worthy of study.

The findings elucidate the second such ideology that was challenged through this study of music as a quasi-elitist aesthetic art form. The authors above denote the ascription of musical value to that which falls under the Western Art Music (WAM) tradition; there is a belief that music is only for those who can afford to pay for private instrumental tuition. Spruce (2012, pp.118-134) argues in favour of music that reflects the students' home musical lives by saying that WAM does not allow for the involvement of individuals in constructing process, content

and decision making. School music, and in particular, primary school music, therefore, can only do so much in developing children musically before external classes must be sought. David's principal echoed this feeling in an interview conducted with him:

> Principal of David's school: It's a DEIS Band II [23] school. So there's some disadvantage, but it's a fairly typical town school to be honest, kind of a cross section of society really, you know? There are 12 classes. We don't have junior and senior infants, so it's first class to sixth. So there's two of each class. So there's 12 teachers, 5 special ed. teachers, and then myself… I suppose my philosophy has always been it's great for children to experience [music] because not every child is going to get any music lessons outside of school. It's very few really in the percentage wise of the school community. So I think it's lovely that they at a young age experience it at some level…whether it leads to anything or not. I just think it adds a bit of colour to school life and to any event we have, that kind of thing.

As David utilised informal learning pedagogies, he began to question how primary music can actually facilitate instrumental learning, indicating his previous assumption that it wouldn't be possible for children to learn instruments such as guitars:

> David: In particular, it has caused me to ask serious questions about how music is taught and the impact a program like Musical Futures could have on a whole school approach to learning instruments.

Accessibility and opportunity in music education within the formal setting of the school emerge here as favourable outcomes from engagement with Musical Futures within David's class. His students attested to how fun it was to learn guitars in school without having 'guitar lessons'.

For Sally, informal learning using Musical Futures had similarly subverted this notion and brought about an interpellative [*sic*] moment for the teacher:

> Sally: …the whole approach to learning music -like a lot of them would have thought that learning music or an instrument was a one to one, after school activity that you pay a lot of money for and that some of them mightn't have the opportunity to do. I know some do but a lot of them wouldn't have the opportunity to do that so it gave them that experience of having kind of like a music lesson or learning an instrument without the expenses, I suppose…I think they've realised, oh, I can pick up an instrument and learn it in a couple of weeks. You know, like they're not proficient now. But you know, they've made good progress on the couple of chords, and I think they've done it quicker than if other approaches were used. You know like the traditional just shown them the chords, and they're repeating what you were doing. I think definitely the visual aspect really, really helped them. They've got just such a positive attitude to music. And I think the fact that at the end they could actually strum along

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[23] DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), which is the Irish word for 'opportunity', is a national programme to support schools who have a high concentration of disadvantage. This programme facilitates supports such as lower pupil-teacher ratios, increased funding, home and family links, and early intervention classes. More information can be found here: https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/4018ea-deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools/

with songs they actually knew really helped them. You know, it made it really relevant for them. They're weren't just doing random chords they thought they were strumming out like pros. I think from that point of view it was really positive for them and they really looked forward to playing the ukuleles.

The interpellation here counters the idea that learning an instrument requires extra-curricular tuition and expense on the part of the parent. It is from this new ideological position that Sally is now operating, and it is hoped that she will adapt her practice to reflect this.

In Winifred's case, giving her students access to instrumental lessons within the school had previously been unheard of as it was deemed to be something that could only a select few could do:

> Winifred: …for the type of school that I'm in, many of those children would not have experienced playing an instrument ever, only that we had given them the opportunity. And I definitely think it is almost life-changing for two or three of them, because they now realise it's something they can do. It's a cheap instrument. It's something they can buy themselves and keep and once they have it now, they'll be able carry that on to secondary school and later in life. And so I think it's something - it was kind of eye-opening for teachers and staff to realise that it can bring so much joy to kids who wouldn't have experienced it at home, which is great.
>
> I think, the kids who don't learn instruments outside of school - which would be most the kids in my class - would have thought that it was a very hard thing to do. And that's why it's not done very often. You know, there wasn't many in their class learning it. I think there was quite negative thoughts on the tin whistle in the school as a whole school. Like kids know themselves when they say, Oh, can we do the tin whistle? You know, teachers' faces just drop because they don't want to teach it so that carries on to the kids then as well. Whereas this was like, they were all excited to do the ukulele and so was I because we were all learning it. So I think in that way like, it was a very positive experience the whole way around.

For her students, this elitist perception of instrumental music education was similarly subverted:

> Researcher: Tell me a little bit more about that. Why did you think [learning an instrument] was going to be so hard?
>
> Molly: I don't know. I've watched a few videos of people doing it and they're just like [imitating playing] playing it so quickly and it looks like it's so complicated.
>
> Leah: Yeah, like, if you're trying to learn a song and whatnot, and then the YouTube tutorial is like, first step is to go [imitating a complicated motion] [others laughing].
>
> Molly: And the way they switch the chords so quickly-
>
> Angela -yes, it's very difficult because like, I've never learned the guitar or anything like that. So like, there's all different frets.
>
> Researcher: So it changed some of your expectations about learning an instrument so, is that fair to say?
>
> All: Yeah, definitely

Alice too explicitly mentioned this notion. Speaking about her position as music post-

holder within the school, she said:

> Alice: …the purpose that I wanted was that every child, would play music. Sometimes music can be elitist. That, you know, the top people will play in a band or they will perform in shows, or they will get the best part in the show or play or whatever is going on in school, but I wanted everybody to have access to music. That was my purpose and that's what I wanted to fulfil in the role.

Musical Futures enabled Alice to redress the elitism she referred to in her pre-interview:

> Alice: But there's so much you can do in the classroom without having spent a vast amount of money in a school. Even though we do have instruments and I wanted to try that part out as well. The children actually enjoyed making music from themselves. That's what they gained the most enjoyment out of.

From the teachers' comments above, the idea that the experience of 'true' music education is only possible for a minority of students became an interesting finding. This view was influenced largely by assumptions of the socio-economic status of students and the subsequent access or lack thereof to private music lessons. Through their participation in the project, this perception was challenged as instrumental music education was made accessible for all students within the primary classroom and curriculum, signalled by the interpellations presented.

Ideological Position 3: Music Lesson Intentionality as Product-centric (Music as Product)

Further to earlier discussion of the space and place of music within the primary classroom, music education routinely finds itself having to justify its position within a broader curriculum. From literature both nationally and internationally (see Chapters One, Two, and Three), teacher accountability within the 'culture of standardisation' (Robinson and Aronica 2015) often results in the expectation that all areas of the curriculum must be tangibly measured. In terms of music education, this leads to the reduction of the music lesson to focus its intentionality on the delivery of a *product*, hereafter referred to as product-centric intentionality. D'Amore and Smith (2017, p.66) refer to the "showcase" depiction of music within the school "where musicals and public performance by choirs, bands, and orchestras take precedence over the statutory delivery of the curriculum". The intangible nature of music makes it difficult for

teachers to feel they have accomplished a result at the end of a music lesson, adding to the issues about teacher confidence and exacerbating the promotion of performance in school musical activities. This is compounded by the focus on product within the Western Art Music tradition, which is a prevailing assumption across music generally (Elliott 1995). Indeed, Nazario (2021, p.200) specifically discusses the link between performance and the grounding of self-evaluations in values and beliefs deemed foundational to creativity, as legitimised within established musical genres such as WAM. These inhibitive beliefs include a) technical musical knowledge being understood as a prerequisite for creativity, b) conformity to accepted aesthetic patterns within creative formulations, and c) mistakes in performance being synonymised with musical inability. These issues are underscored by a product-centric intentionality within the lived experience of participants in music lessons. Further to discussions in Chapter Seven regarding dichotomous distinctions of 'musical' and 'unmusical', the emphasis on music as product and competition can act to reinforce such damaging labels, further compounding the conferring of negative musical values on students and teachers.

Moreover, relating to the ethereal and intangible nature of music, Hennessy's (2000) study highlighted that assessment also caused concern for student teachers, who defined musical ability "in terms of visible (or audible) skills" (Hennessy 2000, p.192). This attribution of value based on the traditional assessment definitions and criteria negatively impacted student teachers' efficacy in teaching music as they may identify themselves as having 'failed' in a lesson should they not have met standardised assessment protocol. Feelings of anxiety were reinforced in this study by the preconception that each child must have a 'product' at the end of an arts lesson, further strengthening the ideological stance of music education focusing on a product-based orientation. The products in question here at the end of the music lesson are a reification of the abstract, which is legitimised through curricular agenda, and is perpetuated across schools. We can therefore argue that it is ideological in origin under Green's characteristics of ideology (2003).

Counter to this view of music solely as product, Turino (2008, p.23) offers a broader view and presents the fields of *participatory* and *presentational* music making, with many Western cultures focusing on the latter, he argues. He describes presentational performance music as "situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing" which can include recordings in this instance (ibid., p.26). He goes on to state that the roles, types of musical activity, values, and goals will vary in these distinct musical framings and that "the manner of preparing for and playing music or dancing in participatory events will vary in a number of predictable ways from presentational preparation and performance" (ibid., p.27).

On a related side note, it was one of the initial concerns of this study that it would be considered a "projectisation" by participating teachers (Young 2021), further reinforcing the idea of music as a product to be achieved at the end of a period or term. Thus, participants had to be made acutely aware that the study was not a 'fly-in, fly-out' intervention, but instead was meant to facilitate a change in approach within the participant's practice themselves.

The findings generated in this study combine to illustrate the perception among the teachers of music as product, with the intentionality of lessons focusing on a tangible outcome (for example a performance associated with a school event). Many of the teachers when asked how music education operated within their school mentioned concerts, masses, assemblies, and musicals as key events. From my lesson observations and notes of Sally's lessons, I noticed her initial focus on mastery of the materials:

> The teacher's emphasis on getting things 'right' and being in tune were apparent from the outset. Her previously identified bimusical background seemed to influence her belief that the children should be in tune and on time. There was no time given in the lesson to free practice or exploration of the chord, or to improvise their own original rhythms….the class were clearly focused on the technical aspects of forming the chords and playing the rhythms. There was little space for personal expression and/or improvisation.

Eileen too in her lessons frequently focused on what was "tricky" in the material – a mindset that the musical activity was something to be perfected. Observation of video recordings revealed that both teachers' attention was again on the product of a 'perfect' musical

performance from the children. As the students played the songs with the on-screen resources, the teachers tended not to play with them. Instead, they focused on counting out the rhythms or strumming patterns. In fact, this occurred in Sally's lesson as her ukulele lay on her desk. In essence, she overlooked the collaborative nature of music in her attempt to 'get through the songs'. Of course, this is not to say the students didn't benefit from guidance to keep in time with the music and with each other. I am purely indicating her understanding of the purpose of the lesson. Rather than learning how to play together, the focus was on playing correctly.

The children's mindsets were similarly aligned with the view of music being a product. In my informal conversations with them after observed lessons, they often commented on looking forward to learning a song that "hadn't been done", "challenging [themselves]" to perfect a strumming pattern or moving onto covering the next new chord. It would appear that once something had been completed, it was no longer of use or interest. One child commented on the process of learning the ukulele:

> Roisín (Sally's 3rd class student): I would say that Musical Futures is very fun, and it's easy to learn the ukulele. If you thought a chord was too easy and you're in school, you could do two chords in a day. We were learning how to do basic chords first, and then we got to harder chords, like D or D minor, or G. There also...if there was an easy chord we would say oh, let's have a chance of another one.

While Roisín was clearly enjoying progressing in music learning, she never expressed how playing the music felt, instead offering what was to be gained tangibly from it. In other words, Roisín's analysis of Musical Futures was from a task-oriented, product-value position. While I am not belittling her clear enjoyment being challenged in her learning, her comment illustrates that the process of engaging in this approach seemed to mirror the teacher's musical habitus and functioned to highlight that even the children's interpretations of music was one of product and not process.

Indeed, changes occurred in the ideological emphasis on music as product when teachers and students began to see benefits in engaging with music as a process. One of Alice's students enjoyed "jamming" with their peers. For several students, music was seen as a new way to relax, tied closely to the recent focus on wellbeing in primary schools (as mentioned in

Chapter Eight), described by Laura here:

> Laura (Eileen's 6th class student): It's a great thing to do even if you have like stuff on your mind, you like forget it really quickly. Like, even if you do it as like a hobby. So like, if you go to Smyths now, you can buy a ukulele. And you know how to do it because of it and it might keep your mind off things as well.

For Beatrice, she utilised what she had learned in school to play for fun with her family:

> Beatrice (Winifred's 5th class student): My cousin can play ukulele as well and I can play ukulele and piano. So then I went to her house, and we were kind of like playing songs together and stuff.

In his reflective notes, David noted how his idea of music as product changed considerably, moving away from rote learning as the principal strategy of musical instruction:

> David: getting the children to actively take part in the music making has changed my idea of simply rote teaching the lyrics to sing the song. Rather, there's an emphasis on the children playing and simply enjoying the music!

This divergence from rote memorisation and repetition was also apparent in Winifred's practice:

> Winifred: Like if I hadn't Musical Futures, and I was just teaching the ukulele on my own, I would have been kind of stressing out - Oh, no, this is wrong, this is wrong - like, whereas when you're following the videos, you're just enjoying the activities, enjoying the songs, you're kind of not taking notice too much as a teacher of the sound that they're producing. You're just watching them learn the different steps of the chord and things like that.

She went on to outline how her practice has significantly changed through engagement in non-formal teaching, highlighting the importance of being in the moment with the students as they made music together:

> Winifred: I think a lot of the time because I'm very much into music, I often have an idea where I want to like teach them a song or something if it's singing or tin whistle or whatever. And I kind of focus on getting to the end product as much as possible and wanting to get each line perfect and blending them in for harmonies, etcetera. But with this, it was very much about the process rather than the product. And it was all about kind of getting them to experience their own little successes in groups and collaborative work or whatever. And not worrying about whether it was right and stuff all the time… I learned how to just kind of, I suppose relax - not everything has to be perfect like - and it actually worked out better in the end because they enjoyed it so much that the product you were kind of looking for just came naturally at the end, which was lovely.

Winifred's comments indicated one of the most explicit ideological shifts in the study. On the relationship between teacher and student, Winifred collaborated with her students on more equal footing. By this, I mean that they were both learning and making music together. At the same time, the teacher was still fulfilling her role as teacher, offering guidance and

feedback to certain children who may have been identified to be struggling.

In sum, informal learning exposed the ideological intentionality of music as product-centric on the part of both the teacher and students. In revealing this tension, many of the teachers such as Eileen, Sally, David, and Winifred reflected more deeply on their intentions while planning and teaching a music lesson to assess the purposes of music within their practice.

Discussion

From these interpellations, it emerges that ideological positions regarding music impact teacher beliefs and values about music education and musical ability within the context of their practice, but also their capacity for change through an engagement with informal and non-formal pedagogies.

Musicality as Giftedness: The Talent Myth

The talent myth has been widely researched in the field of music (Sloboda 1996; Howe *et al.* 1998; Brändström 1999; Evans *et al.* 2000; Hallam and Shaw 2002; Hallam and Prince 2003; Clelland 2006; Biasutti 2010; Legette 2012; Jaap and Patrick 2015; Shouldice 2019). Although in the case of Turino's (2008) participatory music making framing, there is an acknowledgement that exceptional musical ability can exist, generally within the field of ethnomusicology the notion of musical giftedness is not present (Hill 2011). By this, it is meant that musical ability is not subject to a select group of individuals, but that it is an innate ability to everyone.

Teachers who identify as 'musical' or 'unmusical' will have corresponding beliefs about music and their ability to teach music, which will, in turn, shape the beliefs of the students that they teach (Mills 1989; Shouldice 2014; Shouldice 2019). Shouldice (2014) conducted an interesting study in the United States that showed that students' perceptions of their musical ability deteriorate as they progress through school. Musical ability in this study was open to

interpretation from the perspective of the students themselves but was generally defined in relation to comparison with their peers and as someone who plays an instrument or sings (ibid., p.340). Indeed, conceptions of musicality are confounded by varying interpretations of the term that can be broadly defined as: being musically active, having musical experiences, doing music, feeling musical, making musical contributions, and developing musical expertise (Henley 2017, p.475).

The implication of this ideological position is important as it shows that many teachers do not believe that all their students are capable of being successful in music. From this assumption of ability, it is logical to predict that teacher expectations will be that only the few who demonstrate a degree of success in music are talented. The danger of this assumption is that teachers who deem a student as generally successful in school are often the same students who are assumed to be successful in music and are thus given priority in obtaining leading roles within the musical activity. In other words, musicality is presupposed to be analogous to academic aptitude, thereby proliferating exclusionary music practices. We know that the labels of 'musical' and 'unmusical' given to students are highly damaging to the musical identities of students, particularly if they sense that the teacher does not think they are 'gifted' at music (Lamont 2009).

How then, can an interpellation in this ideology benefit music teaching and learning? From the findings presented, the shift in ideological position encourages teachers to assume that all students have ability in music, giving more students a chance to experience success in the music lesson. The intersectionality between academic ability, gender, and musical ability seemed to emerge in some cases, particularly in Sally's practice. Through broadening her interpretation of music education, Sally underwent an interpellation, realising that musicality is not predetermined by gender or general academic ability. This will hopefully have powerful repercussions on how she will approach music lessons in the future and how she will view the musicality of her students. Similar interpellations occurred for Winifred and David, challenging

the assumption of musicality as a gift or talent.

Music as a Quasi-elitist Art Form

The concept of ideology is inherently laden with notions of oppression and power. Historically, music has been used as a tool to promote hegemonic ideals in society. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for example, aspects of what was considered of value or worth listening to lay with the middle classes, whose preference was for Western European classical music (Bull 2016). In this way, music perpetuated the ideals of the dominant society of the time. Today, relativist arguments that no type of art or music is better than any other are counter to neoliberal ideologies that newer is better, meaning that older pieces of music often typically have more 'value' ascribed to them. Consequently, such oppressive structures still exist and the perpetuation of the ideology that WAM is a valuable genre of music is proliferated by the education system (de Villiers 2021), even when the musical experiences of many children may not align with such musical tastes (Green 1988; Wright 2008). This creates an oppressive structure that alienates and nullifies other types of musics that are present in the diverse society, and indeed classrooms. This hegemony is prevalent at all levels of education, including initial teacher education, and, as Powell *et al.* (2017) note:

> …through perpetuating narrow, classist, and thus highly racialised definitions of acceptable music making in higher music education and music teacher education – centring on performance skills in the Western classical or art music tradition – institutions of higher education have the power to 'decide [people's] musical futures'.

(Powell *et al.* 2017, p.735)

Moore (2012, p.76) reasserts this position: "Students whose musical habitus differ from the dominant ideologies at play in higher education, can be disadvantaged in regard to a perceived lack of relevant cultural capital". Indeed, Bourdieu's term "symbolic violence" (2001, p.35) could be used to describe the imposition of the WAM aesthetic to the point where it has become normalised, leading to the idea that music can only truly be consumed and practiced by a select few in society.

Hence, music is seen as elitist through the perpetuation of high art forms. This is reinforced by the fact that "high culture in contemporary, twenty-first-century society tends to be 'difficult', abstract not representative, intellectually challenging rather than entertaining and concerned with style and form rather than content (Waters 1994). One requires a 'key' or set of internal referents by which to understand it." (Wright and Finney, 2010), warranting generalists to believe that music is a specialist subject (Russell 1996; Holden and Button 2006; Biasutti 2010) and further embedding its quasi-elitist status.

Green criticises the "cultural monopoly" (1988, p.68) that ensues from this ideological stance, going on to discuss the role the school has in its replication:

> Mass music for the apparently unmusical mass, and elite music for the manifestly musical elite, are reproduced to varying degrees outside school, and are reliant to a large extent on the different musical tastes, aspirations and opportunities of children from different social classes, a disparity which is already imbued in the social structure precisely by virtue of reproductive processes, and in musical meaning by the power of delineations, However, this mode of reproduction essentially relies on the provision of music education in schools, for without the schools' divisive and meritocratic effects, it could be neither maintained materially, nor legitimated ideologically: not merely the presence, but also the variety, of music in schools, gives the appearance that all music is freely available to all children.

(Green, 1988, p.79)

Informal learning approaches offer a means to address this hegemonic ideology as they start with the learner's musical tastes, abilities, interests, and values. Flipping such hegemony on its head, Musical Futures aligns with Dewey's vision for education as democratic and democratising whereby "…pupil-selection of curriculum content breaks down the reproductive effects of many previous music curricula, which by ignoring the musical identities and tastes of vast numbers of pupils prevented many of them from demonstrating or even discovering their musical abilities" (Green, 2008, p.13).

The findings indicate a considerable increase in the inclusion of students in the teaching and learning paradigm, giving a stronger voice to the student, and enabling the teacher to see the potential for musical development for all children and not just a select cohort. Winifred's practice, in particular, represented a marked departure from elitist presuppositions of music and her class benefitted from this enormously in terms of their musical participation and enjoyment.

Music as Product: Music or Musicking?

In an increasingly accountable profession, where standardisation and measurement are esteemed and that which can be measured is valued, the ideology of music as product is legitimised within broader educational agenda. Curricula further reinforce the concept of music as product through its use of language. The performing strand in the Irish primary curriculum relates most closely to the activity of music-making. However, performing implies an audience. Thus, the curriculum presupposes the act of music-making as product-oriented. A term such as 'practicing' would create a subtle semiotic shift, encompassing musicking in a fuller sense. On this point, when talking about music education, Elliott (1995) states that there must be a clear distinction between musicing (as a contraction of music-making) and performing. Musicing is an umbrella term, relating to all five forms of music-making: performing, improvising, composing, arranging, and conducting. This is a much broader interpretation of music than as just a product as was initially indicated by teachers in the study. The ideological interpellations discussed in this section suggest a shift more in line with the view of musicing as Elliott (1995) puts forward, reflecting a more rounded view of music and indeed music education.

This ideological stance of music being valued if it produces a product comes from a utilitarianist and entrepreneurial focus on education. Under this stance, music will not contribute to productive citizens within the social system. Thus, there is a need on the part of the teacher to 'justify' the value of music using objective measures with a focus on a product at the end of a music lesson. This idea was also discussed earlier in Chapter Eight with relation to assessment in music education.

Indeed, within music education discourse itself, this stance is entirely discordant, most notably in the work of Christopher Small. Small's concept of "musicking" encapsulates music within broader social relationships and complex interactions in how one relates to the world (1998). His emphasis on music as verb rather than as noun brings about an alternative view of

music, fostering a new educative paradigm where the value is placed on music as a *process*. This reverberates with Turino's (2008) framing of music as participatory performance, where:

> a primary distinguishing feature of participatory performance is that there are no artist-audience distinctions. Deeply participatory events are founded on an ethos that holds that everyone present can, and in fact should, participate in the sound and motion of the performance.

> (Turino 2008, p.29)

Green furthers this argument and bridges the dichotomy between music as process and product, advocating for music being viewed as a *processual product*, that is to say, music as a product through process, as both object and subject (2008, p.241). This is possibly the most useful framing within the context of this study as it does not deviate in extraordinary terms for teachers who are generally subjects of the product-oriented ideological framing of music but still functions to open up their understanding of music as a process. Across the interpellations presented in this section, it can be argued that in the findings a shift to this processual product intentionality was generally achieved and recognised.

However, a pertinent question is why is this shift important? Echoing Mantie and Smith (2017), a shift in focus in school on the process of music making though informal learning pedagogies enables more students to be motivated to participate and sustain engagement. This is because the attention shifts from 'getting it right' to music as a means of expressing oneself and connecting with others. For example, this was evidenced by how many students related the act of making music to the area of wellbeing. Stacy, Muireann's 3rd class student, comment is a typical example of the change: "I liked it because it's very fun and that if you make a mistake, it doesn't matter because it's just having fun".

Final thoughts

This chapter has examined the shifts in in three ideological positions using Althusser's interpellation as a tool to understand the process. Informal learning using the Musical Futures approach has challenged the notion of musicality as giftedness, of music as an elitist art form,

and of music education's intentionality towards product. Bearing in mind the interpellations that have been presented in the findings, Green's words take on a powerful meaning:

> By opening out our understanding that there are a multitude of ways in which to acquire musical skills and knowledge, surely we can reach out to more learners and reveal a much higher number of people with the capacity to make music for their own pleasure, a larger proportion of learners who would warrant being 'counted as musical' within formal settings, and a more open attitude towards music-making both on the part of those who specialize in it and on the part of amateur networks of families friends and others in the community.
>
> (Green 2002, p.216)

Indeed, 'opening out' teacher understanding, approaches, beliefs, values, and practice as a theme in itself has threaded through the last three chapters. Certainly, this project has 'reached out' to teachers and students alike and has brought about many positive changes in music teaching and learning within generalist teacher practice.

As discussed earlier in the thesis, teacher habitus both mediates and is mediated by practice. Thus, the extent to which teacher practice has the capacity to change is contingent on the teacher's current musical background and experiences. As such, their propensity for interpellation and/or counter-interpellation is subject to their accrued habitus and capital (including educational capital and musical content knowledge). This was clear in the cases of Sally, Eileen, David and Winifred, whose strong existing musical backgrounds worked to place them in a favourable position for ideological interpellation as they embodied the approach, using it to enhance their existing corpora of pedagogies and practice as music educators. For these teachers, the 'obstacle' of trying to understand the musical components of the approach was not present to any significant degree, thus freeing them to reflect on their own practice in greater awareness, often encouraging them to look at the bigger ideological picture and critically examine their ideological positionings. Conversely, for Muireann, it was not clear from the data whether she underwent any significant interpellation from an engagement with the project, perhaps signalling that her focus was largely consumed on the practicalities of delivering the music lesson rather than wider ideological concerns.

That being so, I would argue that there is a link between teachers' habitus and their inclination toward counter-interpellation. By this, I mean that teachers who regard themselves

as knowledgeable music educators with high self-efficacy are more likely to question existing pedagogies, ideologies, methodologies, and practices as they feel that they are in a position from which to critically interrogate and examine them. The converse it could be argued is also true, that is to say, that teachers who do not feel confident in their abilities to teach music rely on pre-existing structures and conform to dominant ideologies and practices (i.e. they are interpellated). In essence, this comes back to the maxims of 'teaching what you know' or 'teaching how you were taught'. This argument is logical as we are comfortable with the familiar and if most people are conforming to an ideological position there is safety in this position and therefore, we assume must be doing the right thing. However, it is in questioning the entrenched ideologies that exist currently and confronting them as this chapter has done that new and innovative paradigms are created, and new fora for dialogue and meaningful educational change in music education are negotiated.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study set out to examine to what extent can non-formal teaching and learning in music education using the Musical Futures approach affect beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of generalist primary teacher practice. Its aim was fourfold:

I.   To document primary teachers' musical backgrounds and prior music learning and teaching experiences within the Irish context through the lens of Bourdieu and Althusser;

II.   To interrogate assumptions of musical value and the social reproduction of musical opportunity within Irish primary music education;

III.   To explore how critical pedagogy as intervention can influence beliefs about musicality and musical ability for primary school communities; and

IV.   To enhance the confidence and efficacy of generalist teachers, and music education provision generally at the primary level.

Mindful of these aims, this chapter presents a reflection of the study, identifying its limitations and recommendations for further research. It then outlines the project's contribution to knowledge within the field before presenting some concluding thoughts on the thesis.

Reflection and Implications

Music education within primary generalist practice is subject to multifarious challenges, existing at the level of the teacher (through issues of efficacy, autonomy and identity), the classroom (through curriculum, pedagogy, democracy, dynamics), and society (through replicative ideological structures). Throughout the thesis, informal learning and non-formal teaching approaches have been explored in partnership with teachers so that meaningful and authentic music education can be experienced and sustained, reflecting the vision of music education as presented in curriculum documentation. The research question asked: to what extent can non-formal teaching and learning in music education using the Musical Futures

pedagogical approach affect beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of generalist primary teacher practice?

Teacher beliefs, prima facie, seem bound by individual factors such as musical backgrounds and prior music education experiences. However, the findings have shown that the extent to which teacher beliefs and values are subject to change is predicated by their habitus, capital, and position within the field. In particular, the thesis argues that the process of ideological interpellation is a means through which potential change of beliefs and values can be facilitated and that an individual's proclivity to interpellate (or counterinterpellate) is contingent on habitus; an extensive musical habitus may manifest in ingrained musical beliefs and values that are resistant to change, or conversely, such a habitus may grant the individual increased capacity to analyse their practice in a critical way. Moreover, that capacity for (counter)interpellation is bound to efficacious, agential, and identic factors, meaning that implementation of Musical Futures approaches can influence beliefs, values and practice in highly personal ways.

This study has shown how teachers harness their personal music tastes, interests, and experiences and mould them into a pedagogy that is a much a pedagogy of themselves as it is of the curriculum they implement and follow. Music is personal, tying individuals to a time, place, and connections with other people among myriad other elements (Ruud 1997). The findings revealed that informal learning and non-formal teaching can enable both the teacher and student to teach and learn music respectively (and mutually) in a way that is authentic to their firmly established musical identities, ironically granting them increased autonomy at the same time through the relinquishment of teacher control of the lesson and its intentionality.

These personal shifts are complemented by changes towards a more inclusive, open and flexible understanding of music and musicality at the ideological level, perhaps creating the most deep-seated change through the critical examination of teachers' own positionings on the very core of their beliefs as music educators. Questions that have been examined personally by

the teachers and also as the thrust of this thesis include: what is music? Is it a process or a product, or a semblance of the two? What is its value for students? What is its value for society? What does it mean to be musical? Who is musical (~~or not~~)? From this place of questioning, the findings demonstrated the extent to which beliefs and values have the capacity to change. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to answer these questions, the research has brought them to light, marking them as subject to further research within the Irish primary context.

Paradoxically perhaps, the findings have shown that the stronger the teacher's musical habitus (be it in western classical or traditional genres), the more challenging it can be to encourage a critical reappraisal and reconsideration of values. Biases and presuppositions of musical value and musicality can work to inhibit such changes. However, the findings have shown how prolonged engagement with informal learning approaches is key to bringing about shifts in entrenched ideological positions. The benefit of this endeavour is exponentially clear as the willingness of the participants to engage in reflective practice may foster renewed vigour in their teaching, effecting change in the musical beliefs and values of their students and hopefully breaking cycles of low musical self-efficacy and esteem, inspiring a new generation of musical teachers and leaders.

For students, the democratic ideals promoted within informal learning approaches, evidenced by the increased ownership over the learning, signals a shift towards more equitable and inclusive music education practices, redefining what it means to teach and learn music which is undeniably critical in its counter to hegemonic structures imposed by ideology and curricula. In essence, music has been 'opened up' for students and teachers in the classes where this project has taken place, redefining conceptualisations and manifestations of musical ability and musicality which will hopefully gain momentum in these schools.

If represented authentically, informal learning approaches such as Musical Futures enable the teaching of music as a musical endeavour rather than relegating it to an academic one. The authenticity of its representation could be evaluated against criteria from Folkestad's

and Wright's models (see Figure 1), enabling teachers to reappraise their teaching in light of critical reflection on current practice. Indeed, it could be argued that these shifts highlight how Musical Futures is in fact a critical pedagogy, uncovering biases and assumptions within music education and working to address them. With specific reference to this thesis, ideas of music being for a select few in society, that is to say, for those with a 'gift' for music, have been challenged. Elitist presuppositions of musicality and musical ability as influenced by WAM traditions have similarly been subverted, creating a vision for music education that is more inclusive and a counter to hegemonically-driven practices as this thesis has also explored. It is therefore fitting that Musical Futures as critical pedagogy should feature in the title of the thesis.

Limitations of the Study

While the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and data collection tools were deemed to align well with the intended aims and research questions within this study, the limitations of the study also need to be acknowledged.

Firstly, the research captured a snapshot of participants' views at a particular place and time and, undeniably, were influenced in particular by the COVID-19 pandemic. This limitation on the time period of the study is an acknowledgement that since participation in the project, participants may have developed their perspectives on the Musical Futures approach in a way that differs from their initial impressions as presented in the thesis. Further to this point and owing to the general lack of awareness of Musical Futures as an international approach in music education on the part of the participants, teachers were beginning from scratch with Musical Futures in their contexts, facing considerable challenges in getting it up and running within their individual contexts, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. It would have been desirable for teachers to have engaged with the approach over a much longer period, overcoming the 'halo' effect associated with trying something new and giving the teachers more time to carefully consider its impact on their practice. However, I endeavoured to support teachers as much as

possible during the initial engagement phase and followed this us with check-ins with teachers post-participation, for example, workshopping with school staff during school's Croke Park hours for CPD. These workshops were an opportunity for me to use the insights gained from the findings of the project and follow up with the colleagues of some of the participants, helping them to grow and develop the approach within their schools in a way that supported their specific needs and interests. In this way, the findings of the study were used as learning opportunities to stimulate expansion of informal and non-formal pedagogies within the music education practices of teachers on a wider scale.

Secondly, and on the point of reaching a wider cohort of teachers, it was initially planned to implement the Musical Futures approach within the participating schools as a whole-school initiative using a participatory action research paradigm. However, protocols and safety measures in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, severely inhibited cross-class collaboration, preventing this aim from being realised. Having spoken with teachers post-engagement with the project, they were generally excited to share the approach with their colleagues in the coming school year, subject to the easing of restrictive measures. Across schools, the Google Hangouts was set up to try and facilitate dialogue among teachers post-engagement as they developed the approach further in their respective schools. I forwarded details of any upcoming workshops organised by Musical Futures and encouraged teachers to share their insights and tips from their own experiences.

Thirdly, in response to the relatively small size of the participant group in the study, the thesis favoured depth over breadth in its methodological approach. Indeed, Cain (2010) argues the impact of such research paradigms in music education is limited as it primarily deals with small groups, with Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, p.284) adding that they can often be misinterpreted and exaggerated in their facilitation of change and the understanding of the collective roles in the process. Cain goes on to posit that this proves a challenge in relating it to wider educational discourse. However, in defence of this argument, the proposed investigation

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into the beliefs and values of teachers necessitated the use of such a methodological approach in order to capture authentic data. Explicit addressing of the validity and reliability issues arising from qualitative research also goes some way to mitigating this issue.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this thesis has examined the capacity for change in current teacher practice, it has also identified how ITE is a critical period in the construction, reinforcement, challenging and degradation of musical values in the life of a teacher. Thus, a proposed area for further investigation is an examination of the impact of informal learning pedagogies on the musical values of student generalist teachers, offering a chance to intervene at this formative stage of a teacher's career where they are beginning to align their personal and professional musical lives. International studies into preservice teachers facilitating the teaching and learning of popular music has shown promise in this regard (Blackwell *et al.* 2022), warranting further research within an Irish context.

Furthermore, in response to the first limitation above regarding the relatively short timeframe of the project, I propose a follow-up study with these teachers. Further studies might explore how these teachers' beliefs and values have further changed through prolonged engagement or how they have grown and adapted the approach within their school community. It would be interesting to compare their perspectives longitudinally from their initial immersion in the Musical Futures approach in this thesis with new insights at a later date.

With future investigations within the primary context in mind, I have learned the absolute importance of working closely with teachers and school leaders in implementing Musical Futures approaches. This can only be achieved by teachers feeling supported through an intense period of familiarisation and upskilling in the approach, followed by regular consultation. An understanding of Musical Futures as a philosophical and pedagogical approach to music education and not just a set of resources is paramount in engaging with the approach

in its intended format, thereby mitigating the "projectisation" (Young 2021) of Musical Futures as mentioned in Chapter Nine. This could again be enhanced further by the involvement of the whole school staff and community in the approach, as previously suggested. It would be wise in future investigations to invest as much time as possible in ensuring teachers are satisfied with their understanding of the approach and how it can be tangibly implemented within their own specific teaching context.

Contribution to Knowledge

Though previous literature has examined Musical Futures approaches from a variety of perspectives, no studies of primary generalist music education practices of this format have been conducted. Moreover, studies of informal learning in music education in Ireland itself are scant, not least within the primary level. Consequently, the application of this approach within this context has allowed novel and unique perspectives on primary music education in Ireland to come to light. The thesis adds to contemporary discussion and posits the consideration of such pedagogies for the enhancement of the teaching and learning of music for the primary generalist teacher in Ireland. Changing deep-rooted beliefs and values of a lifetime is no small task; this thesis has shown how changes have manifested in teacher practice at micro, meso, and macro levels, warranting serious discussion and consideration of the use of informal learning pedagogies in the facilitation of this process. This comes at an opportune time as the Irish primary curriculum undergoes reform to reflect a changing society.

The idiosyncratic nature of change often makes it difficult to formally or explicitly define and identify. The theoretical insights of Althusser and his concept of (counter)interpellation to track and trace these shifts in musical beliefs and values comprise another unique contribution of this study. Such weaving of theory from Althusser (and reinforced with that of Bourdieu) articulates and bolsters the findings into a cohesive argument. This theoretical lens has not been applied to the sphere of music education to date and offers a

tangible model for the visualisation of change through the micro, meso, and macro levels, influencing teacher practice and student learning on multiple fronts. These shifts - which may have gone previously undiscovered - demonstrate this study's addition to knowledge in proffering new theoretical perspectives on music teaching and learning, as demonstrated here in Figure 13. This figure refines the original Figure 8 in Chapter 4 and demonstrates how the findings specific to this study are framed through Althusser's work. In Figure 8, the process of interpellation and counterinterpellation was illustrated where an individual may change their ideological position. Figure 13 takes this diagram and extends it further; the shifts in three ideological positions pertaining to musical ability, musicality, and the purposes of music through the process of interpellation are illustrated, creating a visual representation of the findings from Chapter Nine. These interpellations are shown to have an impact on teacher beliefs and values in relation to musics education and, in turn, an influence on student beliefs, values and outcomes. This original figure captures how Musical Futures may be regarded as a critical pedagogy, disrupting recursive hegemonic practices, and bringing about reappraisals in music education practice.
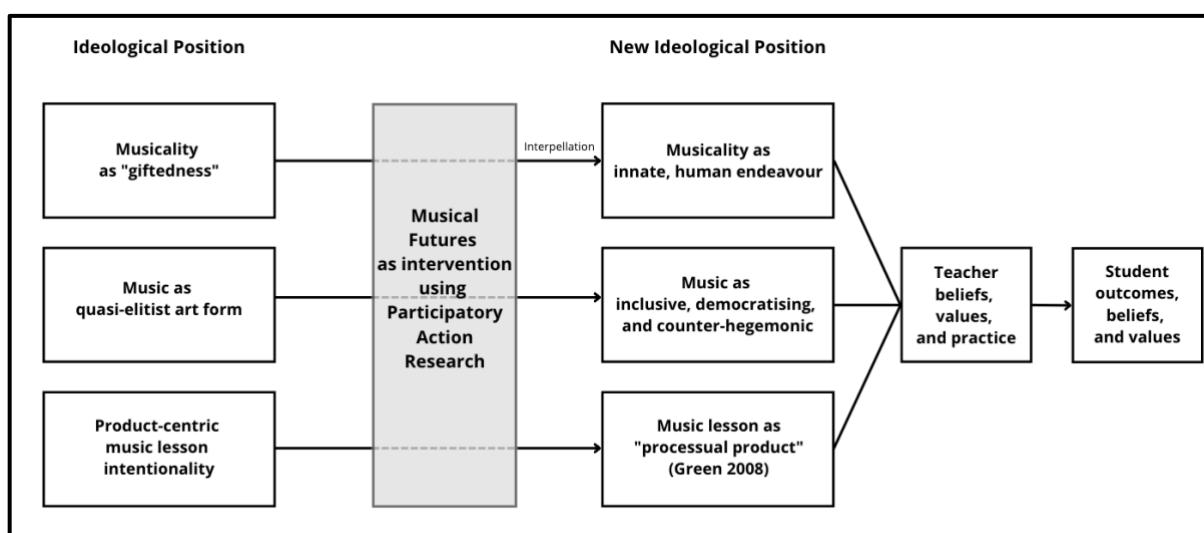

Figure 13: New theoretical perspective

In conclusion, unique in its methodological design and application in context, this thesis

offers original contributions to musical policy, practice, and pedagogy. This thesis originally set out to (a) document primary teachers' musical backgrounds and prior music learning and teaching experiences within the Irish context; (b) interrogate assumptions of musical value and the social reproduction of musical opportunity within primary music education; (c) explore how critical pedagogy as intervention can influence beliefs about musicality and musical ability for primary school communities, and; (d) enhance the quality of music education provision at the primary level for the generalist teacher. I feel that the thesis has succeeded in achieving these aims, adding new insights and advancing discourse in the field, while negotiating innovative paradigms for meaningful educational change in music education.

Concluding Thoughts

> It is imagination that discloses possibilities…personal and social as well as aesthetic…by imagining…we are enabled to look at things as if they were otherwise.
>
> (Greene 2000, n.p.)

This study has offered a timely inquiry into generalist music education practice at a time where the Irish primary curriculum is undergoing re-evaluation. The sociological landscape of music education within Ireland is unique but, in saying this, informal learning pedagogies as originated from contexts outside of Ireland have much to teach us about the ways in which we can engage our students in music education and indeed what it means to make and teach music to children. Unpacking the cultural, structural, and agential conditions that affect generalist primary teachers' experiences of music learning and teaching and the provision of music has exposed ways in which we can begin to understand how beliefs and values are shaped and in turn, shape practice; encouraging critical reflection on pedagogical approaches and fostering enhanced music making in our primary schools. As Greene says above, possibilities for music education, pedagogy, and teacher practice are only subject to our imagination.

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Appendix A: Lesson observation simple protocol

Site 1 - Classroom Observation 1   12/11/2020

· Focus Questions:

- What is the role of the teacher?
- How are the teacher's values mediated through their practice?
- Can we define this as "informal learning"?
  → learning situation (where?)
  → learning style (how?)
  → ownership of learning (who?)
  → intentionality (towards what is the mind directed?)
- How are the children responding?
  → musically
  → extra-musically
- Are children struggling / excelling? What are the supports/barriers observed?
- Are there any limitations / challenges / drawbacks / improvements observed?
- How has MF been adapted for this context?
- Describe the learning environment.
- Describe the nature of classroom interaction.
- Comment on the relationship between teacher and student.
- Any standout statements/comments?

Appendix B: Sample extract from researcher diary

As I entered the prefab classroom, I was met with the sight of the children at their desks tuning their ukuleles. The teacher was also at the door tuning hers.

After greeting the class, I took my seat at the corner of the room in keeping with the school's COVID policy. The teacher began the lesson with the class. The children revised the Am, F and C chords with a funky jam. Here was my first opportunity to view their progress and if the level of difficulty was suitable.

While the ukuleles weren't in tune, I was still able to evaluate the student's ability to follow the rhythms (e.g 1+2+3+4.) and form and change between chords. I was delighted to see that most of the class were able to do so and that all children were engaging with their instrument and the resources displayed on the interactive whiteboard.

I could see children using a combination of counting the rhythms to themselves, watching the board for cues, copying the teacher's rhythms, listening to the teacher verbally calling out rhythms and also looking at eachother

to guide them. Their development of musical and aural skills was apparent right from this revisory introduction.

COVID restrictions severely limit any chance for student interaction in this classroom and the layout of all tables + chairs to face the front of the room in rows also contributes to this. Consequently the development of social interactions was not witnessed in this lesson.

My focus then turned to the teacher. She was circulating (while keeping socially distant) and assisting pupils count the rhythms while also offering tips for fingering and chord formation. Her questioning to guide + revise concepts with the children was effective and her use of teaching points (e.g. "these are the strings closest your nose, these are closest your toes") were useful tips and reminders for

For teachers: Pre-Engagement with MF

1.   Describe your own musical background and experience.
2.   In what way(s), if any, does this experience inform your teaching?
3.   Describe how music education operates/exists within your particular teaching context.
4.   What would you consider to be the most important aspect(s) of music education for different types of pupils at the primary level?
5.   What, if anything, do you feel you need to support you in teaching music in your context?
6.   What do you regard as the most serious/pressing problems in music education within your context?
7.   What is your understanding of the Musical Futures/Just Play approach?
8.   Does this approach differ to your existing music education practice? If so, in what way(s)?
9.   Could you talk about the confidence and professional satisfaction of teachers in this school, in relation to Musical Futures?
10. What do you hope to gain from this project?

For teachers: Post-Engagement with MF

Impact on teacher practice

1.   Could you talk about your general impressions of Musical Futures as a teaching and learning approach?
2.   Describe your engagement and experience using Musical Futures in your classroom.
3.   Have you experienced any challenges implementing Musical Futures in your classroom? If so, what challenges?
4.   Have you experienced any successes implementing Musical Futures in your classroom? If so, what successes?
5.   Has the Musical Futures approach changed your practice in any way? If so, in what way?
6.   What aids/resources/supports were critical in helping you to implement Musical Futures? Why was this the case?
7.   If you were to explain Musical Futures to someone unfamiliar with the approach, what would you say to them?

Impact on student outcomes/experience

8.   Has Musical Futures contributed to whole school ethos? If so, in what ways? (follow up) Could you provide some examples?
9.   (if not) What other contributions might it have made?
10. Could you comment on the impact of Musical Futures on progression in music or in other areas?

11.   Would you say that there have been any specific benefits for students involved in Musical Futures? If so, examples; (Probe: any unexpected benefits?)
12.   Would you say that Musical Futures has had a positive impact on transferable skills amongst the students? (follow up) which in particular? (e.g. concentration, group work, autonomous learning, organisation);
13.   Would you say that Musical Futures has had a positive impact on students, behaviourally and emotionally? (e.g. attitudes to school/learning, attendance, wellbeing, self-concept)
14.   Could you comment on Musical Futures in terms of assessment?
15.   In your experience, does Musical Futures have equal benefit for all students? If not, provide examples and reasons for differences.

Final comments

16.   Have you any thoughts or ideas about how Musical Futures might be developed further in this school?
17.   Any other issues or comments.

For principals: Pre-Engagement with MF

1. What music do children experience in your school?
2. How does music education operate within your school?
3. What do you hope to gain for your school, staff, and students by engaging with Musical Futures?

For principals: Post-Engagement with MF

1. Have you noticed any changes in the approach to music education within the school? Please describe them.
2. What aspect(s) of the project initially appealed to you?
3. What have been some of the biggest challenges in engaging with Musical Futures over the past few weeks?
4. What have been some of the biggest successes in engaging with Musical Futures over the past few weeks?
5. What would you say to any school considering using Musical Futures in their setting?

For students: Focus Group Discussion

1. What were music lesson like with your teacher before Musical Futures?
2. What did you enjoy about using Musical Futures in your classroom?
3. What did you find difficult about using Musical Futures in your classroom?
4. What did you learn while doing Musical Futures? (e.g. musical skills, other skills, teamwork, concentration)
5. If you were to explain Musical Futures to someone who had never done it before, what would you say to them?
6. Would you like to continue using Musical Futures in your classroom? Why/Why not?

Appendix F: Information pack for schools (information letters, consent forms, assent forms for principals, teachers, parents, and students)

Principal's Information Letter

Dear Principal _____,

I hope this email finds you well in these unprecedented times.

My name is Edmond Gubbins. As you may already be aware, I am conducting my PhD in music education at Mary Immaculate College under the supervision of Dr. Gwen Moore. My research seeks to investigate the extent that non-formal teaching and learning in music education using the *Musical Futures* pedagogical approach can affect beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of generalist primary teacher practice. I am hoping to conduct this research in schools during the course of the academic year 2020-2021 and would be delighted for your school to take part.

This project has recently been awarded funding from the Government of Ireland through the Irish Research Council. This is a highly prestigious accolade and highlights the potential impact and contribution this research will have to primary music education in Ireland. Press release information regarding this scholarship can be read here:

https://www.mic.ul.ie/news/2020/government-of-ireland-postgraduate-scholarships

What is Musical Futures?
Musical Futures is an international and empowering approach to music education, delivering music education to students, based on principles of informal learning.

1. Explain later
2. We get better as we play
3. Learn by listening
4. Sound before symbol
5. Show don't tell

This study, the first of its kind and scale in Ireland, will see teachers utilising the *Musical Futures* approach and will examine its implementation at primary level. It is an exciting opportunity for your school community to engage with a new approach to music education, grounded in two decades of research into informal learning in music education.

Participation in this project will:
- Allow children to practice playing in time with others, making chords and chord changes on several instruments, hone listening skills, and enjoy learning music informally while playing along with popular music and artists.
- Enhance teachers' CPD and skills in music teaching, regardless of their own personal musical background.
- Help to discover new perspectives on music teaching and learning at primary level in Ireland.

What would be involved for me, my staff and my school?
- This project intends to examine the impact of Musical Futures for the **senior classes of the school (3rd-6th class)**

and would require the involvement of the teachers and students of one or more of these classes. Mixed grade and single grade classes would equally be welcome for the project.

- Those teachers interested in taking part would be provided with a **1-2 hour practical workshop** in how to implement Musical Futures with their classes. This workshop would be delivered by me to participating staff at a time of convenience to you. A bank of **high-quality interactive teaching resources** for this approach will be showcased in this workshop. To access these resources, your school will need a subscription to Musical Futures Online. If you agree to participate fully in the project and show your commitment to taking it on board, access to these resources can be arranged at no cost to the school. If you have access to or can gather a set of instruments for the class(es) taking part they will be able to delve even further into the approach. Suggested instruments include ukulele, guitar, keyboard, tuned percussion (e.g. chime bars, glockenspiels, etc), and/or untuned percussion (e.g. shakers, tambourines, drums, etc.). Saying this, they will still be able to engage perfectly well for the purposes of this project with body percussion and/or no instruments.
- Teaching using the Musical Futures approach for at least a **6-8 week period during regular music classes**. I would attend some of these classes to observe and, with your consent, record the music teaching and learning taking place. These can take place virtually over Zoom with your permission.
- Completion of a **questionnaire and interview** before the 6-8 week teaching block.
- Completion of an **interview** after the 6-8 week teaching block.
- Completion of brief **focus group discussions** with a small number of students (4-6) at a time of convenience to you and your class.
- Participation would be completely voluntary, and all data would be anonymised to protect participants.
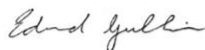
Given the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic, I know that there are many worries at present regarding the operation of schools. I would, of course, liaise closely with you prior to engagement in the project to allay any concerns or queries you may have about how the project would operate within your school in order to best serve the needs and interests of your school community.

I want to sincerely thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

If you require more information, please don't hesitate to contact me via email, or alternatively by phone 086 073 9122 and I would be more than happy to discuss any of the above in detail.

More information about *Musical Futures* can be found here: https://www.musicalfutures.org/

Yours Sincerely,

Edmond Gubbins
PhD Student in Music Education
Mary Immaculate College
South Circular Road
Limerick

Musical Futures as Critical Pedagogy: Investigating Generalist Primary Teachers' Musical Backgrounds and Experiences and the Influence of Whole School Participatory Action Research on Music Learning and Teaching

Participant Information Letter

Thank you for your interest in the study. My name is Edmond Gubbins and I am a PhD Researcher in the field of music education at Mary Immaculate College. My thesis seeks to investigate to what extent can non-formal teaching and learning in music education using the Musical Futures pedagogical approach affect beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of generalist primary teacher practice.

You will be asked to complete a brief survey and audio-recorded interview before your engagement with the *Musical Futures* approach in your classroom. You will be invited to have your *Musical Futures* lessons observed and video recorded. You will also be asked to participate in a recorded interview after your engagement with *Musical Futures*. These will help in understanding generalist teachers' beliefs and values with regard to music education and their capacity to change.

Your participation is voluntary. **You may withdraw from participation at any time without consequence.**

All data is collected anonymously – you are only required to give your name for consent. In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule, anonymised research data may be held indefinitely by the Researcher. This research complies with the Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you very much for your time. If you have any queries / issues with regard to this study my contact details are as follows:

Edmond Gubbins

Edmond.gubbins@mic.ul.ie

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

Dr Gwen Moore (Supervisor)	**Mary Collins**
Director of Teaching and Learning	**MIREC Administrator**
Mary Immaculate College	**Research and Graduate School**
South Circular Road	**Mary Immaculate College**
Limerick	**South Circular Road**
061-204945	**Limerick**
gwen.moore@mic.ul.ie	**061-204980**
	mirec@mic.ul.ie

Consent Form for Participating Teacher

Musical Futures as Critical Pedagogy: Investigating Generalist Primary Teachers' Musical Backgrounds and Experiences and the Influence of Whole School Participatory Action Research on Music Learning and Teaching

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

As outlined in the **participant information letter** the current study will investigate to what extent can non-formal teaching and learning in music education using the Musical Futures pedagogical approach affect beliefs about music education and musical ability within the context of generalist primary teacher practice.

Details of what your participation involves are contained in the **participant information letter**. The participant information letter should be read fully and carefully before consenting to take part in the study, including reference to the use of audio and video recording.

Your anonymity is assured, and you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule anonymised research data may be held indefinitely by the Researcher.

Please read the following statements before signing the consent form.

- I have read and understood the **participant information letter.**
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I am fully aware of **all** of the procedures involving myself, and of any **risks and benefits** associated with the study.
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.
- I am aware that my results will be kept confidential.

Name (PRINTED): _____

Name (Signature): _____

Date: _____

Investigating Primary Teachers' Musical Backgrounds and Experiences and the Influence of Whole School Participatory Action Research on Music Learning and Teaching

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Purpose of the study
This study hopes to examine the impact of the *Musical Futures* approach on teaching and learning within the primary school. This approach has had positive outcomes on student engagement and musical development internationally and is the first of its kind and scale to be adapted for the Irish primary school context. It is hoped that teacher practice in music teaching and learning will be enhanced by engaging with Musical Futures in your child's class.

Who is undertaking it?
My name is Edmond Gubbins and I am a Postgraduate student attending Mary Immaculate College. I am presently completing a PhD in the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education under the supervision of Dr Gwen Moore. The current study will form part of my thesis.

What are the benefits of this research?
It is hoped that the data gathered from participants will (a) give an insight into the beliefs and values of primary teachers with regard to music and music education (b) enhance teacher practice through an engagement with Musical Futures (c) encourage inclusive and meaningful musical participation from students.

Exactly what is involved for you and your child?
The study will involve:
a. Interviewing your child as part of a group discussion after the project has finished. This will take 5-10 minutes and will be audio-recorded. Your child will also be asked for his/her permission to take part in any of the above.
b. Observation and video recording of *Musical Futures* lessons by the researcher.

The *Musical Futures* lessons with your child will be completed with their class teacher and will be over a 6-8 week period. After this, the interview will be conducted about the student's experiences over the previous weeks.

The observation, recording and interviews will be conducted with the permission of the principal and class teacher. The recordings will be watched, listened to, and transcribed by the researcher only, and analysed for inclusion in the thesis. This information will be used for research purposes only. Children's names will never be used in the writing up of the study. Your child will only be asked questions about the project and no personal or sensitive questions will be asked. If you do not wish for your child to be included in the study, they will still be able to take part in the *Musical Futures* music lessons with their class.

Right to withdraw
Every participant's anonymity is assured and participation is voluntary. You, or your child, are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without consequence.

How will the information be used?
The data from your child's participation will be combined with that of the other participants in this study and presented in the thesis. Excerpts from the data may be used to show their progress over the 6-8 weeks to other teachers and researchers but your child anonymity will be kept at all times and every effort will be made to ensure there will be no clue to their identity in these excerpts.

How will confidentiality be kept?
All data gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. A pseudonym will be created for each participant and it is this name, rather than the participant's name, which will be held with their data to maintain their anonymity.

What will happen to the data after research has been completed?
In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule, anonymised data may be retained indefinitely by the researcher.

Contact details:
If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study my contact details are as follows:

Edmond Gubbins
Edmond.gubbins@mic.ul.ie

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

Dr Gwen Moore *(Supervisor)*	**Mary Collins**
Director of Teaching and Learning	**MIREC Administrator**
Mary Immaculate College	**Research and Graduate School**
South Circular Road	**Mary Immaculate College**
Limerick	**South Circular Road**
061-204945	**Limerick**
gwen.moore@mic.ul.ie	**061-204980**
	mirec@mic.ul.ie

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Title of Study: Investigating Primary Teachers' Musical Backgrounds and Experiences and the Influence of Whole School Participatory Action Research on Music Learning and Teaching

- I have read and understand the parent/guardian information sheet.

- I understand what the study is about, and what my and my child's data will be used for.

- I understand that my own and my child's anonymity will be protected and their name will not appear on any research data from this study.

- I understand that my own and my child's participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my child's participation from the study at any stage without giving any reason.

This study involves audio and video recording. Please tick the appropriate box

☐ I am aware that my child's participation in this study will be audio and video recorded and **I agree** to this. However, should I or my child feel uncomfortable at any time I/my child can ask that the recording equipment be turned off. I am entitled to an anonymised summary of the discussions if I or my child wants to review it. I am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is finished.

☐ I **do not agree** to my child being audio and video recorded in this study.

After considering the above statements, I consent to my child
_____ (name) involvement in Edmond Gubbins' research study.

Name of child: (please print) _____

Name of parent/guardian: (please print) _____

Parent/guardian Signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____   Date: _____

Musical Futures Interview

Children's Information Letter

Your teacher is going to be doing some new things when teaching you and your class music over the next couple of weeks. It's called *Musical Futures*. Your teacher is doing this to help us find new and fun ways of teaching music for primary school children just like you.

We would like to hear what you think about *Musical Futures* in your classroom. To do this, I would like to ask you some questions with your classmates about what you enjoyed or what you found difficult. I would also like to record your class doing some of your *Musical Futures* lessons on video.

It's not a test – there are no right or wrong answers. If you don't want to answer any questions, that's okay. You won't get in trouble.

What you say and do will only be heard and seen by us, some people in the college who are learning about teaching music, and some other people who want to use *Musical Futures* in their schools. Nobody else will hear or see what you say or do because those are our college rules. If we are telling people about your answers, we won't use your name so people won't know who you are.

If you have any worries about the questions you can talk to us, your teacher or your parents, even if they have already been answered.

Assent Form for Children

What was Musical Futures like in my classroom?

Assent Form

My name is _____. For the next few weeks, my teacher is going to use Musical Futures with me and my class. Some of these lessons may be video recorded and at the end of that time, I may be asked to talk about what I thought Musical Futures was like in my classroom.

When I am talking about what I thought Musical Futures was like in my classroom, I know that I don't have to speak if I don't want to. I know that whenever I feel like stopping that's okay, I won't get in trouble and I don't have to say why I feel like stopping.

I know this isn't a test or an exam and by speaking I am just helping out the people from Mary Immaculate College.

By signing my name below, I agree to take part.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G: Phase one codebook sample

Phase 1 - Open Coding (Codes)

Initial open coding of interesting features of the data in systematic fashion across data. Codes are defined here as: 'the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis 1998, p.63).

Name	Description	Files	References
Aspirations or Intentions	Refers to any wish or intention the teacher holds for either their own practice or the students' learning.	13	40
Attitudes Towards Music	This refers to any mention of a teacher or colleague's attitude towards music and/or music education	19	77
Existing Attitudes		4	4
Fostering Attitudes		15	44
Barriers to Musical Participation	Mention of any challenge or barrier to music education, music, or musical participation	13	68
CPD	This refers to any mention of teacher continuous professional development (CPD), or lack thereof, in relation to music education	2	3
Resources	Includes lack of resources, inadequate resources, access to resources, limited resources, etc.	8	14
Student-Related Factors		8	8
Teacher-Related Factors	Including teacher knowledge, musical knowledge, school makeup and structure, etc.	8	19
Time	Refers to any mention of time - time within music, within the school day, within planning, within practice, etc.	8	14
Comments about Musical Futures	Refers to any comment, impression, or opinion of Musical Futures in general	21	427
Assessment		7	13
Challenges, Barriers and Obstacles	These include those the teacher self-identified and those perceived to be present by the researcher	14	59

Name	Description	Files	References
Changes in Teaching and Learning		0	0
Development of Students' Skills		17	138
Personal and Professional Development		8	29
Experiencing Success	Referring to any mention of success experience by either the teacher or students using Musical Futures	15	51
Mention of Resources		12	33
Negative Comments		6	17
Positive Comments		20	222
Relinquishing Control	This refers to any instance where the teacher mentions a change in classroom dynamics, where the students are given increased ownership/voice in the learning process	8	25
Comments on Gender		4	6
COVID	Refers to any mention of the COVID-19 Pandemic and/or it's impact on the teaching and learning experience.	18	39
Curriculum	Refers to any mention of curriculum and/or its impact on the teacher or class.	10	36
Differentiation	Refers to any mention of differentiation or differences in learning among students.	13	42
Identity	Refers to any mention of or aspect of an individual's identity, be it musical, educational, personal, etc. 'the concept of musical identity enables us to look at the widespread and varied interactions between music and the individual" (Hargreaves, Mieli and MacDonald 2002, p.5) "[music teachers' identities] inevitably determine how they project their own implicit views of the nature of music in the school" (Hargreaves, Purves, Welch and Marshall 2007,	15	43

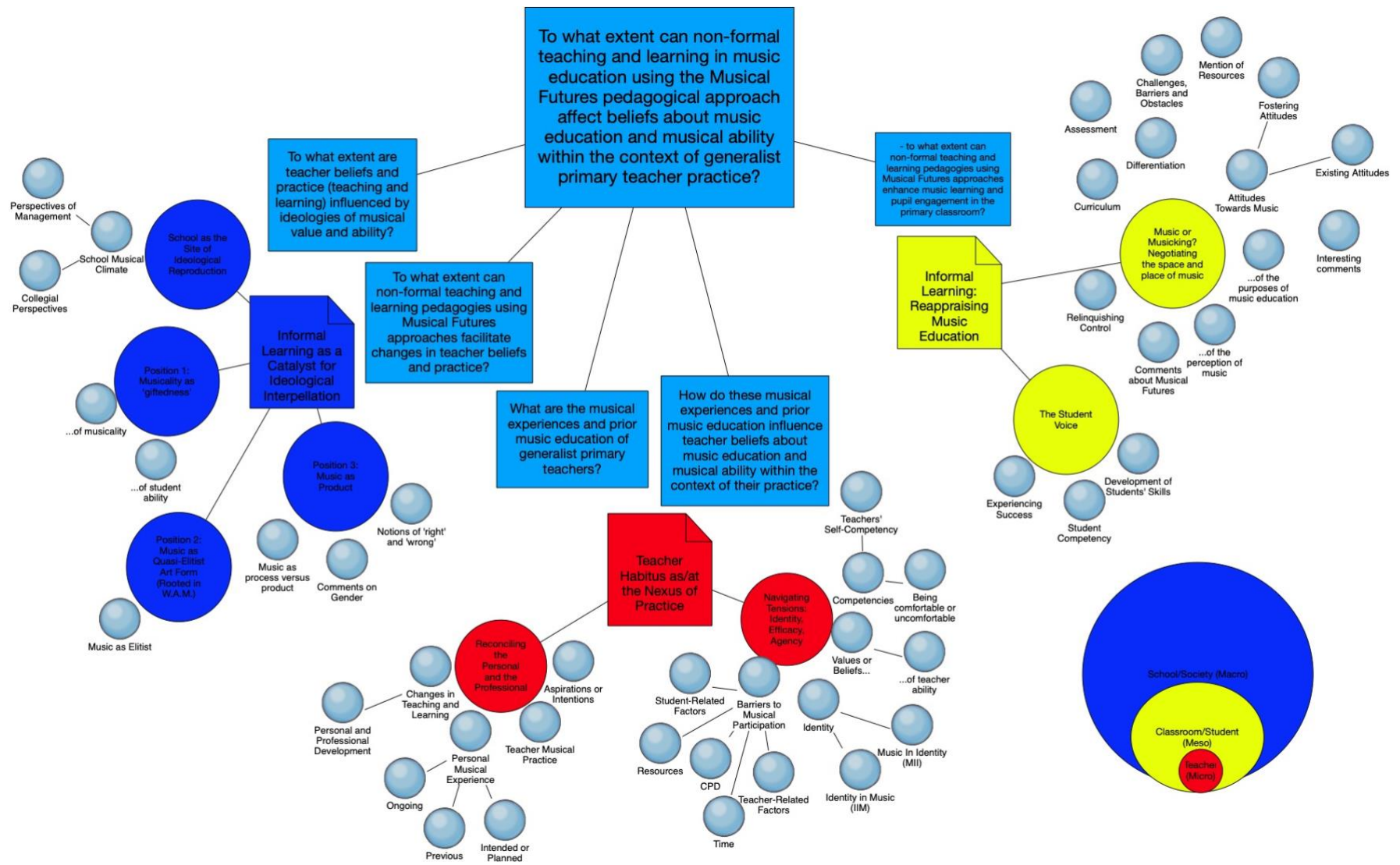| Name	Description	Files	References
	p. 667).		
Identity in Music (IIM)	McHale (2013, p.198) uses Hargreaves, Mieli and MacDonald's (2002) term to denote 'the conceptualisation of self based on the cultural or social roles applied in music. These include the general roles of performers, composers, and teachers as well as specific details, such as instrument played or music preference'	4	6
Music In Identity (MII)	McHale (2013, p.199) uses Hargreaves, Mieli and MacDonald's (2002) term to denote 'the result of the process of using music to develop identity. This category positions music as an important element in the development of self-concept - how we define ourselves in terms of context or domain and self-esteem - the evaluative measure that individuals place on themselves'	14	33
Interesting comments	Refers to any comment deemed to be of interest to the researcher with potential for further reflection and analysis	20	42
Music as Elitist	This refers to any mention of music or music education reserved for certain students. It may include talk of extracurricular music lessons, one-on-one lessons, after-school lessons, money, socio-economic factors, etc.	12	28
Music as process versus product		18	51
Notions of 'right' and 'wrong'		20	49
Perceived Competencies	Refers to any mention of competency or proficiency in aspects of teaching, pedagogy, music, musical knowledge, musical content, etc.	19	208
Being comfortable or uncomfortable	Refers to any mention of being comfortable, familiar, or used to something, or the opposite - finding things hard, difficult, etc.	14	42
Negative valence	Mentions that they do not feel competent in this area	7	18
Positive valence	Mention that they are competent in these areas	6	8
Student Competency		15	61
Teachers' Self-		13	63

Name	Description	Files	References
Competency			
Personal Musical Experience	Refers to any mention of prior or existing musical learning, including lessons, courses, classes, examinations, instruments played, musical experiences, either in school or external to the school	12	35
Intended or Planned		5	8
Ongoing		5	5
Previous		6	18
School Musical Climate	This refers to any influence on music education outside of the teacher and class, including colleagues, parents, principal, boards of management, collaboration, planning, policies, etc.	13	43
Collegial Perspectives		0	0
Perspectives of Management		2	2
Teacher Musical Practice	Refers to any mention of prior or current practice in music education, including pedagogy, layout, content, experience, student learning, etc.	15	85
Negative		4	5
Positive		8	27
Values or Beliefs…	Refers to any mention of a belief or value a teacher holds with regard to teaching generally or in music and/or music education.	23	295
…of musicality		19	65
…of student ability		17	67
…of teacher ability		12	43
…of the perception of		17	49

Name	Description	Files	References
music	238		
...of the purposes of music education		18	43

Appendix H: GANTT Chart

	2019		2020			2021			2022	
	Sept-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-June	July-Aug	Sept-Dec	Jan- Feb	Mar- Aug	Sept - Dec	Jan-Apr	May-September
Refining Proposal, Research Question and Embedded Questions	██							██		
Theoretical Framework	██	██	██							
Literature Review and Policy Context	██	██	██	██						
Methodology			██	██		██				
Ethical Clearance			██	██						
Stakeholder Meetings and Workshops					██	Schools closed due to COVID-19	██			
Data Collection – Interviews, Observations, Focus Groups					██	Schools closed due to COVID-19	██			
Data Analysis						██	██	██		
Synthesis and Chapter Structure									██	
Drafting								██	██	
Submission and Viva Voce										First week of June – soft bound submission First week of July – last possible date for viva First week of September – hard bound and accompanying forms submission Mid-Sept. – Exam board

<u>Awards:</u>
- Winner of Mary Immaculate College *Thesis in 3* competition. February 2022.
- Best Overall Poster Layout at the Shannon Region Postgraduate Researcher Conference (SRPRC). May 2021.
- MIC Doctoral Studentship Award 2019 Awardee (competitive award granted based on a prospective student's academic excellence. Total value €38,312). June 2019.
- Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme Awardee (highly competitive award to complete doctoral studies. Total value € 51,430.86). October 2020.
- Winner of an Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) Bursary 2019/2020 (value of award €3000). November 2019.
- Laura Bassi Scholarship winner Round Two (partial fee waivers towards editorial assistance). August 2020.
- Eda Sagarra Medal of Excellence winner (achieved first place in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences section of the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme Awards). December 2020.

<u>Conference Presentations/Symposia/Dissemination:</u>
- Gubbins. E. (2022) '*Interpellations in Primary Generalist Music Education: Informal Learning Pedagogies as Change Facilitators of Music-Related Ideologies*', presented at the International Society for Music Education World Conference. July 17-22.
- Gubbins. E. (2022) '*Musical Futures and the Irish Primary School: Findings from Doctoral Research*', presented at the Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral Futures for Music Education in Ireland Symposium. All Hallows Campus, DCU, Dublin. April 21-22.
- Gubbins. E. (2021) '*Amplifying primary music education: Findings from doctoral research on the impact of the* Musical Futures *informal learning pedagogy on music teaching and learning within the Irish primary generalist context*', presented at The Society for Music Education in Ireland Conference, November 4-6.
- Gubbins. E. (2021) '*Music Education, Informal Learning, and Primary Generalist Teacher Practice: Findings from a Pilot Cycle Study into the Experiences of Music Teaching and Learning in the Primary Classroom using the* Musical Futures *Approach*', presented at the Shannon Region Postgraduate Conference. May 18-19.
- Gubbins, E. (2021) '*Informal and Non-Formal Music Education Approaches and the Primary School: Interim Findings from a Pilot Cycle Study into the Experiences of Music Teaching and Learning in the Primary Classroom using the* Musical Futures *Approach*', presented at University of Limerick Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference. May 27-28.
- Gubbins, E. (2021) '*Musical Futures and COVID: the experiences of generalist teachers and students of informal and non-formal music teaching and learning in the primary classroom*', presented at The Educational Studies Association of Ireland Conference. March 25-26.
- Gubbins, E. (2020) '*The possibilities for informal learning pedagogies in opening up music education for the primary school*', presented at The Educational Studies Association of Ireland Conference. September 3-5.

- Gubbins, E. (2020) *'Investigating Generalist Primary Teachers' Musical Backgrounds and Experiences and the Potential Impact of Non-Formal Pedagogies on Teaching and Learning'*, presented at the University of Limerick Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference. April 29.
- Gubbins, E. (2020) *'The case for informal learning pedagogies and their potential impact on music education practice in the primary school'*, presented at The Society for Music Education in Ireland Conference, St. Patrick's Teacher Training College, DCU, Dublin. January 24-25.

Other Dissemination Outputs:
- Musical Futures' organisation Festival of Learning #MuFuTV (June 28- July 2 2021) YouTube presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pbDNE-sicY
- Guest lectures to Bachelor of Education and Master of Arts in Music Education students:
  - EDE355 Instrumental Music Leadership (22nd February 2021, 22nd February 2022)
  - MUS601 Music Education in Policy and Practice (17th November 2021)

Seminars/Training Sessions:
- Kodály Summer School 9-11 July 2021 (Online). Organised by the Kodály Society of Ireland
- Little Kids Rock Modern Band 101 Module May 12, 19, 26 2021
- Identifying the impact of arts and humanities research with Dr Eoin Flannery, ELL
- Thesis Submission and the Examination Process (Dr Amy Healy)
- Getting Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals - A Practical Guide
- Surviving the Viva
- So You Have Finished Your PhD, Now What?
- Applying for Academic Posts with Dr Lisha O'Sullivan, HoD, RPECS
- PGR Progression with Dr Amy Healy
- Research and Integrity Dr Amy Healy vir2ue April 2021
- Exploring the challenges of being a post-graduate student in a Pandemic: ways to build self-care and foster resilience (Dr Paula Seth – MIC Counselling)
- Hugh Kearns - Seven Secrets of Highly Successful Research Students
- Maximising your Teaching Potential (part 1) with Dr Geraldine Exton (LEAD)
- The Academic Interview with Dr Eugene O'Brien, HoD, English Language and Literature
- Preparing for Viva with Dr Rebecca Breen
- PG Info Session - Funding and Scholarships With Dr Amy Healy
- 'Becoming a conscious academic writer' with Dr Brian Clancy, Academic Learning Centre
- Research integrity – virtues, norms and dilemmas with Dr Amy Healy
- Planning and Facilitating Synchronous Teaching Sessions using Big Blue Button. Delivered by the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Team. 15th February 2021. One hour online workshop
- 2-Day nVivo Training Workshop up to Intermediate Level in Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Systems. Delivered by Ben Meehan, QSR Registered nVivo Trainer. 18-19 January 2021 (online).

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  - Research Integrity: Concise (Core Course)
  - Human Subjects Protections (Specialist Course)
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  - Collaboration, Cooperation, Coteaching, Co-facilitation, Covid: Reflections and Thoughts on Shared Learning Experience. Society for Music Education in Ireland. 7th Dec 2020
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  - Future Directions in the Humanities
  - Accessing Archives and Libraries and Digital Repositories
- Creative Ways to Visualize Qualitative Data. NVivo and SAGE Publishing Webinar Series. March 4th 2021. 1 hour webinar
- Visual Thinkery: Simple Techniques to Improve Visuals in TEL. Presented by Bryan Mathers. National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. 26th February 2021. 4 hour webinar
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- Teaching Induction Seminar 1 – Roles and Responsibilities of Departmental Assistants
- Teaching Induction Seminar 2 – Maximising Your Teaching Potential (LEAD)
- Teaching Induction Seminar 3 – Teaching for Inclusion (LEAD)
- IRC Briefing Session
- Writing Successful Funding Proposals
- Preparing for Conferences
- Being an Ethical Researcher: Ethical Considerations in Research
- Project Managing Your Thesis
- Thesis Submission and the Examination Process
- Getting Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals - A Practical Guide
- Academic Writing – The Literature Review (Dr Paul O'Brien)
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Appendix K: Numbering System for Instrument Packs

Instrument Record

- This record is to assist in assigning instruments to particular students and to note any information regarding the loaned instrument.
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure the maintenance, safe distribution and cleaning of the instruments in line with health and safety regulations and procedures.

Instrument Number	Student's Name	Information/Repairs
Ukuleles		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Appendix M – Body percussion beat grid

SPEAKERS

Edmond Gubbins, Site 2 Teacher 1

Edmond Gubbins

The first question I have here is focusingon your perspective on musical futures. Could you just talk about your general impressions of the approach?

Site 2 Teacher 1

It's excellent, like, I suppose it's so engaging, from a student's point of view, they're engaged from the get-go. It's very clear. So once they had a few practices, they were able to follow along the programme very easily. I know some of my students found that the strong beat like the pulse really helped them actually learn how to play. What I found was that it was so easy to use from a teacher's point of view. So like my ukulele playing is pretty average. I was only a chord or two ahead of the of the children, but I found that it actually improved my playing, and but also that it was really easy to teach it to. I would feel that I have a good grounding in music theory, and I play different instruments, but I suppose just the ukulele itself wouldn't be my instrument. But even so, it was so easy to follow along and to use it. What I thought was really beneficial I suppose in terms of the kids learning the instrument was the repetition. There was lots of repetition involved, which just gave them, you know, all the practice that they needed. And it seems that it really kind of consolidated what they were learning, and also how it got progressively harder. So I suppose from the first day we did it, everyone was able to fully engage with it, fully participate, and it just got progressively harder. It wasn't too challenging. It was just right for them. And I just thought it was absolutely brilliant. And I would love to use it again.

Edmond Gubbins

That's fantastic. Sounds like a very positive experience. Could you focus, I guess, then on your engagement and your experience of using it? I know you touched on it already how you used it in your classroom. But could you just talk a little bit more about how you experienced that in your classroom?

Site 2 Teacher 1

Sure. So I think it was so easy to use, like for me what was great was you didn't have to spend a lot of time planning and preparing lessons, because everything was there, I just had to have a quick look over what I wanted to teach. And that was enough, like it was only a couple of minutes. I suppose like, because the content was there, ready for you, it was so easy for me to conduct the class, like I would feel quite confident teaching music, and I'd have different methodologies that I would have used, but like they just came so naturally, because I wasn't worrying about the content that I was actually teaching, it was all there ready for me. So I think the fact that the resource was so easy to use, it made me feel more confident teaching an instrument that I don't know a lot about. And so the strategies that I was using, and how I engage the kids was just so easy. I think I was able to put a lot back on the kids. So I would ask them a lot, like, you know, how do I do this? This is what we're going to be doing today. You know, I was really focused on putting as much and getting the kids involved as much as possible. And that was definitely stemming from the fact that everything was there ready prepared for me, that I didn't have to worry about that.

Edmond Gubbins

Can I just ask what you said there about when you say, putting it over onto the kids, like that experience, how was that for you, as a teacher putting yourself into that position where you're

getting the kids to lead the learning a little bit more?

Site 2 Teacher 1

It's funny, it was a little bit strange, at first, and you kind of forget that the kids are so well able, once you give them the opportunity. So I remember I just asked the kids to, you know, explain how to form a particular chord or, you know - they were probably used to hearing me say you know, it needs to be the first finger on the second fret on the second string or whatever, you know if it was the G string or the C, whatever string. They actually had picked up on all of that language. And I wouldn't have known that if I didn't get them to do the talking. And as I said it was a little bit strange at first, but then once I realised how capable they were it just became a lot easier for me to to continue doing that so it was great. So it wasn't, as you said, it wasn't really me leading the learning, they were they were leading the lesson as such, and it was nice as well because I had a particularly quiet class, and it took a while for them not just in music, but just in general to warm up a little bit and to become comfortable contributing to discussions and things like that. But what was really nice was one child might say something and another child would pipe in and add to what they were seeing, which I thought was really lovely, particularly because my class found it hard to speak up, they're just a quiet and shy class.

Edmond Gubbins

Did you experience any challenges when you were implementing musical futures?

Site 2 Teacher 1

Not really to be honest. Sometimes it was a little bit tricky to tune the ukuleles. But that was nothing to do with the programme itself. That was the only thing that might have taken up a little bit of time. I'm trying to think of other challenges now. No, like, there was no problems with using the programme, everything worked really smoothly, you just had to click the button

like and it was ready for you. I think the one small thing might have been with I think it was the musical futures PowerPoint slides, the ones where there's lots of different kind of pop songs, and the only small, tiny thing - and it wasn't a major challenge once the kids got used to it - but the ukulele section was really, really small. And I think was it the guitar or the piano was much larger, took up most of the slide. So that was the only small thing. And on those same slides, the strumming pattern is only on the first bar. So just say the the chords were D for four beats D again for four beats and G four beats in G for four beats. But the strumming pattern would only be under the first but it was the same strumming pattern repeated. But the kids actually said it would have been easier if they had the strumming pattern under each one. And I mean, again, that's that's tiny. It wasn't a major challenge at all. But there were just two small things that we picked up on.

Edmond Gubbins

On the flip side, then did you experience any successes while you were implementing the approach?

Site 2 Teacher 1

Oh, I'd say we experienced several successes. I'm just trying to think of a few of the main ones. For me, what was really impressive was how the children were remote learning for three months and they came back and they still had remembered the chords that we'd learned before. Like that was a huge success for me. I thought we'd nearly be starting from scratch. We just had to do a quick revision and the kids remembered it which was just so nice to see the benefits of the programme and that they really did learn so much. There was one particular student who would have had real difficulties with fine motor skills, and he still does. And he really struggled with chords. I suppose he found it very hard to change from one chord to the other. And the chord of G really caught him. And the learning support teacher who works with my class, he

would play the guitar and he's really interested in music and he was looking for a way to I suppose work on this student's fine motor skills in a way that was relevant to him. So this was the perfect opportunity to do that. And so the learning support teacher took the student and worked with the few chords that we'd learned. And I remember, it was about two weeks ago near the end of the year, we were playing a piece with the chords of D and G. And I was just kind of quickly scanning the room running around to check that the students had the correct fingering for the chord of G. And some children chose to use the easy G chord, but I went over to [Jack] expecting to have to help him and he just automatically put his three fingers into the correct position for G major, and he knew by my face, I was so delighted. Like he found this so hard a few weeks ago to the point where he was getting really frustrated, like he was very upset with himself - he'd be very hard on himself. And he does have a diagnosis as well. So it was just so lovely. And he was so proud, he was delighted. So that was just one massive success for me.

Edmond Gubbins

That's fantastic to hear that. It's a really, really positive one. Was there any other successes that you experienced?

Site 2 Teacher 1

There was a few students who picked up the chords really quickly and really challenged themselves. Sometimes I would have asked the kids, you know, if we were playing a piece with two or three chords, I would have asked them, you know, just focus on one chord if you want, and then maybe focus on trying to do two chords and things like that. But there was at least six students who always challenged themselves to do the hardest level of challenge. So they were trying to play two if not three chords. And they said themselves that they found it hard at first but towards the end of the song, they got it. And that's again, the repetition embedded in the

programme, which was fantastic. So I think just, I suppose the kids' actual music skills really, really improved so much. And not just their skills, but also their listening, turn-taking, reading the music. And we did some of the chair drumming as well, they loved that. They really, really took to that. So it was just really, really positive all around.

Edmond Gubbins

Brilliant. That's fantastic to hear that. Has the musical futures approach changed your practice in any way do you think?

Site 2 Teacher 1

It was always on the back of my mind to learn the ukulele myself and to implement it with a class, but I was never confident enough to give it a go. There was always something kind of holding me back a little bit. Whereas now it would be the one thing that I would absolutely love to keep doing every single year no matter what class I had, within reason, but I wouldn't necessarily have to do it with sixth class. I'd be very comfortable teaching it to younger students. So that is something that, I suppose is really positive for me because I was very slow to introduce a new musical instrument that I wasn't very familiar with to a class. I was always quite comfortable teaching music. And I feel that I would have picked up a good few techniques. I think I mentioned in a previous interview that my specialism is in music education, and I would have observed music teachers teach in in the States. So I would have picked up a lot of strategies from them. But I think as I alluded to earlier, it's just I'm so much more confident and comfortable teaching because you have this really good resource supporting you so my time doesn't have to go into making the resource or figuring out what I need to teach or which chords to do next, because everything is there. So it definitely has put the focus on my actual teaching and my strategies and definitely putting the onus on the children for sure that I really found that once I gave the children the opportunity, then I realised that they're so capable, and that I need

to do that more and possibly not just in music, but give them the opportunities to lead the lesson as you said. I suppose the territory is a little bit uncertain when they do that, but it's just so rewarding to see how much they've picked up and how competent they are when you give them the the opportunity and it's lovely for the kids to learn from each other in that kind of an environment as well.

Edmond Gubbins

Brilliant. You just said something there then that in the past when you were trying to you know, do music education that you felt that doing something like this would be quite maybe daunting. And you were you said it was holding you back? Could you pinpoint exactly what it was that was holding you back from doing something like this?

Site 2 Teacher 1

I suppose there's a few things like, so I would have taught recorder before but I was very comfortable teaching that because I played the flute. So I think just having the musical experience and knowledge myself in playing the recorder, I would have been very, very comfortable playing that. Whereas with the ukulele, I only knew about three chords before starting the musical futures programme. And, you know, I didn't have time to practice a lot. And so I think, definitely the fact that I wasn't able to play the ukulele very well would have stopped me from convincing the principal to invest in a set of new ukuleles. Also, I suppose, like, I would have been worried that I wouldn't be able to help the kids enough, because I wouldn't have that content knowledge, I suppose, and the confidence to play the ukulele myself. And then there would be the kind of, the fear of behavioural challenges and behavioural difficulties, if I'm not confident in teaching the content, that it becomes a little bit loose, and it could be a disaster. Whereas with musical futures, my own ukulele playing definitely improved because I was I was practising along with the children and practising myself - like it was actually

quite fun to practice away myself with the programme, and also the fact that the children were engaged from the minute you start the presentation, you know, they're really interested, the pace of the lessons is perfect. And, you know, it's really engaging for them. So it then allows me to teach - everything, it just becomes becomes easier. So I think the fact that I didn't have the content knowledge in playing the ukuele that would have definitely been something holding me back, and then the fear of behavioural challenges and just not being able to teach it properly when you don't know it yourself well enough, I think that would have been the biggest thing that would have stopped me from teaching an instrument like ukulele to class.

Edmond Gubbins

And what resources or supports are aids as part of the musical futures approach were critical in helping you to implement it?

Site 2 Teacher 1

Definitely, you need good speakers, you need the interactive whiteboard. And like the PowerPoint slides, like other than that, that's all you needed in terms of physical resources, I think. I found that the chord progression chart that you made, I printed that out for each child, so they had a small sheet with the chords on it so they could refer to that and that was helpful. A lot of children used that. I never mentioned earlier the visual aspect of musical futures as well - like having the picture of the chord up - it seems so silly not to think of having the picture of the chord itself up on the screen was very, very helpful. I think it really helps that I'm able to read music and that I'm comfortable teaching it and I would have good enough rhythm and things like that. I suppose that definitely made me feel more comfortable using it. But I don't think a teacher would need to have, you know, a very strong knowledge base in music, you know, we actually played a little bit of a trick on one of the learning support teachers in the school who has no musical experience or no musical background. And the children were

teaching him how to use the resource and he actually he found it okay to use and that was just him totally being caught off guard and he had no idea that he was going to have to teach a ukulele lesson to the class. And he was able to pick it up and follow along. And the kids really enjoyed that as well. As I said, he doesn't have any experience, you know, playing a musical instrument himself or anything like that and he was able to use it with the children with no prep whatsoever.

Edmond Gubbins

Brilliant, very good. And that's great to hear that you know, that it is accessible for teachers who mightn't have that strong musical background as well. If you were to explain musical futures to someone who is unfamiliar with the approach, what would you say to them?

Site 2 Teacher 1

I would say that it is a student-friendly, engaging resource that is excellent to prepare children to learn an instrument. It starts off with the child's level, and it gets progressively more challenging. There's a lot of repetition embedded in it. And it's also very fun, you know, it's really the music that is used in it is appealing to the children. It's very engaging, as I said, and very, very easy to use.

Edmond Gubbins

Excellent. Thanks for that. That's really insightful. We're going to turn now to maybe looking at the student perspective and the student lens on the whole thing. Could you comment on how musical futures impacted students' progression in music - I know, you commented on it a little bit earlier, but just maybe to delve into that a bit further?

Site 2 Teacher 1

Um, I mean, it was hugely beneficial in so many different ways. As I said, some of the children would have had a little bit of musical experience playing a musical instrument and what was nice was some of those children actually bought ukuleles. One particular boy, the guitar he found was too difficult because the instrument itself was too big. He has the ukulele now and he plays it with his grandad who teaches him, which is really nice. And I think that with the children who had a small bit of experience playing instruments, they really picked up the chords very quickly. They got very good at changing the chords quite fast. And, you know, they were very, very engaged. You could see that they were quite confident as well. They really enjoyed it. Other students then who found it a little bit harder, they still made huge progress. It was a little bit of a shame that we couldn't have done it a little bit more often every week - we played once a week. But then towards the end of the year, we played nearly every day. And even in that alone, you could tell they were picking up the skills a lot better. There's a couple of students who would have found it very, very hard at the beginning of the year and they progressed excellently you know, picking up the chords. Everyone actually did quite well with rhythm. You know, they were able to strum and they picked up the strumming patterns really quickly. And it was great as well that they were reading music, you know, the whole time and it definitely became easier for them. And as I mentioned before, there was one particular boy who really struggled with his fine motor skills, but he was flying it at the end.

Edmond Gubbins

And would you say that there were any specific or unexpected benefits for students as they participated in musical futures?

Site 2 Teacher 1

I think my class felt really privileged. They felt really special because they were the only class in the school playing the ukulele and they were really proud of it. And even small things like

when we went down to get the ukeleles, how they carried their ukuleles, you know, the strap of the case across their shoulders. You could see that they were just really proud. And it was nice for their confidence as well. I suppose another unexpected benefit was listening to how much they learned from the programme and their ability to actually articulate that, like, I really did not expect their answers to be as as good as they were and I suppose as comprehensive as they were. There was a couple of leaders would have emerged, there was one particular girl, she plays the violin. And, you know, she was advising students on their strumming, she was saying, you know, don't do it with such force, like to do it a little bit more gently. And, the kids really responded well to that and they were working on that. So it was nice, how they helped each other. That same girl helped another boy who was finding some of the chords difficult. So she really emerged as a leader from that and I wouldn't really have expected her to, which was quite nice. And other students just said, it was really nice for them to relax a little bit, it was a really nice break from other subjects like maths and things like that. So they really looked forward to playing ukulele on Fridays. I didn't really expect them to, you know, I suppose perceive it as a little bit of a break. I did think that they would enjoy it. But it was just I think, just being able to take your mind off different worries that they had, that they actually identified that as a benefit themselves.

Edmond Gubbins

Would you say that musical futures had a positive impact on their transferable skills as well, like you said, they're about their concentration and the relaxing element of it? Was there any more transferable skills that you notice it developed?

Site 2 Teacher 1

I think, I suppose definitely the fact that they were helping each other. I think for me, as I said, they were such a quiet class, that it really helped me encourage them to talk more and to feel

more comfortable to contribute to discussions, and I think, you know, really reiterate to them that like what they were saying was really valuable and, as you said, I was actually learning from their responses. So I think definitely they exceeded my expectations in that regard. Their confidence, for sure, definitely improved or increased. Listening, concentrating, their engagement. And I think as well, I didn't expect so many students to want to continue playing the ukulele. So a few of them - we were doing little reflections on what they were hoping to - you know, some of their goals for secondary school and their hopes and dreams for the future. And quite a number of them said that they hope that they're going to continue with the ukulele. One boy said that I promise I'll keep practising the ukulele and just the fact that so many students bought a ukulele as well and a lot of parents were really positive about it.

Edmond Gubbins

That's so wonderful to hear that. You really obviously had a positive impact on them which is lovely to hear. Would you say that musical futures had a positive impact on students from the point of view of behaviorally and emotionally?

Site 2 Teacher 1

Yeah, I think so. There was one girl in my class, she has a diagnosis of ASD. And she was actually the first person who spoke up and said that she really enjoys ukulele on the Friday afternoons because it gives her a break and she's very capable academically, and would have no struggles whatsoever with any subject area, but she was the one who said that she really likes playing the ukulele as it gives her a little bit of a break. Another child who would have been quite anxious. She was actually one of the students who volunteered to participate in the focus group with you which surprised me a little bit, but it was lovely to see. And she identified in the focus group session that she might have been thinking of lots of things or worrying about maths or something that happened on yard but playing the ukulele totally just took her to a

different world and she was able to just focus on that and not worry about other things that might have been on her mind. So it was definitely beneficial for a number of students.

Edmond Gubbins

Could you comment on musical futures in terms of assessment?

Site 2 Teacher 1

I suppose a lot of my assessment would have been primarily observation. And so I would have been just jotting a few notes down of how different children were, you know, who could do a specific chord or who could change a chord or how they were engaging with it. But other than informal notes and teacher observation. That's the only kind of form of assessment that I did, really. I didn't do much else.

Edmond Gubbins

In your experience, does musical futures have equal benefit for all students?

Site 2 Teacher 1

I'd say definitely. For all students....I would say so, like, I think they all took something from it. Like, I don't think even if it was a little bit more challenging for some students more than others I don't think it was not beneficial in any way. Yeah, I don't know to be honest? I probably can't elaborate on this question. I think it is equally beneficial, like for children who have learning needs, for children who music mightn't be their favourite subject, they mightn't feel very strong at music, but my class engaged with it so so so well.

Edmond Gubbins

I liked the way you said it kind of brought benefits to different students in different ways, you

know? What they may have needed, you know, if they needed a confidence boost it might have helped on that. If they needed to, you know, show what they can do, it provided that. If they wanted to develop their musical skills it provided for that.

Site 2 Teacher 1

-the few pupils that I spoke about, like in the case of the child who had real difficulties with fine motor skills, that really helped uhis fine motor skills. Like, I just could not believe how much it improved. And he was very, very frustrated in the early stages. And then the other girl who like emerged as a leader, like she was very competent at playing the fiddle. She picked up the chords very easily, she could read the music so easily, you know, all of that was second nature to her. But it enabled her to get a benefit in a different way in that she was able to advise other students. She was just a really unassuming pupil, you know, and it was just lovely for her to get that kind of a benefit. So even though her musical ability would have been streets ahead of other students, she still gained equal - I would say she gained equal benefit - because her music playing and her musical knowledge continued to improve and strengthen but she got other benefits as well. So I would say it is equally beneficial.

Edmond Gubbins

Have you any thoughts or ideas about how musical futures might be developed further in your school?

Site 2 Teacher 1

If it is possible for us to use it again, I would definitely love to use it. The other sixth class teacher who would be comfortable teaching music had hoped to use it this year, but between the jigs and reels of everything that was happening this year just didn't happen. But she would love to use it. The Learning Support teacher who was helping the boy in my class with particular

chords, he's actually going to be teaching third class next year, and he asked me if I could pass on the musical futures resources to him if it's okay, so he's definitely interested as well. I know that like, if it was, you know, possible next year, I'd be very comfortable to go into other classes to teach the ukulele to them and I know that if other teachers saw me using the resource, they'd realise that it's really not that difficult to use. They'd probably feel that they could use it themselves as well. So I could see that like - it is the principal's hope that the other classes will use the ukulele, it won't be just confined to my class next year. I think she would love to see other classes using it. So there's definitely three teachers, including me. And then if I'm able to mix pods and teach other classes, I think other teachers would be very willing to use it too. It's amazing how the kids can pick it up so fast like with the chair drumming, they had it like. I kind of thought initially like, oh, there's a lot going on here.

Edmond Gubbins

Do you have any issues or questions or comments, or anything that we didn't address that you want to speak about?

Site 2 Teacher 1

The only other thing I think, just to add to what I've been saying before, when you were saying about in terms of assessing, it definitely helps so much that the programme is doing the work and you're able to see what the kids are doing. That really is what was so helpful - that you're not the one trying to show them the chord and they can't even see your your fingers, where they are and things like that and you're trying to focus on doing it yourself that when it's there on the screen, you're able to completely have all of your attention on the kids and how they're engaging with it. The other thing was that I suppose the fact that all of the songs, all of the content is there, ready it made me then think, Okay, how can I add to this and how can I like do something a little bit more creatively, so like, towards the end of the year, we were learning the song 'best

day of my life', which was really appropriate for the sixth class at the end of the year. And I didn't do any singing with them this year, because of the year that was in it. But I took them outside onto the field and we spread out, you know, at least two metres apart and things and we actually sang and did body percussion with it. And it was really, really nice. You know, I just think that like before the last two years was my first year in this school and I would have done a lot with, you know, song singing and you know, for the Christmas carol concert and the confirmation ceremonies and things like that. And we're very lucky here the principal is incredible when it comes to music. She's so talented. You know, she really led it. But like watching her and then having you know, the brilliant resource here kind of gave me a little bit more confidence myself to say, well, actually, we could do this or I could add in tambourines here and I could do that, you know, whereas I would have been very slow to put myself out there and try it because I'd be afraid that it would be wrong or it would sound terrible, but now, I was like, okay, no, I'm going to try this and they can bring in the egg shaker here and then the tambourine there whereas before I would not have done that at all. I did not have the confidence to do that. And like we even learned 'Feliz Navidad' and things at Christmas and the kid's named that as one of our favourite memories from this year. The only other thing was when you asked me if I could describe musical futures to another teacher or to someone else, I'd written down here a few pointers that might sound better than what I said originally. So I just said that I would describe it as a high-quality resource that's so easy to use. There's very little time needed to prepare. Even though the ukulele was new to me. It's very clever in that there's lots of repetition embedded into the programme. The children can read the music. It's really, really easy to follow. It gets progressively more challenging and that all the children are able to participate and experience success in some way. So that's what I had kind of half prepared on my notes here.

Edmond Gubbins

Thanks for having all those notes. Because that's, that's brilliant to have all that. Now that's

absolutely super, thanks so much for all that.

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