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Title	Teachers' perspectives of the role of music and creativity in music teaching and learning in the Irish primary level classroom: exploring policy, curriculum and practice
Authors	Hogan, Grace
Publication date	2021-12
Original Citation	Hogan, G. 2021. Teachers' perspectives of the role of music and creativity in music teaching and learning in the Irish primary level classroom: exploring policy, curriculum and practice. MRes Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Masters thesis (Research)
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Download date	2026-11-06 15:17:09
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Teachers' Perspectives of the Role of Music and Creativity in Music Teaching and Learning in the Irish Primary Level Classroom: Exploring Policy, Curriculum and Practice

Thesis presented by

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for the degree of

Masters by Research

University College Cork

Department of Music

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2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents ..... ***- 1 -***

Declaration ..... ***- 3 -***

Abstract ..... ***- 4 -***

Acknowledgements ..... ***- 6 -***

List of Figures ..... ***- 7 -***

Acronyms ..... ***- 8 -***

Chapter One: Music and Musical Creativity in the Classroom – Research Context, Aims and Objectives ..... ***- 9 -***

1.1 Introduction ..... **- 10 -**

1.2 Background, Context and Rationale ..... **- 10 -**

1.3 The Research Problem ..... **- 13 -**

1.4 Research Question, Aims and Objectives ..... **- 14 -**

1.5 Parameters of the Study ..... **- 17 -**

1.6 Structure of Dissertation ..... **- 17 -**

Chapter Two: History of Music Education in Ireland ..... ***- 22 -***

2.1 Introduction ..... **- 23 -**

2.2 Music Education and Policy: 1900 to 1950 ..... **- 23 -**

2.3 Continuity and Change in Music Education and Policy: 1950 to 2000 ..... **- 27 -**

2.4 Creativity, Music Education and Policy: 2000 to 2021 ..... **- 33 -**

2.5 Chapter Summary ..... **- 36 -**

Chapter Three: Exploring Creativity in Music Education ..... ***- 37 -***

3.1 Introduction ..... **- 38 -**

3.2 Exploring the Meaning of Creativity ..... **- 38 -**

3.3 Benefits of Creativity and Music Education ..... **- 43 -**

3.4 Creative Practice in the Classroom ..... **- 48 -**

3.5 Chapter Summary ..... **- 50 -**

Chapter Four: Fieldwork Part One – Considering Teachers' Perspectives of Music Education ..... ***- 52 -***

4.1 Introduction ..... **- 53 -**

4.2 Initial Teacher Education ..... **- 54 -**

4.2.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Music Education in ITE and the Primary Classroom ..... - 54 -

4.2.2 Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum in ITE and the Primary Classroom ..... - 60 -

4.2.3 Concerns and Considerations for Music in Primary Level ITE ..... - 61 -

4.2.4 Secondary Level ITE Experience and Considerations for Music Education ..... - 66 -

4.3 Continuous Professional Development ..... **- 68 -**

4.3.1 CPD Opportunities and Considerations in Music Education at Primary Level ..... - 69 -

4.3.2 CPD Opportunities and Considerations in Music Education at Secondary Level ..... - 73 -

4.4 Teacher Confidence ..... **- 74 -**

4.5 Chapter Summary ..... **- 77 -**

Chapter Five: Fieldwork Part Two – Exploring Teachers' Perspectives of the Music Curriculum and Creative Practice ..... ***- 78 -***

5.1 Introduction ..... **- 79 -**

5.2 Primary Teachers' Perspectives of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum ..... **- 80 -**

5.3 Secondary Teachers' Perspectives of the Junior Cycle Music Curriculum ..... **- 85 -**

5.3.1 New Junior Cycle Music Curriculum ..... - 86 -

5.3.2 Enhancing Connections from Primary to Secondary Level ..... - 92 -

5.4 Musical Creativity ..... **- 93 -**

5.4.1 Supporting Teachers in Music Education and Creative Development ..... - 94 -

5.4.2 Balancing Creativity and Subject Knowledge ..... - 97 -

5.4.3 Creativity and 'Flow' in the Curriculum ..... - 98 -

5.5 Chapter Summary ..... **- 99 -**

Chapter Six: Moving Forward Creatively through Music in the Primary Level Classroom ..... ***- 101 -***

6.1 Introduction ..... **- 102 -**

6.2 Lifelong Learning through Teacher Education ..... **- 102 -**

6.3 Creative Curriculum Development ..... **- 105 -**

6.4 Personal Experience ..... **- 107 -**

6.5 Recommendations ..... **- 109 -**

6.6 Concluding Thoughts ..... **- 110 -**

Bibliography ..... ***- 112 -***

Official Publications and Policies ..... **- 122 -**

Websites and Online Articles ..... **- 125 -**

Appendices ..... ***- 126 -***

Appendix A: Ethics ..... **- 126 -**

Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions ..... **- 129 -**

Appendix C: Curriculum Content at Primary Level ..... **- 132 -**

Declaration

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents.

I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Ethics Committees at University College Cork.

Digital Signature of the candidate



Grace Hogan

Abstract

This dissertation explores the current status of musical creativity in primary level music education in Ireland. It focusses on the meaning and purpose of creativity at primary level, and analyses the positive impact of creativity through music, while also highlighting the meaningful benefits that transcend the boundaries of music education, and enrich the holistic development and learning experience for children in the primary level classroom (DiDomenico, 2017). This thesis explores the efficacy of the current music education model at primary level from the teachers' perspectives, reflecting upon the history of music education within government policy, education curricula, and in wider society in Ireland throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century, to inform how this has impacted upon the current position of music in education at primary level today.

Adopting an ethnographic approach, this dissertation analyses the views and perceptions of teachers surrounding music and creativity in the classroom, through the perspectives of six generalist primary level teachers and two secondary level music teachers. Using the mindset expressed at interview as the channel for further exploration, this thesis highlights five core themes from interview. It examines these five themes, and considers the benefits and challenges associated with music education for the generalist primary level teacher, and explores connection and continuity moving to secondary level music education. It discusses the barriers to developing effective learning environments in music education as expressed by teachers, while seeking to clarify if there is a disconnect between policy and practice.

Using the revision of the 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum as a stimulus, this thesis examines recent developments relating to the role of music at primary level, and explores

how these developments have greatly enhanced the music education experience. It examines the position of creative practice in education curricula at both primary and secondary level. Creative practice in music education refers to the exploration of creativity through music, and the facilitation of creative music making opportunities in the classroom. This thesis focusses specifically on creativity within music education policy, discussing how this aspect of the curriculum has progressed, from the publication of the Education Charter (2012), to the development of Creative Ireland, and the release of the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum (2017). These creative experiences are explored and discussed, to emphasize why creativity should be an integral part of the music education curriculum at primary level. Through analysis of research and best practice, this thesis presents considerations for the development of music education for generalist primary level teachers, to ensure that all primary level teachers can facilitate children with opportunities to access the exciting world of musical creativity.

Acknowledgements

A heartfelt thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Michelle Finnerty for her understanding, knowledge, support, advice and guidance during my studies. Sincere thank you to all of the staff at the Department of Music UCC, and in particular, the following who advised and helped with various parts of my study: Dr. J. Griffith Rollefson, Dr. John Godfrey and Dr. Tríona Ní Shíocháin. A special thank you to Dr. Alexander Khalil, his enthusiasm and knowledge provided me with a new lease of creativity and motivation during the Covid-19 lockdown period which inspired many new avenues in my research.

Thank you to my wonderful work colleagues who were kind enough to share their honest thoughts through video interviews during the period of home learning, and thank you to my friends for the endless phone calls, emails and guidance. I appreciate your continued support and encouragement.

My huge gratitude to the Irish National Teachers' Organisation for awarding me the opportunity to develop and explore music education in Ireland, and to help further the importance of the arts in education through the INTO Bursary Award Scheme.

Thank you to my wonderful family, my mum Frances and dad David for believing in me and always allowing me to pursue my dreams and interests. I will be forever thankful to you both for all of the opportunities and experiences that you have given me throughout my life.

List of Figures

Figure A - Research Aims ..... - 15 -
Figure B - Research Sub-Questions ..... - 16 -
Figure C - Cyclical Pattern of Inadequate Development in Music Education ..... - 26 -
Figure D - Developments in the Arts and Music Education from 1949 - 1979 ..... - 27 -
Figure E - Newspaper Articles 1954 - 1955 ..... - 28 -
Figure F - Deaf Ears? 1985 Findings ..... - 31 -
Figure G - Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences ..... - 39 -
Figure H - Robert Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Intelligence ..... - 41 -
Figure I - Links between Gardner and Sternberg's Theories ..... - 42 -
Figure J - Csikszentmihalyi's Nine Traditional Components of Flow ..... - 43 -
Figure K - Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model of Creativity (McIntyre, 2008) layered with Burnard (2017) ..... - 49 -
Figure L - Third Level Courses for Primary Level Teaching in Ireland ..... - 55 -
Figure M - Nine Musical Concepts of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum .. - 61 -
Figure N - Time Allocation per Subject in the Revised 1999 Primary Level Curriculum ..... - 62 -
Figure O - Excerpt from Circular 0056/2011 ..... - 63 -
Figure P - Concurrent Third Level Courses for Secondary Level Music Teaching in Ireland - 66 -
Figure Q - Consecutive Third Level Courses for Secondary Level Music Teaching in Ireland - 67 -
Figure R - List of Accredited Teacher CPD Music Courses Available for Primary Level in Ireland ..... - 69 -
Figure S - Teacher Concerns with the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum ..... - 75 -
Figure T - Strands and Strand Units of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum - 80 -
Figure U - Survey Results on 'Time Spent' on each Strand of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum ..... - 84 -
Figure V - Survey Results on 'Usefulness of Content' in Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum Documents ..... - 85 -
Figure W - Key Skills of the New Junior Cycle Curriculum at Secondary Level ..... - 87 -
Figure X - Strands of the New Junior Cycle Music Curriculum at Secondary Level ..... - 89 -
Figure Y - Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (1983) ..... - 104 -

Acronyms

CPD Continuous Professional Development

EPV Extra Personal Vacation

ITE Initial Teacher Education

L1 The main language of instruction (for example, Irish as L1 refers to the teaching of Irish as the first language or its use as the medium of instruction in Irish-medium schools)

L2 The language taught as a second language (for example, Irish as L2 in English-medium schools)

NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NQT Newly Qualified Teacher

PE Physical Education

PISA Programme for International Student Assessment (International study of Reading, Mathematical and Scientific Literacy conducted under the auspices of the OECD)

PIRLS Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

PME Professional Masters in Education

PPMTA Post Primary Music Teachers Association

SEL Social Emotional Learning

SESE Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

SPHE Social, Personal and Health Education

TIMSS Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Chapter One: Music and Musical Creativity in the Classroom – Research Context, Aims and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation explores the role of music in the primary level classroom in Ireland. It considers the position that music holds within primary level educational policy over the last century, and analyses how this has informed the current status of music education at primary level today. It highlights the benefits of music education for the holistic development of the child, and establishes how music can further enhance the quality of education across the curriculum at primary level (Varner, 2019). The voice of the teacher is considered central to this study, owing to the impact of good quality teaching on the learning experiences for students (Greenwalt, 2016). Through discussions with primary and secondary level teachers, this thesis explores how teachers interact and engage with music education in their practice. Their third level educational experience will be discussed, progressing from student in Initial Teacher Education, to their experiences as generalist and specialist teachers in the classroom. This dissertation examines the role, and effectiveness of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, along with teachers' views and perceptions on their ability to interact effectively with this curriculum. It delves into the music education experience for both student and teacher, and explores the literature and benefits surrounding the importance of creativity and creative practice in children's lives. It considers how creativity is a central part of how children engage meaningfully with music at primary level and explores further development in this area in the primary level classroom.

1.2 Background, Context and Rationale

This thesis explores literature surrounding the history of arts education in Ireland and the developments in music education at primary level in Ireland (Dowling, 2015; Finnerty, 2008; Beausang, 2002; Kennedy, 1990; & The Arts Council 1985, 1979). It reflects upon the complex history that music has had in policy throughout the twentieth century, and discusses how this

has impacted upon the progression of music as a subject within the education system. It examines the recent developments in music education and recognises how the status of music education has progressed significantly in recent years.

Music has always been recognised as an integral part of the education system for children (Heidingsfelder, 2014), yet there seems to be a shortage of reflective and instructional data, to ensure the continued development and progression of the subject in Ireland. Ballantyne and Packer (2004) speak about the overall lack of research in teacher education in the curricular area of music. Their research highlights a disconnect between Initial Teacher Education content and the experience of early-career teachers in the classroom when they describe:

> …early-career music teachers' ratings regarding the relevance of coursework to their needs, and their overall satisfaction with their preservice preparation were relatively low (Ballantyne and Packer, 2004:303).

During my research in teacher education, it became evident that additional research in music education at primary level in Ireland would be very informative and beneficial. In the most recent Irish study undertaken regarding teachers' perspectives and the arts (INTO, 2009), composition was the strand which presented the biggest concerns for teachers within the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. As my research in this area evolved, I was drawn to musical creativity and composition in education. Research by Burnard & Younker (2002) explores 'the role creativity plays as students compose' (2002:245) and throughout this research, it became evident that creativity is a meaningful and integral aspect in the further development of music and composition in the primary level classroom. The use of the term creativity in my thesis is reflective of Burnard & Murphy's inclusive approach (2017). Burnard describes how, in order to develop creatively through music, teachers should

attempt to ensure that some element of all music lessons can be attributed to the creative development of the child. Burnard explains this when she states:

> …in order to promote musical growth, teachers must constantly endeavour to encourage and help children to respond creatively in their dealings with music. The creative response is not a separate thing that only happens on some occasions and not on others; rather, the creative response must go on all the time (Burnard & Murphy, 2017:7).

It also became clear that creativity can be fostered using all strands of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum (Burnard & Murphy, 2017), and further exploration of this area is required to enhance the primary level music experience in Ireland.

During my fieldwork interviews, specific themes emerged among primary and secondary level teachers. This thesis explores these themes in depth and discusses the benefits of advancing the quality of music education in Ireland. These key themes are:

- Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Curriculum
- Creativity
- Confidence issues (Generalist primary level teachers only)

As a researcher, I am in a very unique position. Throughout my research journey, I have been working full time as a mainstream primary level teacher. Owing to this, I have a distinctive connection and comprehensive understanding, from student in Initial Teacher Education, to researcher and teacher in the classroom. This invaluable position has had an impact upon all stages of my research journey. In the early stages, it gave me the opportunity to implement various strategies and methodologies with the children to inform my research, but unfortunately this method was interrupted due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. However, this time away from the classroom steered my research in new directions and it gave me the

opportunity to see first-hand how important and influential music and creativity is in a global context. Kiernan et al. (2020) state:

> 2020 has been the year of creativity par excellence…The events of 2020 should therefore give us pause to consider the meaning of the term "creativity" and to reflect on the potential role of creativity in cultivating and supporting wellbeing (Kiernan et al., 2020:1).

Creative activities were utilised as coping mechanisms to help support the wellbeing of people during the lockdown period. A study by Tang et al. (2021) investigated the 'crisis-creativity-wellbeing relationship' and established that 'people benefit from the engagement in creativity in helping them achieve positive, flourishing experiences' (Tang et al., 2021:13). My research seeks to highlight the importance of access to quality music education for all children and explores the significance of music in relation to creativity, for the holistic development of the child.

1.3 The Research Problem

This thesis presents an overview of the diverse perspectives that are present in the modern-day primary level classroom regarding music education and creativity. It is informed by the voices of the teachers, linked with my own experiences, and embedded within the history of music and creativity in education policy and curricula. My own previous research and interactions with other primary level teachers would suggest that there is a significant gap in teacher knowledge surrounding music composition in the primary level classroom. The concepts of music composition and creativity are intrinsically linked, and this gap in knowledge has a direct impact on the level of creativity experienced by children during music lessons in the classroom. Glover (2004) highlights this link when he explains:

> This lack of experience of composition detracts from the understanding of the relationship of skills to musical creativity which is so central to a broadly based music curriculum (Glover, 2004:176).

This dissertation endeavors to explore the difficulties experienced by primary level teachers when engaging with the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum and considers how to address the problem expressed by Glover (2004) relating to composition and musical creativity. It attempts to understand why these difficulties arise, and analyses recurring themes relating to music education, as expressed by educators during fieldwork interviews. This thesis explores how the current experience in music education can be enhanced, encompassing views from research in primary, secondary and third level education. It analyses the current Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in music education available in the country and discusses how to enhance the quality and availability of CPD in music for educators, to better equip teachers and students with the necessary knowledge and musical experiences to fully engage with, experience and benefit from a broad and balanced music education programme.

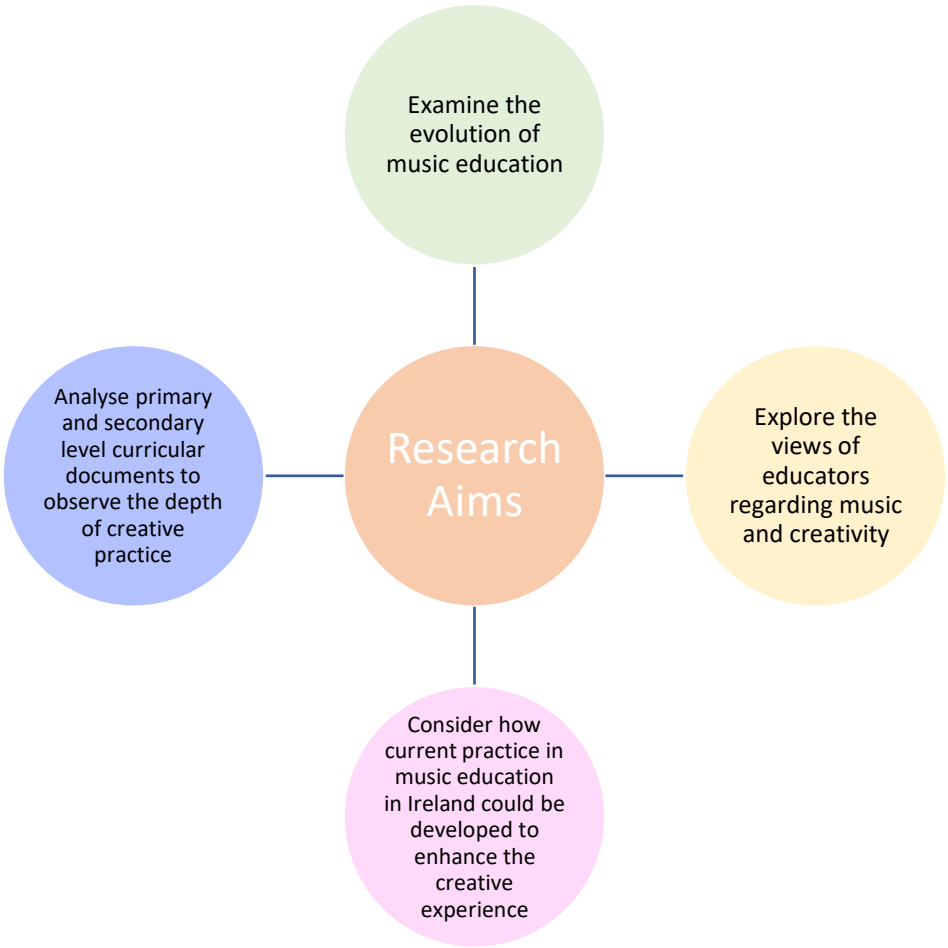
1.4 Research Question, Aims and Objectives

This dissertation aims to explore teachers' perspectives of music in the classroom, with a specific focus on composition and musical creativity. It examines how facilitating creativity through music can be a part of the music curriculum that all teachers feel confident to deliver. The perspectives and views of both primary and secondary level music teachers are addressed to best examine continuity, the developmental layered approach to learning which is an integral part of the curriculum (Primary School Curriculum Introduction, 1999), in music education from primary to secondary level.

This research methodology is designed to be inclusive of the teachers' role in facilitating meaningful and creative musical experiences for students. It discusses how creativity through music can be actively developed and encouraged in the Irish classroom, using the

classroom teacher as the facilitator of this creative practice. Reflecting upon the views of psychologists and creative music specialists, this study reveals the benefits of engaging with music, and creativity in the primary level classroom. The diagram in Figure A shows the main aims of this thesis.

Figure A – Research Aims



My primary research question is, what are teachers' perspectives of the role of music, and creativity in music in the primary level classroom? The three main sub-questions that informed the development of my thesis are outlined in Figure B.

Figure B – Research Sub-Questions

Research Sub-Questions

1. What are primary level teachers' views on music education?
    a) Are they confident teaching music?
    b) How effective is our practice?
2. Is creativity a central aspect of music lessons?
    a) Is creativity a term they would have encountered in music education?
    b) Are they comfortable facilitating the development of creativity through music?
3. How can initial teacher education, CPD and music curriculum documents be enhanced to ensure the music curriculum is accessible to all teachers?

To represent the teaching staff as accurately as possible during fieldwork, interviews were conducted with teachers from a variety of musical backgrounds, presenting a range of interests, values and attitudes towards music. For the purpose of this study, six primary level teachers were interviewed. Among the primary level teachers were two male and four female teachers. The teachers came from a wide range of school communities, with all girls, all boys and mixed schools represented. These teachers had diverse levels of experience and backgrounds in education, with one Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), three experienced teachers, one vice principal and one principal interviewed. The views of each participant are essential, to gain an understanding of the overall status of music in education. While carrying out this research, the contrasting levels of knowledge and engagement with the music curriculum at primary level became very apparent. This prompted me to conduct two interviews with secondary level music teachers, to obtain an insight into the views and opinions of secondary level music teachers. Two female secondary teachers were

interviewed, one from an all-male and one from an all-female school. I wanted to explore continuity in the music education curricula, and the efficacy of the progression in teaching and learning from primary to secondary level in music education.

1.5 Parameters of the Study

Due to the scale of the project, there are certain limitations within the results. This research presents the views of a very small cross section of educators from the south of Ireland and some of the findings may be specific to this regional area. Opinions and conclusions drawn are representative of the views expressed by this cohort of research participants and they must be seen through the lens of this cross section. An expansive national study would be needed to present a more accurate report on teachers' perspectives of music education.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 on education in 2020, this study solely focused on the experiences and perspectives of the teacher in music education in the classroom. As schools closed and interactions moved online, there was a shift in the course of this study. All interviews were completed with teachers using an online platform during lockdown and the observations of children and teachers in the classroom were no longer possible, due to school closures. A national study including observations in the classroom and focus groups exploring the views of both student and teacher would present a more well-rounded view of the experiences, impact and perspectives of teachers in music education.

1.6 Structure of Dissertation

This thesis is presented in six sections. Chapter One introduced the research theme of music and creativity in the primary level classroom in Ireland. It briefly explored the background to the study and contextualised the research, embedding it within the current status of music education in Ireland. It discussed the need for further research in the area of music education focussing on composition and creative practice. This chapter also presented the research

problem, and highlighted the research question and sub-questions. It explored the objectives, aims and purpose of this research in music education and creativity in the primary level classroom in Ireland, and clarified the purpose and rationale for this dissertation.

Chapter Two explores the history of music education in Ireland discussing the influence of government, policy writers and the wider community on the development of music education in Ireland. With a focus on two research pieces by McAuliffe (2004) and Kennedy (1990), it examines the steady increase in the importance of music within the education system in Ireland throughout the twentieth, and into the twenty-first century. It considers how, in more recent years, the position that music holds in education has evolved, and the influence of music has spread right across the curriculum. It attributes much of the recent developments to the *Arts in Education Charter* (2012) as the stimulus for change. This chapter highlights creativity as a central element for development in music education and recent government initiatives are explored, discussed and reviewed within the overall mosaic of music in primary level education.

Chapter Three examines the role of creativity in primary level education in Ireland. It analyses literature based on creativity and seeks to explore the term creativity, using research from specialists in the field of psychology (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Sternberg, 1985; & Gardner, 1983). These psychologists were chosen as each one considers different aspects of musical creativity and intelligence to explore the developmental importance and impact of music for learners, which is also central to this research. This chapter examines the use of creative practice in music education, highlighting the reasons and purpose of creativity at primary level. It discusses the psychological and social benefits of creativity, and considers how

creativity supports the holistic development of the child. Analysing research in the areas of neuroscience and cognitive function, this chapter discusses the positive findings surrounding engagement with music and the enhanced cognitive benefits associated with music education and musical creativity (Hille at al., 2011; Kraus & Chandrasekaran, 2010; & Schellenberg, 2005, 2004). Finally, it positions creative practice within the Irish primary level context, examining research and studies surrounding musical creativity, to further support the importance of musical creativity in the primary level classroom in Ireland.

Chapter Four analyses three of the five themes as expressed during fieldwork interviews undertaken with six primary level and two secondary level teachers. It explores the views and opinions expressed by these educators regarding Initial Teacher Education at both primary and secondary level. These views are discussed and areas of concern are highlighted and analysed. The concerns of these teachers are compared to those of music lecturers in Initial Teacher Education, emphasising the need for continuity at every stage of the educational journey. This chapter also explores the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) that is currently offered for primary and secondary level teachers in Ireland. Through fieldwork data, it explores the level of engagement with CPD and discusses the views expressed by research participants regarding CPD opportunities. Following on from these findings, this chapter discusses the lack of confidence experienced by fieldwork participants and presented in research, when teaching music education. It explores the subsequent impact of this absence of confidence in music education and discusses the effects this has on the facilitation of creative music making in the classroom.

Chapter Five explores the remaining two themes from fieldwork interviews, relating to curriculum and creativity at primary and secondary level. The Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum document is central to this exploration, and the three strands of the music curriculum: Performing, Listening and Responding, and Composing feature. This chapter analyses the relationship between the three strands of the music curriculum and discusses what aspects of the curriculum teachers are engaging well with, while reflecting on curricular issues arising from fieldwork. This chapter also analyses continuity within the music education curricula, and explores the need for a more cohesive approach throughout primary and secondary level. It explores the transition from primary to secondary level in music education, and introduces the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum linking it to best practice, while highlighting the potential for further developments in the primary level curriculum. This chapter discusses creativity as a central element of a meaningful and engaging learning experience in music education. This chapter supports this sentiment of contemporary Irish composer Peter Moran who states "…composing music with school children builds their confidence, self-awareness and ability to express themselves" (Moran, 2012:online). It explores why creative practice should be an intrinsic feature of the primary level music curriculum.

The final chapter reflects on the themes and views expressed in this thesis, and during fieldwork interviews. It addresses the concerns and observations regarding the quality of music education in Ireland, and using the information and knowledge developed in earlier chapters, this chapter presents a range of ideas and enhancements for music education, to move forward at primary level with creativity playing a more central role. It seeks to

strengthen the position of music education in the classroom, and supports the status of creativity and creative practice as central aspects of the primary level music curriculum.

The overall aim of this dissertation is to analyse music education from the teachers' perspectives, and present an understanding of the importance of music education, with particular emphasis on musical creativity within primary level education system in Ireland. It aims to examine the history of music education in Ireland, to help situate my research in the overall context of Irish primary level education. It analyses and explores the views of three psychologists regarding the varied definitions and philosophy of creativity, as a catalyst for discussion, considering the relevance and importance of creativity in the primary level classroom. Through interview, it explores how music education is currently identified among generalist primary, and secondary level music teachers, and considers six primary level classroom teachers' authentic experiences in the delivery of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum in the classroom. It also explores the views and concerns of two Secondary level music teachers with new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum, to analyse continuity in the curriculum and discuss the range of opportunities for development in primary level music education, to strengthen the skills of generalist primary level teachers and ensure engagement and quality interaction with the primary level music curriculum in Ireland.

Chapter Two: History of Music Education in Ireland

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the history of music education in Ireland. It considers how the national political landscape, and associated government policies have impacted greatly upon the advancement of the Arts and more specifically, music education throughout the twentieth century. The position of music education in school during this time is discussed, analysing the effects and impact of: varying levels of interest among policy makers and the wider community historically, leading to inconsistent music education within teacher education, and a lack of musical knowledge among teaching staff. The evolution of music education is described in this chapter and the developments during the latter half of the twentieth century are presented, along with the initiatives and projects established to further enhance the position of music within education. More recent reports and developments in music education are discussed, to present the situation representative of the music education programme which teachers and policy makers strive for in education today. This chapter endeavours to present the journey which music has taken in government and educational policy in Ireland. It shows how a history of inconsistency in policy and practice affected the development of a quality broad, balanced, and accessible music curriculum, and considers if this history still has an impact upon the musical experiences encountered in the primary level classroom in Ireland today.

2.2 Music Education and Policy: 1900 to 1950

While still under British rule, music was first introduced as a compulsory element of the primary level curriculum in 1900. The teaching of music was confined to song singing at this time with McAuliffe (2004) describing the condition of music in education when she explains:

> For the first time the status of singing was raised to a compulsory subject in all schools where there were teachers qualified to teach it, and it was considered that the teaching of vocal music should form part of the duties of the primary school teacher (McAuliffe,

2004:83).

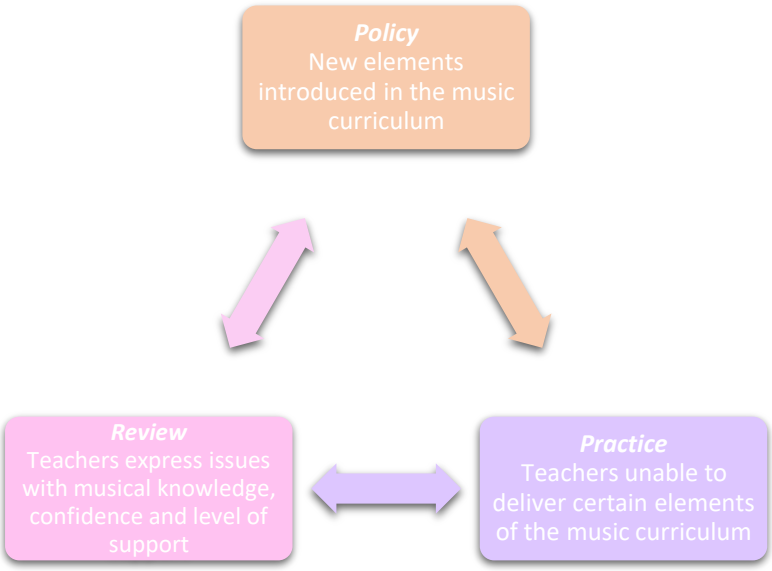
Unfortunately, at this time generalist primary teachers did not have much guidance in music. Vocal teacher Peter Goodman was appointed by a board of commissioners as inspector of musical instruction in 1901 and was tasked with the responsibility of preparing generalist primary teachers for teaching music in the primary level classroom. The situation in music education at the time was quite dismal, with the board of commissioners declaring "approximately 75% of the country's twelve thousand teachers were not proficient in music" (Board of Commissioners, 1900:82, cited by McAuliffe, 2004). This led to ineffective and non-existent music practice at primary level, which continued for the first half of the twentieth century, predominately due to inadequate instruction and guidance for staff and inefficient policy (McAuliffe, 2004).

There were frequent fluctuations in interest and advocacy for the Arts among policy makers throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The early part of the century was marked by periods of political unrest at national and international level, which greatly affected the formation of official arts policy in Ireland. In a report commissioned by the Arts Council (1990) entitled *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland,* researcher Brian P. Kennedy explores the issues and difficulties which arose while developing arts policy in Ireland during the early twentieth century. Kennedy's research sought to analyse the history and development of official arts policy in Ireland. He gives an insight into his findings when he states:

> … this development has been marked more by a tendency to implement grand gestures towards the arts than to realise a comprehensive and cogent arts policy (Kennedy, 1990:xiii).

Government views relating to the arts at the time were indifferent and highlighted a lack of understanding of the purpose for arts in society. This influenced the perception of the arts among policy makers, and subsequently affected the position of the arts in wider society. Kennedy noted that "The material reveals that the arts have most often been an interesting but peripheral part of government policy" (Kennedy, 1990:1). His findings present the detrimental impact that the opinion of the arts among government had on the development of an effective arts infrastructure in Ireland, and the subsequent influence on the position music held within education curricula. The sole purpose of music in schools during the first half of the century was two-fold. There was a political influence, using music to promote the Irish language, which encouraged the principles of a newly independent Ireland, and a religious aspect focusing on preparation to sing at liturgical events, a position which was reflective of the status of Catholicism in Ireland, and the influence religion had in education at the time (McAuliffe, 2004). Referring to music education in 1930, Kennedy considered the difficulties facing the development of music education in the classroom. He too attributed it to the lack of guidance for teachers, a similar sentiment to that written thirty years previously by the board of commissioners in 1900. This highlights a cyclical pattern of inadequate development in music policy and practice at this time, which can be seen in Figure C.

Figure C - Cyclical Pattern of Inadequate Development in Music Education



Kennedy expresses his concerns with the provision of music education when he states:

> The Department of Education had tried to stimulate interest in music but had met with limited success. It was difficult to overcome the inherent problem that most teachers had no musical training (Kennedy, 1990:38).

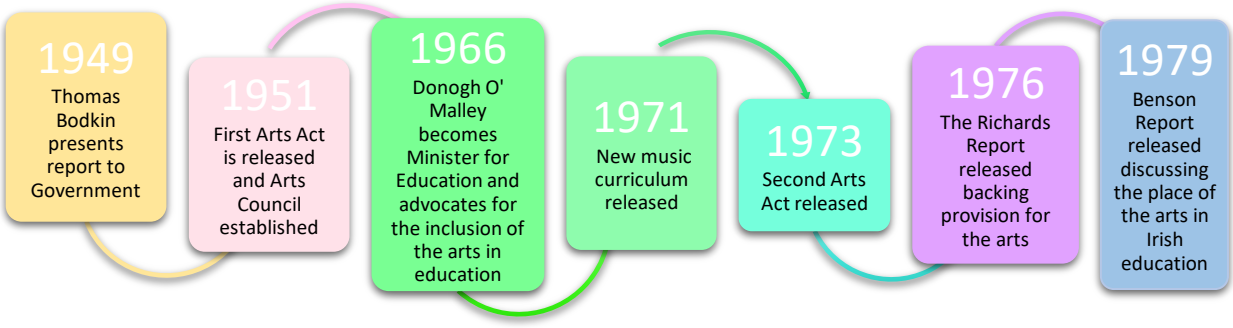
In 1932, the Department of Education appointed, Donnchadh O'Braoin as the organizing inspector of music. Mr. O'Braoin worked tirelessly for over twenty years promoting music in the education system, presenting annual CPD courses in music for primary level teachers. However, this enthusiasm was not reflected through engagement with music education at secondary level, with very small numbers of pupils choosing to study music at Junior and Leaving Certificate Level (McAuliffe, 2004). Research suggests that progression in music education during this time was minimal. Only individual voices in government, with the support of a small number of colleagues constantly fought to cement the position of a broader Arts programme in education throughout the early twentieth century (McAuliffe, 2004; Kennedy, 1990; O'Braoin cited in Fleischmann, 1952; & Fleischmann, 1935). Two such advocates were Thomas Bodkin, a prolific lover of art and Paddy Little, a passionate enthusiast of music, both of whom were avid believers in the development of the Arts in Irish society.

Bodkin and Little frequently presented recommendations for the Arts to the Government but financial pressures and political agendas of the time constantly prevented these opportunities from coming to fruition. This decline was seen with the position of organizing inspector of music gradually eroded by government, and later abolished in 1985 (Beausang, 2002).

2.3 Continuity and Change in Music Education and Policy: 1950 to 2000

After a tumultuous period for the state during World War Two, music continued to sit on the periphery of educational policy but the importance of music began to gain traction in Ireland. The positive developments in the arts and music education from 1949 to 1979 are presented in Figure D. In 1949, the government asked Bodkin to write a piece entitled *A Report on the Arts in Ireland*. This report acted as the catalyst for the establishment of the Arts Council in Ireland, and for the development of music within education, which began to flourish with the publication of the *Arts Act 1951.*

Figure D - Developments in the Arts and Music Education from 1949 - 1979



The *Arts Act 1951* was written to "promote the knowledge, appreciation, and practice of, the arts and, for these and other purposes, to establish an Arts Council…" (*Arts Act*, 1951:1). The Arts Council was established to oversee the development and management of arts endeavours in Ireland. Unfortunately, the council was met with little support or funding from

government ministers (Irish Independent, 1955). The lack of understanding and appreciation for the arts in society, and the need for arts in education (Irish Examiner, 1954) are highlighted in Figure E.

Figure E - Newspaper Articles 1954 - 1955

Irish Examiner 1841-current ▾ | Thursday, October 28, 1954 ▾ | Page: 4

IRELAND AND CULTURE

ARE the Irish a cultured race? Apparently not, for if they were cultural productions would command a wider interest, as is the inference to be drawn from the second annual report of an organisation founded to foster art in every form. Says the report: "The patronage and support given to our own artists improves, but there is still evidence of that lack of appreciation and support referred to when An Chomhairle Ealaiou was set up. Experience so far points to the need of developing a general understanding, sound taste and judgment in our youth if the problem is to be dealt with seriously. Valid cultural productions do not yet pay adequately, or command as wide an interest as one would expect among a people endowed with considerable intelligence."

The organisation means well, but does it set about its mission in the right spirit. Take pictorial art, for example. How can the ordinary citizen appreciate the merits of a picture if he has not been taught

Irish Independent 1905-current, Friday, July 15, 1955; Page: 11

The estimate was the last major item remaining on the Order Paper, the only other estimate being that for An Chomhairle Ealaion (the Arts Council). "I gravely doubt if deputies in their present mood want to hear anything about art," said the Taoiseach, in moving it.

He was well aware, he added that they were anxious to leave the House and get away to their homes, but he took a few minutes, nevertheless, to tell them of a new campaign that is being launched for the return of the Lane pictures. Mr. MacEntee, for the Opposition endorsed the Government's stand in the matter and a few moments later, in the happy atmosphere of a school breaking up for the holidays, the House had adjourned until October 26

* * *

During the period from 1960 – 1970, there was an increase in the population in Ireland and many new schools were founded. This situation forced the government to reflect upon plans and policies in place for the arts in education. The Minister for Education Donogh O'Malley, revolutionised the education system in Ireland during the period from 1966 – 1968. He endeavoured to provide a full range of educational opportunities for all and highlighted the failings within his department regarding arts education in schools when he declared:

> …my neglect of the arts and my failure to provide adequately in our schools for music, drama, a knowledge of our national treasures and our wonderful ancient monuments must be put right (cited in Kennedy, 1990:95).

However, even with the strong endorsement from the Education Minister and the support of members of the Arts Council, the position of the arts in education and in wider government continued to struggle. Just as Thomas Bodkin and Paddy Little were beacons of hope in the early twentieth century, government minister Donogh O'Malley became an isolated advocate for the arts in the nineteen sixties within government, receiving little or no support.

After a long period of stagnation within music education from a curricular perspective, a new music curriculum was released for primary level entitled Curaclam na Bunscoile (1971). It was seen as a very ambitious curriculum, which included new elements in music education. The introduction of creativity through music represented a major shift in music education but teachers struggled with the implementation, as they did not have sufficient guidance, nor the fundamental musical knowledge to do so effectively (McAuliffe, 2004), a recurring theme among teachers regarding music education since 1900.

The *Arts Act* published in 1973 served as a stimulus for further change in government policy and positively enhanced views towards the arts in society. The *Richards Report* entitled *Provision for the Arts* released in 1976 commended the improvements since Bodkin's report in 1949, but also emphasized the need for further action to improve the status of arts in Ireland. As the interest and enthusiasm surrounding the arts began to flourish, so too did the funding associated with the Arts Council. Theatre companies such as Team Educational Theatre and Graffiti, who specialised in material for school children, were established during

the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties, along with the National Children's Choir and RTÉ Cór na nÓg (1985). A very positive step for the inclusion of creativity in the classroom came with the launch of the 'Writers in Schools' initiative (1977). In conjunction with these developments in schools, the members of the Arts Council continued their work to demand more robust government policy on the arts in the education system. Ciarán Benson published *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* (1979) which discussed and offered recommendations regarding how the arts in the Irish education system could be improved. Benson's viewpoint continued to gain momentum and his work came to fruition in the 1983 Arts Council annual report. *The Benson Report* (1979) highlighted the importance of the arts in education and reiterated the view that children need to be exposed to the arts during their time in school. Benson's work emphasized how exposure to the arts will always be limited to a small number of the population, if it is not experienced in education. This report had an enduring impact upon the members of the Arts Council. Council representatives stated:

> It is clear that, unless proper recognition is given to art, music, drama and dance in primary and secondary level schools, the inclination to participate in the arts will be confined to a small sector of the adult population (Arts Council Annual Report, 1983:6).

Over the following twenty years, there were many publications released supporting the views surrounding the importance of the arts in education and it continued to gain momentum (Education Act, 1998; Review Body on the Primary Curriculum, 1990; The Arts in Education, 1989; & *Deaf Ears?,* 1985). *Deaf Ears?* (1985), released during the European year of music discussed the quality of music education at primary and secondary level in Ireland. This report presents a very stark view of music education in schools when it highlights:

> The majority of Irish primary school children leave school musically illiterate…As a consequence they have no worthwhile basis…to avail of music as a subject at post-primary level…Primary schools have little or no money with which to buy instruments,

> and even if they had, a large proportion of teachers find difficulty implementing the primary school music programme and particularly the creative sections (*Deaf Ears?,* 1985: Introduction).

It expressed grave concern with music education at primary level, with twenty percent of teachers doing no music in the classroom, and fifty percent of the teachers having trouble with some aspect of the curriculum. One of the national surveys cited in *Deaf Ears?* speaks about "particular difficulties in the creative sections of this new programme" (1985: 11). These national survey results relating to music education in Curaclam na Bunscoile (1971) are presented in Figure F.

Figure F - Deaf Ears? 1985 Findings

1.2 PROVISION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1.2.1 The 1971 *Primary School Curriculum*[5] proposed a broad music programme for the various years in a child's primary schooling. It included song-singing, music- making, creative work and integration with other curriculum areas.

1.2.2 In the 1970's, three national surveys' pointed out the difficulties being experienced by teachers in implementing aspects of this new music programme:

(1) Twenty per cent of teachers admitted to doing no music;[7]
(2) Half of the teachers experienced difficulty in implementing aspects of the programme;[8]
(3) One survey" highlighted particular difficulties in the creative sections of this new programme.

1.2.3 More recently, the Department of Education's Curriculum Unit conducted a national survey on the implementation of the 1971 music programme. While the report indicates satisfactory levels of achievement in song-singing, *very low levels of mastery* were recorded in:

(1) knowledge of intervals;
(2) musical literacy:
(3) some aural skills.[10]

Creative work integration and music-making were not included in this survey.

1.2.4 The above findings have been confirmed in research carried out this year in a provincial area."

1.2.5 All these reports demonstrate that the majority of Irish school children leave the primary school

(a) musically illiterate;
(b) with little vocal or aural training; and
(c) a repertoire of songs usually learned by rote.

1.2.6 As a result they do not have the necessary skills:

(1) to extend their repertoire;
(2) to avail easily of music as a subject in post-primary school.

The *Deaf Ears?* report stimulated further development in music education throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Music Network was established in 1986, providing opportunities for children to experience live music in school. Government bodies considered the status of music in education with various reports released (The Review Body on the Primary Curriculum,1990; & The Arts Council and Education, 1989). In 1995, the government officially acknowledged the importance of the arts in education in their report *Charting our Education Future – The White Paper*. It marked a significant improvement in the standing of the arts in education. In relation to the primary level curriculum, it stated "the Government affirms the centrality of the arts within educational policy and provision, particularly during compulsory schooling" (Government of Ireland, 1995:20). The *Education Act* of 1998 supported this opinion as it acknowledged "promoting the development of the arts and other cultural matters as a particular function for schools" (1998, Section 9(f)). In 1999, the Revised Primary Level Music Curriculum was introduced, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

Following the introduction of this curriculum, the MEND report entitled *A Review of Music Education in Ireland, Incorporating the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate* (Heneghan, 2001) was written in response to growing concerns relating to music in education. The findings of this report highlight concerns relating to Initial Teacher Education. Heneghan was uncertain if primary level teachers were sufficiently prepared to deliver all aspects of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, similar sentiments to those expressed by the Board of Directors in 1900 (McAuliffe, 2004), Kennedy (1990) in relation to music education in 1930, and *Deaf Ears?* (1985). Heneghan explains this when he states:

> There is concern that teacher training for music education in Ireland is neither adequate nor always relevant to the demands of the published curriculum; this is particularly so in

> relation to the revisions of the last decade at all levels of school music education. (Heneghan, 2001:427).

2.4 Creativity, Music Education and Policy: 2000 to 2021

The MEND report (2001) did enable policy makers to reflect and respond to the content presented in *Deaf Ears?(*1985), and it gave them the opportunity to provide a clear pathway moving forward in music education. The status of music education has continued to develop consistently over the last twenty-one years. The Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum has encouraged reflection and development in music practice at primary level, with many organisations providing enhanced musical support for Primary Schools (Arts in Education Portal, 2015; Teacher-Artist Partnership Project (TAP), 2014; Music Generation, 2010; Artist in Schools Scheme, 2006; & Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland/Peace Proms, 1995). There have been numerous reports released during this time which highlight the importance of the arts and emphasize music as an integral part of the development of the child (Music in Ireland today, 2018; Arts and Culture Plan 2008; Points of Alignment, 2008; Looking At Music, 2008; The Public and The Arts, 2006; Music for Young People, 2004; A National System of Local Music Education Services, 2003; Arts Act, 2003; & Report of the Joint Committee on Education and Science on Music in Education, 2000).

Over the last ten years, creativity has become a central part of culture in Ireland. There has been a notable refocus relating to creativity, and it continues to hold an important position in government policy today. This began with Ruairi Quinn TD, the Minister for Education and Skills and Jimmy Deenihan TD, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, signing the *Arts in Education Charter* (Department of Education and Skills, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2012). This charter included the recognition that arts provision in

education needed to be reviewed and enhanced. A special committee on the arts and education collated data from educators, specialists, policy makers and the public relating to the arts. They compiled a report (Points of Alignment, 2008) which was "adopted unanimously by the Arts Council and submitted to the then Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and to the Department of Education and Science" (Arts in Education Charter, 2012:3). The *Arts in Education Charter* highlights the importance of creativity in education as an intrinsic element for the future progression of the country when it declares:

> The nature of the Irish economy and the paradigm shift which it experienced in recent years underscores the need for economic and social policies that are underpinned by an education system that fosters and nourishes creativity *(Arts in Education Charter, 2012:7).*

This document emphasises how students are enabled to develop as creative individuals through learning experienced in music, drama and visual art. In relation to the arts, the Charter explains:

> The arts are our first encounter with that rich world of creativity, and we believe in placing the arts, alongside other subjects, at the core of our education system (Arts in Education Charter, 2012:4).

Since the publication of the Charter in 2012, the importance of the arts in education has greatly improved due to the content, and subsequent developments which arose from the charter. This charter has informed numerous policies including *Making Great Art Work, Arts Council Strategy 2016 – 2025; Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study* (2016); & *Creative Ireland* (2017). These reports conclude that the experiences which children are exposed to through the arts, inherently lend themselves to creative expression and development. In the draft document *Culture 2025 – A Framework Policy to 2025* (Government of Ireland, 2016) 'Foster Creativity'

is one of the Seven Pillars to guide the development of Government Policies in the Cultural Sector. Creativity is constantly emphasized as an integral part of the enhancement of future generations.

Another positive development was the establishment of Music Generation in 2010. This organisation provides opportunities and access to music education for children from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Music Generation conducted research in conjunction with St Patrick's Teacher Education College, Drumcondra entitled *Possible Selves in Music (2016)*. This report examines the various facets of youth music education and the extensive range of benefits and possibilities that engaging in creative music making with children has. One such finding refers to 'relational meaning' which explores the development of relationships among children through musical activities. It highlights how the benefits of music-making extend far beyond the music-making process itself. The research describes:

> Relational meaning highlights the role of others in children and young people's musical engagement. Features of relational meaning include the role of meaningful music-making in promoting broader social connections for children and young people, in widening children and young people's cultural understandings, in contributing to a sense of collective well-being and belonging, and in building supportive and trusting relationships… (Music Generation, 2016:225).

In recent years, there has been a substantial amount of funding allocated to the arts in education sector. The Arts Council of Ireland, along with the Irish Government established the *Creative Ireland Programme 2017 – 2022*. This initiative states that "Culture and Creativity are the greatest assets of any society. It is our duty to do everything we can to unleash the full creative potential of our people" (Creative Ireland, 2017:6). Following this

report, *Creative Youth* (2017) document was released which outlined the *Creative Schools* initiative. This programme gives primary and secondary schools access to funding, along with an assigned arts professional known as a creative associate, to guide and support the planning process for the arts and creativity in the school. The staff co-ordinator and creative associate work together to devise a creative plan, to include the whole school community. This important programme safeguards and enhances the position that creativity and the arts currently hold in education.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the history of arts policies and music education in Ireland from 1900 to the present day. It discussed the shifting status of music in society and explored the evolution of decision making at government level relating to music policy and creativity. In the early part of the twentieth century, these policy decisions were often accompanied by a lack of understanding of the power of the arts in society, which subsequently affected the progression and elevation of the status of music within the education system (Dowling-Long, 2015). This chapter explored the shift in mentality during the late twentieth century, which culminated with the introduction of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. This curriculum marked the beginning of a substantial period of development and appreciation for music and creativity in education. This chapter concluded with a discussion surrounding the more recent developments in music education including the launch of the *Creative Ireland* initiative (2017), highlighting the positive impact these programmes have on the importance and power of music and creativity in primary level education in Ireland.

Chapter Three: Exploring Creativity in Music Education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to develop an understanding of the role and reasoning for the inclusion of music and creativity in primary level music education. It considers the different interpretations of creativity as presented by psychologists, and links these evaluations to music and creative practice in the primary level classroom. This chapter explores the impact of music and creativity on the holistic development of the child and discusses music making as a mechanism to support the development of creativity in music education. It investigates research surrounding creativity in music education, examining the value of creativity in music education and considering the enhanced learning experiences provided through creative practice in the classroom. This chapter suggests that considering these benefits, schools should cater for creative development in music education, by providing access to creative music making opportunities during primary level education in Ireland.

3.2 Exploring the Meaning of Creativity

The term creativity has been utilised and interpreted differently in a variety of disciplines. It is defined in a diverse number of ways but one message is clear, creativity is central to the overall development and progression of the human race. Reflecting upon the value of creativity in his 2011 inaugural address, Ireland's President, Michael D. Higgins directly emphasises the significance of creativity in our lives and in the progression of our nation when he states:

> I believe that when we encourage the seedbed of creativity in our communities and ensure that each child and adult have the opportunity for creative expression, we also lay the groundwork for sustainable employment in creative industries and enrich our social, cultural, and economic development (President Higgins, 2011: Inaugural address).

Through this statement, President Higgins acknowledges the importance of creativity for the holistic development of our society.

Professor of Educational Psychology Barbara Kerr (2016) describes creativity as:

> …the ability to make or otherwise bring into existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form (Kerr, 2016:online).

Creativity has many positive uses, it is the catalyst for the creation of new inventions, it is central to the development of cures and treatments for disease, and it transcends the known boundaries of the human mind. Creativity enables people to explore and move beyond the known realm of what humans are capable of, and it opens up a whole new world of discovery in education which is full of rich learning opportunities. In his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, developmental psychologist Howard Gardner describes his Theory of Multiple Intelligences as outlined in Figure G.

Figure G - Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

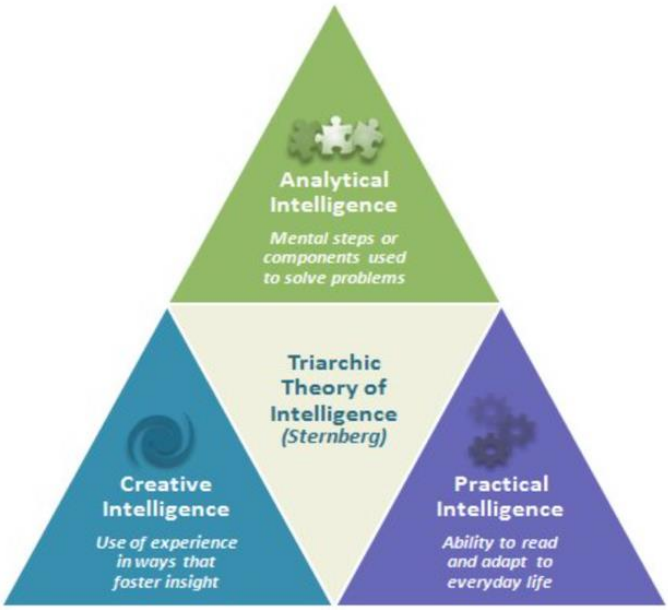


Gardner's theory describes intelligence as a complex concept, with eight different types of intelligence, one of which is musical intelligence, connected to numerous aspects of life. He explains how people have varying levels of proficiency in these areas, and increased skill levels can be acquired and developed in each field throughout life. A parallel can be drawn here with the perception of musical ability and creativity. People often see music and creativity as skills which are innate and cannot be acquired, but these skills can also be nurtured and developed throughout your life, if you are provided with the necessary skills, knowledge and opportunities to do so (Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007). In Gardner's theory, creativity and problem solving do not feature prominently among the listed intelligences. Gardner later added that "each form of intelligence may harbour, within it, its own form of creativity" (Gardner, 1995:35). Research by Education Professor Abdi (2012) supported this, with a study showing a direct correlation between teachers providing lessons with the multiple intelligences approach for various learning styles in the classroom, and an increase in creative thinking among 5th grade children. Abdi emphasizes this when he explains:

> Results research shows that multiple intelligences theory-based instruction significantly improves students' creative thinking ability compared to traditional teaching…based on this study's findings and conclusions, we suggest that teachers utilize multiple intelligences theory-based instruction to provide students more creative thinking ability (Abdi, 2012:108).

Psychologist Robert Sternberg presented a different approach to intelligence when he published his *Triarchic Theory of Intelligence* (1985), represented in Figure H.

Figure H - Robert Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Intelligence



Sternberg's theory defines three different types of intelligence: Analytical, practical and creative. Analytical refers to academic and computational knowledge, practical represents common sense and the ability to adapt effectively to new situations, and creative signifies imaginative and innovative problem solving (Spielman et al., 2014). In 1999, Sternberg developed this theory further with his publication *The Theory of Successful Intelligence*, which advocates a shift away from the traditional concept of intelligence, moving towards a more well-rounded approach, just as Gardner had discussed in 1983. Further analysis of these theories strengthened links between Gardner's theory of 'musical intelligence' and the clear need for the creative intelligence component as described by Sternberg (1985). In 2020, Sternberg himself released the paper *Toward a Theory of Musical Intelligence*, examining the interrelationship between his triarchic theory and Gardner's multiple intelligences theory. The links from Sternberg's paper (2020) are presented in Figure I.

Figure I - Links between Gardner and Sternberg's Theories

Table 1. An integration of the theory of multiple intelligences with the theory of successful intelligence with application to musical intelligence.

Intellectual skills/intelligence	Creative skills	Analytical skills	Practical skills	Wisdom-based skills
Linguistic				
Logical-Mathematical				
Visual-spatial				
Musical	Composing music; Playing music in a novel but appropriate way	Critiquing musical performance; analyzing a musical composition	Composing or playing music in a way that effectively reaches an audience	Composing or playing music in a way to achieve a social or societal good
Bodily-kinesthetic				
Naturalist				
Interpersonal				
Intrapersonal				

Sternberg explores the skills and elements needed for true 'musical intelligence', and makes significant links between music and creativity when he states:

> An individual is creative when she or he creates, invents, discovers, explores, supposes, designs, or imagines. Meaningful creativity always requires a knowledge base: One cannot think creatively—beyond what has been done before—unless one has some idea and appreciation of what has been done before. Creative intelligence is involved in music in a variety of ways (Sternberg, 2020:4).

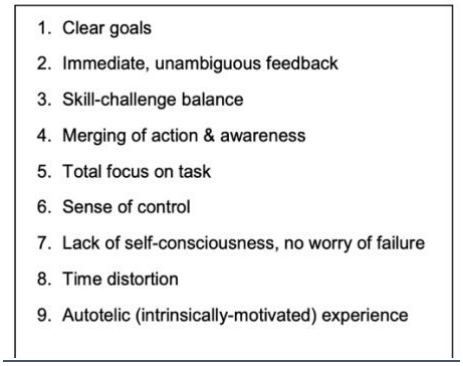
Analysing the impact of creativity on the human mind, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explores the state of 'flow'. He describes flow as:

> …the way people describe their mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:8).

Csikszentmihalyi explores the range of activities whereby people are most likely to enter this state of 'flow'. Creativity and creative thinking feature prominently among these activities which range from working, or raising children, to playing sport, painting or making music. The use of 'flow' as a tool for enhancing creative activities in music education has produced positive outcomes (Bakker, 2005; Byrne et al., 2003). Byrne et al. (2003) presented a model

for the assessment of creative flow during learning which was based on Csikszentmihalyi's traditional components of flow (1999/2002), as presented by Cseh et al. (2016) in Figure J.

Figure J - Csikszentmihalyi's Nine Traditional Components of Flow



This study using a Csikszentmihalyi inspired 'flow' model of goals, balance and feedback produced positive results for both teacher and student learner outcomes (Byrne et al., 2003). Another empirical investigation into the state of 'flow' in creative music education gathered results affirming "higher levels of flow are related in a number of important ways to higher levels of creativity and higher quality compositions" (MacDonald et al., 2006:301). This state of 'flow' represents an appropriately challenging, yet engaging and rewarding experience for the student, which is an optimum environment for creative learning in music.

3.3 Benefits of Creativity and Music Education

Creativity in music education provides an environment where the children are at the centre of the learning experience, which is described as experiential learning. Girvan et al. (2016) define experiential learning as:

> …an overarching term used to classify several different forms of learning approaches, including problem and inquiry-based learning. Yet at the centre of each is a focus on a lived experience upon which learners can reflect, think and act (Girvan et al., 2016:130).

Supported by this idea of experiential learning, Elliott (1995) developed the concept of praxial music education. This approach situates 'musical doing' or 'music-ing' at the centre of the activity. Elliott challenges the aesthetic notion of music education, and redefines it as a human activity, where the environment and musical values of the community directly impact on the quality of students' musical experiences (Silverman et al., 2013). Silverman (2014) discusses Aristotle's concept of 'eudaimonia', a personal state, which draws parallels with Csikszentmihalyi's theory of 'flow', where the most creative learning environment is experienced. Silverman explains:

> When music education is ethically guided—when we teach people not only in and about music, but also through music—we achieve what Aristotle and many other philosophers consider the highest human value—eudaimonia (Silverman, 2014:57).

This concept of praxialism (Elliott, 1995) encourages opportunities for experiential learning activities, which enhance the creative and holistic development of the students, through their music making experiences, both individually and within the wider school community.

This prompts the exploration of creativity in music education as an important part of overall development. As discussed in Chapter One, Burnard and Murphy (2017) emphasize the importance of enhancing creativity during music class, ensuring that every lesson includes an element of creative practice. Burnard and Murphy (2017) believe that all musical activities can be developed to be inherently creative and subsequently, creativity is placed at the centre of music education.

Creativity through music boosts pupil wellbeing by affording them opportunities to explore emotions and experiences in a creative space. Burnard and Dragovic (2014) discuss how:

> Creative instrumental music group learning activity has the potential to enhance pupil wellbeing by empowering them through supportive statements and decision-making, and by engaging them through embodiment of the played music and improvisations/playfulness (Burnard & Dragovic, 2014).

Music is an important tool for emotional regulation in the classroom. Edgar (2013) discusses the impact of music education on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). He considers how the five components of SEL: Self-awareness, Social awareness, Responsible decision making, Self-management and Relationship management (CASEL,2003), can be developed through a variety of music lessons and activities. Research by Smyth (2020) discusses how music making has an impact on emotional wellbeing and overall life satisfaction for young people. Smyth's research explores the current narrative surrounding the impact of technology on a child's development. (Joshi et al., 2019; HSE, 2018; & Hatch, 2011) This research reveals:

> Life satisfaction levels are higher where young people regularly make music, go to the cinema and (to some extent) are involved in music/drama clubs or lessons, but lower where they play computer games or watch TV/films regularly (Smyth, 2020:64).

The role of creativity has been widely discussed by researchers in the field of music education (Webster, 2018; Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015; Stavrou, 2012; Göktürk, 2010; Burnard & Younker, 2004; & Macdonald & Miell, 2000). As discussed by many researchers, music has an impact on many parts of the primary level curriculum including reading, understanding language, maths, and science (Guhn et al.,2020; Das et al.,2020; & Barrett,2006b). Kraus and Chandrasekaran (2010) and Patel (2003) discuss the relationship between music and the development of auditory skills. On studies of the brain, the brain of a musically trained child was able to recognize differences in sentence syntax (structure), pitch and tone. From their research, Kraus and Chandrasekaran (2010) conclude that:

> …music training results in structural and functional biological changes throughout our lifetime. Such neuroplasticity not only benefits music processing but also percolates to other domains, such as speech processing…neural changes such as these have practical implications, as they help to prepare people who actively engage with music for the challenges of language learning and everyday listening tasks. (Kraus & Chandrasekaran, 2010:604).

Following an experimental study, research by Skoe and Kraus (2012) suggests that "…the brainstem response was more robust in adults with musical training compared with those with no past instrumental training (Skoe & Kraus, 2012:11508). This further strengthens the links between a child's development and the potential lifelong impact of engagement with music education. It is clear that engaging with music in school can have a direct impact on cognitive and subsequent academic development. Schellenberg (2004) explores this impact of music on IQ. From his study, results suggests that "…compared with the control groups, the music groups had reliably larger increases in full-scale IQ…" (Schellenberg, 2004:512)

Much research supports the understanding that creativity in music leads to enhanced learning opportunities and increased cognition (Rastelli et al., 2020; Silvia, 2015; & LaMore et al., 2013). In a study of arts involvement and economic development, LaMore et al. (2013) look at the impact that sustained exposure to arts and crafts activities has on the development of innovative and creative individuals capable of designing new patentable products and companies, which will enhance the economic growth of a region. Creating and composing music was a central aspect of 'arts and crafts' within this study. LaMore et al. describe how:

> …long-term experience with the creative process in arts and crafts may enhance creative potential in science and technology… arts and crafts developed skills and creative ways of thinking that are critical to developing their professional problem-solving ability (LaMore et al., 2013:225,228).

As *Possible Selves in Music* (2016) research explains, the benefits of creative music making for

children reach far beyond the musical elements encountered in the lessons. Contemporary Irish composer Peter Moran also expresses this when he declares:

> The benefits of music education are profound and well-documented, but there are also other, more specific benefits to be gained from composing in the classroom which pertain to a child's personal development and growth: creating an original work and performing it before your peers builds confidence and self-expression; collaborating with class mates and exchanging abstract ideas builds social and communication skills; and tackling problems to which there are no right or wrong answers builds an open-mind and an aptitude for creative problem-solving, which will stand to each child whatever path they choose in life (Moran, 2012:online).

Moran understands how creative music making builds an environment where teachers can maximise the holistic potential of each student, regardless of their academic ability across other aspects of the school curriculum.

Bújez and Mohedo (2014) discuss the influence of music education, and in particular writing (creating) music on cognitive development when they describe:

> Music (especially reading and writing music) plays a fundamental role in the cognitive development of human beings since, like all advanced linguistic systems, it involves the development and mastery of multiples forms and systems of mental processing (Bújez and Mohedo, 2014:238).

The benefits of creative music making on cognition have also been explored extensively (Schiavio and Benedek, 2020; Van der Schyff, 2018; & Ritter, 2017). Hogenes et al. (2015) conducted a study exploring the effects of composition on musical and academic achievement among a group of elementary children. An experimental group who composed songs, placing creativity at the core of the learning, and a control group who reproduced songs, were formed among fifth and sixth grade students. Following a study over a ten-month period, results found that the group creating their own compositions had made more

progress in reading comprehension than the control group. Hogenes et al. explain this when they reveal:

> …this study highlights the surplus value on several dimensions of composition as a classroom activity, such as on engagement and on academic abilities, such as reading comprehension. This study has shown that music composition is feasible and useful in elementary school…The authors of this study conclude that productive music education is evidently more engaging for students than reproductive forms of music education (Hogenes et al.,2015:14).

3.4 Creative Practice in the Classroom

Burnard & Murphy (2017) discuss the importance creativity in the classroom. She highlights the rich learning opportunities for students and teachers to grow creatively together in the classroom. Burnard expresses the importance of creativity for the holistic development of the child when she states:

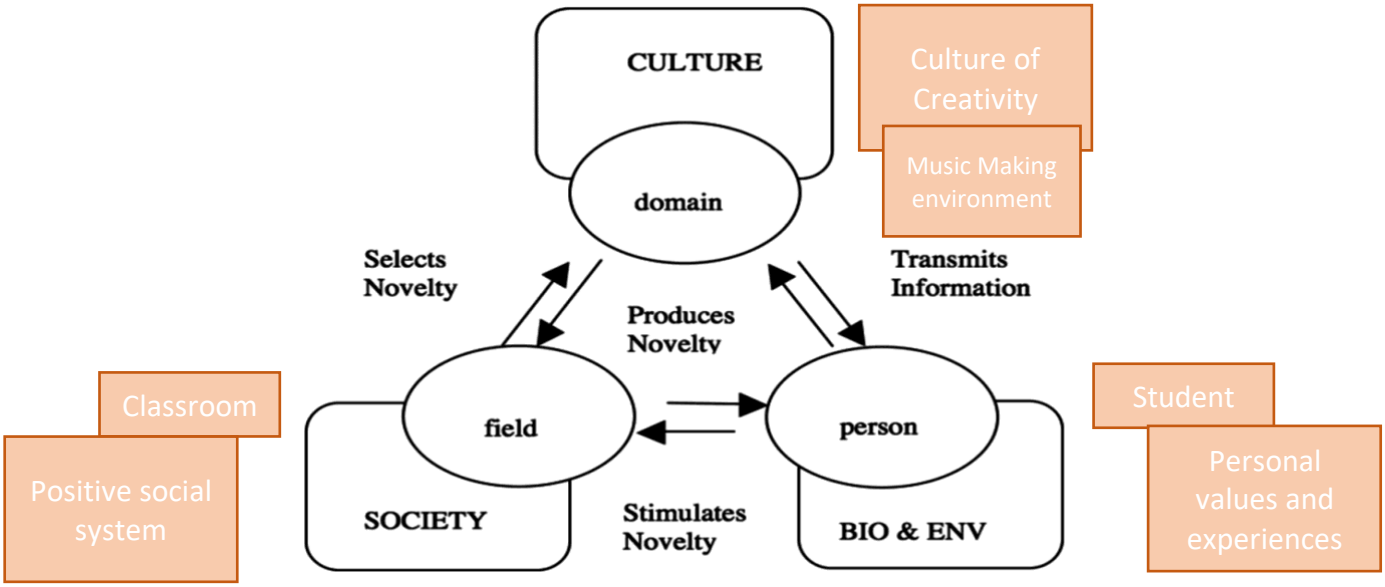
> Creative teachers help children to express themselves effectively and create music as well as critically evaluate their own work. Both UNESCO and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognise the importance of creativity and highlight the role of teachers in fostering children's musical capacity to make connections, take risks and innovate (Burnard & Murphy, 2017:4).

Burnard introduces the concept of 'creative teaching'. She too considers, just as Glover (2004) did, that the teacher has an inherent impact on the level of creativity experienced by students during a classroom activity. Kaufman & Beghetto (2009) discuss 'The Complete Four-c Model', where they tier levels of creativity from mini-c to Big-C. They recognize that most people encounter some form of creative experience in their everyday lives. The creative impact of these activities ranges from forming and developing a new skill (mini c), to complete mastery of a skill (big C). Burnard acknowledges the presence of creative knowledge in all humans, and she aspires for every teacher to access these creative experiences. Through their work with the children, she hopes students will develop skills in musical risk taking,

expression and exploration together, all of which will provide an engaging and creative environment for the child (Burnard & Murphy, 2017).

Kokotsaki & Newton (2015) explore some thought-provoking elements of musical creativity, as discovered in research (Rosenblatt, 1986 cited in Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015; Gadamer, 2004; & Elliott,1972). They explore Csikszentmihalyi's 'Systems Model of Creativity' (2015) as seen in Figure K (McIntyre, 2008).

Figure K – Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model of Creativity (McIntyre, 2008) layered with Burnard (2017)



Burnard (2017) refers to this model, presented in orange in Figure K, which highlights how creativity is not the sole the concern of the performer creating the work. There are many other variables which coexist during the creative process. Creativity is also central to the listener who responds to the work, formulating personal feelings and responses to the music heard. (Csikszentmihalyi,1996,1998 cited in Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015), Dunn (1997) refers to this as 'creative listening'. This represents the shared relationship between the classroom

culture, performers and listeners in the classroom setting, with all students working creatively through music. Bújez and Mohedo (2014) discuss moving away from the traditional approach to teaching and learning in music education in the classroom, and instead fostering collaboration, creativity, discussion and active discovery, allowing children to become the protagonists of their own learning. Barrett (2005) talks about the importance of developing musicianship and creative strategies concurrently which leads to progressive musical problem solving where the students are listening, performing and reflecting with more awareness and expertise as they expand their creative skills. This suggests that creativity should be a central aspect of every classroom, and should feature prominently in every plan for the music education Curriculum.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the definition and interpretation of creativity from a range of perspectives and models in psychology. Each model was discussed and analysed in relation to the advancement of creativity in music education. By examining these models, the abundance of valuable learning experiences to be gained from the inclusion of creativity in education curricula were shown. The academic and holistic benefits of creativity were presented and music was highlighted as a multifaceted subject, which creates many opportunities for creative learning experiences (Burnard & Murphy, 2017; Bújez & Mohedo, 2014; Moran, 2012). These learning opportunities may carry benefits that extend far beyond the realm of music education. The experiential learning approach discussed through praxial music education (Elliott, 1995) was explored, to consider the opportunities for creative development among learners. Autonomous, self-regulated learning (Oates, 2019), with the student becoming the protagonist of their own musical experience was highlighted as an integral part of developing creative practice in the classroom setting. Research discussed how

creativity can be fostered through music education activities for both participants and listeners, with musical problem solving described as a method of creative reflection and development in the classroom (Bújez and Mohedo, 2014; Barrett, 2005; & Dunn, 1997).

Chapter Four: Fieldwork Part One – Considering Teachers' Perspectives of Music Education

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and explores the views and opinions presented by eight classroom teachers in the south of Ireland. It focuses on data gathered from semi-structured interviews carried out online with research participants. It reports on three of five the main themes that emerged during these interviews: Initial Teacher Education (ITE), Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Teacher Confidence. ITE and CPD are explored at both primary and secondary level. The first part of this chapter focusses on the educational experience of the teacher. It analyses teachers' experiences with music education during their ITE programmes, and progresses to the availability of, and interaction with CPD, comparing teachers' experiences of CPD in music education. The second part of this chapter focuses on concerns surrounding teacher confidence at primary level in Ireland. A high level of confidence is explored as a fundamental aspect in the delivery of effective, engaging and reflective music lessons, and this is discussed in the context of the ITE process. This chapter presents valid reasoning for the inclusion and development of effective music education instruction within the Irish education system, while highlighting the necessary considerations to ensure it is an accessible and meaningful subject for all educators.

During fieldwork interviews, the participants refer to teacher training and teacher training colleges. I have chosen to amend this phrase in my critique and use teacher education and teacher education colleges. This is to signify the progression, development and evolution of our teacher education courses, and to reflect upon the expansive professional and academic knowledge gained right across the field of education during these teacher education programmes (Mulenga, 2020).

4.2 Initial Teacher Education

A quote from Fleischmann's review, *The Outlook of Music in Ireland* (1935) highlights an integral aspect of this research, and one which can still be applied to the learning experience today. Fleischmann states "if any uplift is to take place, we must begin with the teachers, the children, the schools" (Fleischmann, 1935:130). Teacher education has emerged as a fundamental part of a student's educational journey before commencing their teaching career. Research shows that the quality of teacher education has a direct impact upon the teaching experiences and academic achievements of students (Fischetti, 2019; Kazu and Kurtoglu, 2019; Mansfield, 2015; & Darling-Hammond, 2000). Moore (2019) describes how the teacher has a significant influence over the quality and quantity of music education received by the children. She explains:

> …the musical experiences a child has at the primary level are largely dependent on the teacher(s) they encounter (Moore, 2019:243).

It is paramount that teacher education is of a very high standard, to best equip students with the pedagogical knowledge and methodologies necessary to excel in their chosen field.

4.2.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Music Education in ITE and the Primary Classroom

Currently, there are many pathways to primary level teacher education in Ireland. The Teaching Council website lists eight accredited concurrent (undergraduate) routes, and five accredited consecutive (postgraduate) routes, which are provided by various Irish third level institutions and one online college, see Figure L.

Figure L - Third Level Courses for Primary Level Teaching in Ireland

Concurrent Primary

Higher Education Institution	Programme
Church of Ireland College of Education	Bachelor of Education
Marino Institute of Education	Bachelor of Education
DCU Institute of Education	Bachelor of Education (Irish Sign Language)
Institiúid Oideachais Marino	Baitsiléir san Oideachas Trí Mheán na Gaeilge
Maynooth University (Froebel Department of Primary and Childhood Education)	Bachelor of Education
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	Bachelor of Education
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	Bachelor of Education in Education with Psychology
DCU Institute of Education	Bachelor of Education

Consecutive Primary

Higher Education Institution	Programme
DCU Institute of Education	Professional Master of Education
Maynooth University (Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education)	Professional Master of Education
Hibernia College	Professional Master of Education in Primary Education
Marino Institute of Education	Professional Master of Education
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	Professional Master of Education

Fieldwork research would suggest that there are huge differences between the experiences in music education across teacher education courses. Research participants expressed a need for additional continuity in the study of music as part of the Bachelor of Education degree. As discussed in Chapter One, during my interviews with teachers, it came as a surprise that a varied amount of musical knowledge relating to music and the curriculum was experienced in ITE. As someone interested in music pedagogy, I understand the need for a diverse approach to teaching music in classrooms, but the discrepancies are concerning as they potentially impact the confidence and ability of teachers to support the development of music in their classrooms. For some teachers interviewed, there are aspects of the music curriculum which feel entirely inaccessible. Schools have chosen to deal with this in two ways:

1. By utilising staff members who specialise in music by means of a teacher subject swap or through shared class activities together.
2. By accessing music specialists from outside of the school community.

Utilising staff members provides children from different classes with opportunities to enjoy lessons with a specialist teacher. Using the unique talents of individual staff members at primary level to enhance the overall delivery of the curriculum is an excellent resource. This approach is implemented by many schools to enrich the delivery of the primary level music curriculum, as highlighted by Teacher 5:

> *…the main part that catches me would be all that kind of interval work and…singing but I haven't taught that now for years. My colleague teaches that for me and she's exceptionally good, it's second nature to her so we do a swap* (Teacher 5, May 2020:Interview).

However, Teacher 3 expressed a level of concern with this approach. In his experience, he describes how the classroom teacher thinks that the responsibility to teach music falls solely to their specialist colleague. Subsequently, the classroom teacher feels that there is no need to cover additional music lessons during the year. Teacher 3 explained:

> *…it makes me laugh because I've done a show nearly every year since I started teaching but…you'd be taking kids from other classes as part of it and then the other teachers…would be saying "oh they're doing all their music there with…" but it would really be for the majority of time, performing…but they would think then that they've music covered, they have drama covered, they have whatever…religion nearly, depending on the show! You'd have everything covered…Whereas yeah, I probably wasn't, I was covering performing a lot and probably neglecting some of the other areas a little bit as well* (Teacher 3, May 2020:Interview).

This quote highlights the potential gaps in children's musical experiences, and the absence of the sequential development of skills across other areas of the music curriculum.

If the above approach isn't possible at primary level due to an absence of staff expertise, or if the school wants to further enhance their music curriculum, music specialists are sourced from outside of the school community. This approach provides the children with access to musical experts that specialise in the field of instrumental tuition, or have developed hands-

on interactive music workshops, such as Waltons New School of Music who have created the Outreach Programme. However, from my own experience, these music specialists endeavour to align their material with the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, but in terms of autonomy over the content, the class teacher often becomes a student during the workshop, or completely removes themselves from the lesson and takes on a supervisory role ensuring participation, behaviour and inclusion of all students. This approach may do little to develop the skills of the classroom teacher, who may not feel very confident teaching music in the classroom already. It could have a paradoxical effect and succeed in creating an unrealistic ideal for teaching music in the classroom that many teachers feel they cannot attain. Kenny (2017b) calls for a more collaborative and partnered approach between teachers and music specialists to best develop effective and meaningful practice (Kenny, 2017b).

It would appear from my interviews that the diverse way that music is delivered, using a combination of classroom teachers, music specialists within the school, and outside music specialists, has impacted negatively upon how music education is perceived by some teachers. It is paramount for the progression of the subject that music education is accessible to all educators. To become truly effective, collaboration is extremely important, with each element of the educational process enhancing the other. Just as the strands of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum are interrelated, so too are the parties involved in providing good quality music education. If an effective and engaging music education programme is to be further enhanced and developed, fieldwork would suggest that it begins with the ITE experience.

Some participants during interview expressed concern with their musical experience in ITE. They felt that they did not leave with the necessary musical knowledge to deliver the music curriculum effectively following their ITE course. Teacher 1 noted inconsistencies in her musical knowledge when she said:

> *…the first time I saw what those notes meant was from that tin whistle course (CPD summer course) and even then, I sat there going, oh right, actually this makes sense, but I should have learned this when I was in college and they're preparing us for teaching music. Like you think that would be what you'd start with…this is what the notes are, this is where they sit on the line, this is a crotchet, this is a minim, this is what it means, this is your beats, like I don't have any music knowledge from college* (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

From fieldwork interviews, the range of interests and abilities in music became very clear. Of the eight teachers interviewed, six expressed opinions of frustration regarding their musical experience in ITE, with the remaining two teachers voicing a desire for more guidance and up-to-date CPD materials and resources. Teacher 1 expressed a lack of knowledge arising from college experiences, surrounding the use of instruments in the classroom when she said:

> *Grace: …do you think, overall, teachers are adequately prepared in college to teach a broad and balanced music curriculum?*
>
> *1: …we've had this conversation in our school when we took on the Dabbledoo (Music) programme…because we had a huge debate about music in school…we bought all these new instruments and we all turn to one another and go…there's actually probably only two max teachers of our 8 mainstream teachers that would be confident in using them, which is an issue (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).*

Teacher 3 cited a lack of time and engagement with music education in the postgraduate programme as an influential factor on the quality of music education received. He explained:

> *…well, I did a postgrad so the one kind of drawback on the postgrad is that it's very intense and that…you would do a module of music. If I can remember correctly now, we did a module of like 8 weeks music, and it was quite intense. I don't think we really got enough time or enough opportunity to practice what we were being taught and…You didn't really get a chance to try them out until your next teaching practice but then you weren't going back to study music again afterwards. I think that was the one drawback and I think that we did some really good things in my teacher training and…but I would have liked the opportunity to have tried them out and come back to the college…and even you might*

> *learn a little bit more from others…other students' experience of how it went for them or things that they tried out that worked well for them and we didn't really get that opportunity. It's probably a little bit better for the undergrads maybe but…* (Teacher 3, May 2020:Interview).

Teacher 6 spoke about the range of confidence levels among staff members and discussed how more needs to be done regarding CPD and collaboration, to guide teachers who are not as confident, through the music education process. She explained:

> *If you want teachers who aren't musically competent or confident to teach music, you do need to provide ways to help them or otherwise it will be avoided and the children are losing out then* (Teacher 6, May 2020:Interview).

Greenwalt (2016) analyses the views of philosopher John Dewey and discusses how his beliefs still relate to teacher education and learning today. Dewey highlights the need for high quality Initial Teacher Education to best equip students with the subject content needed to become effective and meaningful educators. He believes that it is only through this confidence in subject-content, that ITE courses can create an environment which produces reflective practitioners. Greenwalt (2016) expresses how through constant development and improvement in this area, our job as educators can continue to develop and improve when he states:

> Dewey expected from teachers expansive and profound knowledge of subject-matter. Only then would the teacher have the tools to identify the potential and tendency of the intellectual stirrings of learners. Only then would the teacher be able to provide materials and learning conditions that assist learners in developing their knowledge, skill, and character. Only then would the teacher be able to assess the nature of learners' past educational experiences when contemplating directions for their future growth (Greenwalt, 2016:3).

This constant cycle of reflection, assessment and progression is needed to enhance the teaching of curricular content in music which will impact positively upon the value of the overall learning experience for the child.

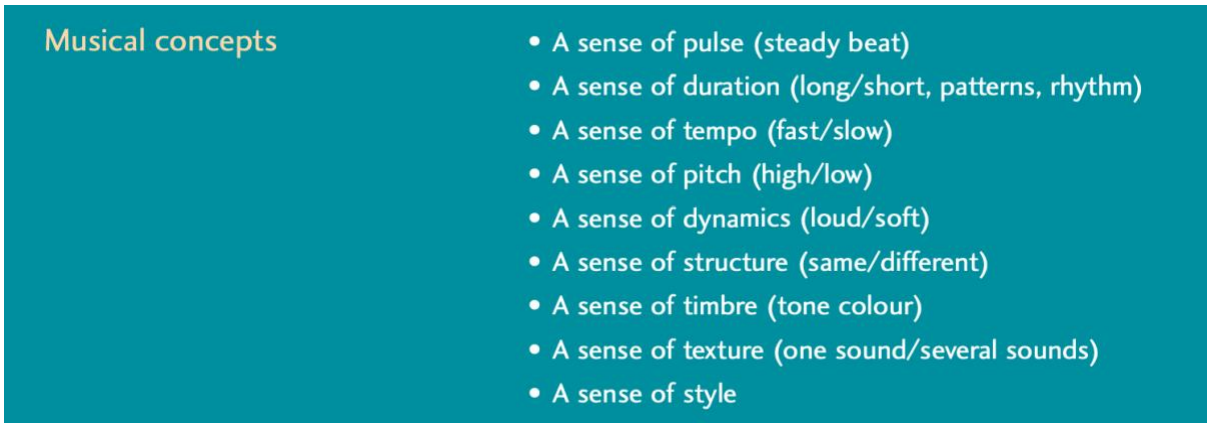
4.2.2 Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum in ITE and the Primary Classroom

During fieldwork research, many interviewees expressed difficulties understanding curricular content and subject knowledge in music education. All six primary level teachers interviewed highlighted Initial Teacher Education as a component needing further development, to meet their needs regarding the delivery of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. Many of the teachers interviewed voiced their lack of musical background as their main difficulty with the subject. Teacher 1 did not have a strong background in music and felt that the course did not fully cater for her in that regard. As discussed by Greenwalt above, Teacher 1 was lacking "expansive and profound knowledge" (Greenwalt, 2016:3) of the curriculum content when she left college. She explained:

> *… I don't feel we were prepared at all for the classroom…I couldn't put my hand up and go oh yeah, I know this much…I can't pinpoint anything that I learned in college that I apply to my music teaching today and it's very sad…* (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

Extensive knowledge of the curriculum is an integral aspect in the development of good quality music education and the nine musical concepts of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum are central to this development, see Figure M. These musical elements are repeated annually within each class group throughout primary level education. This fieldwork research would imply that some Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are beginning their teaching career without the foundational knowledge in music needed to guide and support the children in their classrooms. This subsequently affects their ability to share and explore the required musical knowledge to their students in the classroom.

Figure M - Nine Musical Concepts of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum



In a 2009 report from the INTO entitled *Creativity and The Arts in the Primary Classroom*, fifty two percent of teachers surveyed, cited teacher education and confidence as their main issue when teaching music. This sentiment was echoed by interview participants when they expressed:

> *…I feel that some of them (students) have music knowledge and I'm like, ye probably know more than I do* (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

> *I don't think you are fully equipped to go out and be proficient in teaching music unless you did, let's say a music specialism or if you had a big musical background beforehand* (Teacher 4, May 2020:Interview).

> *…maybe training and additional support…I probably would like to see more for teachers like me. There are some teachers that I suppose just maybe through their own background, don't feel as confident with music* (Teacher 5, May 2020:Interview).

4.2.3 Concerns and Considerations for Music in Primary Level ITE

The views from research participants expressed above prompted the need for a greater understanding of the overall situation. Moore et al. (2019) compiled a report entitled *Music in Initial Teacher Education in Ireland and Northern Ireland: A study of Provision, Attitudes and Values* which considers the views of music education lecturers in ITE courses. This study represents the "first comprehensive investigation of music in Initial Teacher Education across

Ireland and Northern Ireland" (Moore et al., 2019:24). The report highlighted issues associated with student engagement and development of skills in music in ITE. Lecturers cited the lack of contact time with students, the structure of the degree and the personal views of students as the main barriers to effective music education in ITE. Moore et al. (2019) discuss the views of Stein (2002), which reflect the renewed emphasis on literacy and numeracy within the education system when they state:

> …a predominant emphasis on literacy and numeracy has raised concerns among music educators whereby 'non-core' subjects such as music within primary education has given rise to attitudes of devaluation among teachers (Stein 2002 cited in Moore et. Al., 2018:3).

The *Revised 1999 Primary School Curriculum: Introduction* has seven curricular areas encompassing twelve subjects (1999:40), the time allocations per week associated with these twelve subjects can be seen in Figure N.

Figure N – Time Allocation per Subject in the Revised 1999 Primary Level Curriculum

Language 1*	4 hours
Language 2*	3 hours 30 minutes
Maths	3 hours
SESE (History, Geography, Science)	3 hours
Arts(Music, Art, Drama)	3 hours
PE (Physical Education)	1 hour
SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education)	30 minutes
Religion	2 hours 30 minutes

*Depends on English/Irish speaking school. (Revised 1999 Primary School Curriculum: Introduction, 1999:70)

In 2011, the government released Circular 0056/2011 in response to Ireland's international PISA results, which focus on literacy, numeracy and scientific studies among school going children. An excerpt from this circular shows the introduction of a weekly increase in time

spent on literacy and numeracy in primary level education, as presented in Figure O. This circular led to the reduction in weekly discretionary time, and a decrease in the regard and value of the other subjects of the primary level curriculum.

Figure O – Excerpt from Circular 0056/2011

5.2 Immediate adjustment to time for literacy and numeracy

Pending the adjustments to the existing recommended timeframe by the NCCA and with effect from January 2012 all primary schools will be required to:

- ***increase the time spent on the development of literacy skills, particularly in the first language of the school, by one hour overall for language (Irish and English) per week (i.e. to 6.5 hours for infants with a shorter day, and to 8.5 hours per week for students with a full day)***
- ***increase the time spent on mathematics by 70 minutes per week to 3 hours and 25 minutes per week for infants with a shorter day, and to 4 hours and 10 minutes per week for students with a full day.***

You are requested to make provision for these arrangements in your school through a combination of approaches such as:

- ***integrating literacy and numeracy skills with other curriculum areas***
- ***using some or all of discretionary curriculum time for literacy and numeracy activities***
- ***re-allocating time spent on the other subjects in the curriculum to the development of literacy and numeracy***
- ***prioritising the curriculum objectives which are considered most valuable in supporting children's learning and delaying the introduction of elements of some subjects (for example, by delaying the introduction of strands and strand units from the history and geography curriculum for the infant classes and first and second classes to later in the primary cycle).***

These views were compounded with the publication of the government document *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* (2011), which cemented this hierarchy within the Irish education system. Languages and maths take precedent over all other elements of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Curriculum in this report. This had a subsequent impact on the

structure of ITE programmes, with more contact time given to the core subjects of English, Irish and Maths. Reflecting on this, Finnerty (2016) explains:

> The immediate impact of this report has seen the reduction in the timetabling of music contact hours at the various colleges by the Department of Education and Skills (Finnerty, 2016:72).

This report has made the situation much more difficult for music educators in teacher education courses. From fieldwork interviews, it seems that the current structure has made music a more accessible subject in ITE to those that have a strong background in music outside of their primary and secondary level education, which Demorest et al. (2017) refer to as 'musical self-concept'. Teacher 8 shares her concerns about teaching primary level music among the senior classes, as she feels she does not have sufficient experience due to her lack of background in music education. She states:

> *8: I find teaching music fairly straightforward in the younger classes but feel I would be less confident if I was teaching musical elements and composition in the more senior classes perhaps as I do not have a background in music outside of school and college* (Teacher 8, May 2020:Interview).

Moore et al. (2019) discuss the complexity of the musical process and explain the difficulties surrounding the development of skills in this area in ITE when they state:

> The B Ed degree programme is generally structured around modules; as music education is a process, the sequential nature of developing pedagogical skills and confidence within music does not fit with the modular structure of the programme (Moore et al., 2019:17).

Moore et al. (2019) also highlight the barriers present among students regarding music education in ITE, before lecturers even begin to impart curricular knowledge when they describe:

> …in the context of primary teacher education, participants reported spending an inordinate amount of time and energy challenging students' negative perceptions of their own musicality and instilling confidence in their ability to teach music (Moore et al., 2019:24).

The above research would suggest that within the current structure of ITE, it may be challenging for lecturers to sufficiently cover all necessary elements of music education. They must now attempt to develop the students' musical and pedagogical knowledge, alter negative perceptions, encourage enthusiasm and improve confidence levels in the teaching of music at primary level. Owing to this decrease in contact time, music does not always receive the same level of importance within the primary level curriculum as the core subjects do. Teacher 6 reiterated this statement during interview when she acknowledged:

> *Grace: Do you think music is important to your teaching?*
>
> *6: Yes, when time allows unfortunately. As teachers, some weeks are much busier than others and I classify music as a 'dessert subject'. So, the main subjects of Maths, English and Irish will always take precedent, especially since I started in the senior class. Music is an extra privilege I suppose really if I can fit it in…and I do think this comes back to my parents that are in front of me as well. These parents are academic driven, most of these parents provide children (with) music lessons outside of school. So, it is priority that I cover my main subjects first. So, it's important to my teaching when the time allows* (Teacher 6, May 2020:Interview).

Through policy and initiatives mentioned previously (*Creative Ireland*, 2017; *Arts in Education Charter*, 2012; & Music Generation 2010), society recognizes the importance of the arts subjects from an overall developmental context, yet from fieldwork interviews, it is suggested that this importance is not always reflected in the classroom. Teachers are juggling an overloaded curriculum, the Irish government are analyzing the country's academic achievements globally through the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessments, and many parents are focusing on English, Irish and Maths results to measure academic attainment and achievement**.**

Parents and teachers may prioritise the core subjects due to how these subjects are considered in our wider education context. The Qualifax website details how a combination of the three core subjects is a requirement for acceptance at most third level colleges in Ireland. A recommendation for music as an academic subject for the leaving certificate at secondary level does not feature prominently on the Qualifax website, it is suggested if "you are talented and gifted in the arts and enjoy using your creativity" (Qualifax.ie, 2021). Looking at the nucleus of this issue, strengthening the importance and value of music education within society is vital, to encourage greater interaction with music in education.

4.2.4 Secondary Level ITE Experience and Considerations for Music Education

The pathway to secondary level Initial Teacher Education in music is quite different to that of primary level. One college in Ireland offers music education as an undergraduate degree programme and one other college provides religious education and music as a joint undergraduate degree programme, see Figure P.

Figure P – Concurrent Third Level Courses for Secondary Level Music Teaching in Ireland

Concurrent Post-primary

Higher Education Institution	Programme
Trinity College	Bachelor in Music Education
Mater Dei Institute of Education	Bachelor of Religious Education and Music

Most students complete a separate undergraduate degree, with a mandatory amount of credits in music which are deemed essential for secondary level music teaching. The Teaching Council website states:

> The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Music comprising at least 80 ECTS credits (or equivalent) and with not less than 10 ECTS credits (or equivalent) studied at third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent) (Teaching Council website, 2013).

Following on from their undergraduate programme, students complete a two year Professional Masters in Education (PME) programme which is provided by a range of colleges around Ireland as listed in Figure Q.

Figure Q – Consecutive Third Level Courses for Secondary Level Music Teaching in Ireland

Consecutive Post-primary

Higher Education Institution	Programme
Dublin City University	Professional Master of Education
National University of Ireland, Galway	Professional Master of Education
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Professional Master of Education
Trinity College, University of Dublin	Professional Master of Education
University College, Cork	Professional Master of Education
University College Dublin	Professional Master of Education
University of Limerick	Masters in Education (Music)

The PME programme consists of modules covering a wide range of educational themes including Curriculum and Assessment, Philosophy and History of Education, and Psychology and Sociology of Education. However, besides their school based placement, students only

take five specialised credits per year in their chosen subject, which amounts to 8.3 percent of the PME overall. From fieldwork interviews, this lack of fundamental skills in teaching and learning in the music education curriculum during the PME was highlighted. This view was shared by both secondary level music teachers when they explained:

> *…I feel like my…resources and how I go about things in my classroom…are very much down to the own experience I had in secondary school. For example, at one point my class in my dip (PME course), were worried about Senior Cycle melody writing and how we would go about that because we had gotten, no training on that at all and I actually remember digging out my old notes from my music teacher and photocopying them…for them and that's how we helped each other. I feel like the music aspect of the dip was lacking in any formal training of…how to go about teaching students certain aspects of music. It wasn't delivered to what I would have expected* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

> *My degree (undergraduate), while it was enjoyable, only accounts for max twenty percent of the knowledge I impart on a daily basis. My PGDE (PME) was certainly helpful but the most influential factor on my ability to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum was down to my own teaching experiences (the failures, just as important as the successes) and most importantly the network of music teachers that I am involved with* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview).

Teachers are drawing upon their own experiences to bridge the gaps present in their subject knowledge following the PME programme. These discussions would suggest that more time is required learning about the content of the music education curriculum at third level to fully prepare for a career in teaching it. In a study of secondary level principals, Bowe describes how:

> Music education practices are inconsistent throughout post-primary schools to the point of insidious decline in many schools… (Bowe, 2016:6).

4.3 Continuous Professional Development

From my research, quite a number of issues arose regarding readiness to teach in music education. During fieldwork interviews, teacher confidence in music was a recurring theme at primary level, and necessary subject knowledge was highlighted as a concern in teacher

education programmes at both primary and secondary level. ITE is one of the first places that this issue can be reformed. However, as a primary level teacher myself, it is paramount that the current primary level teaching staff are provided with effective, good quality CPD to strengthen their skills.

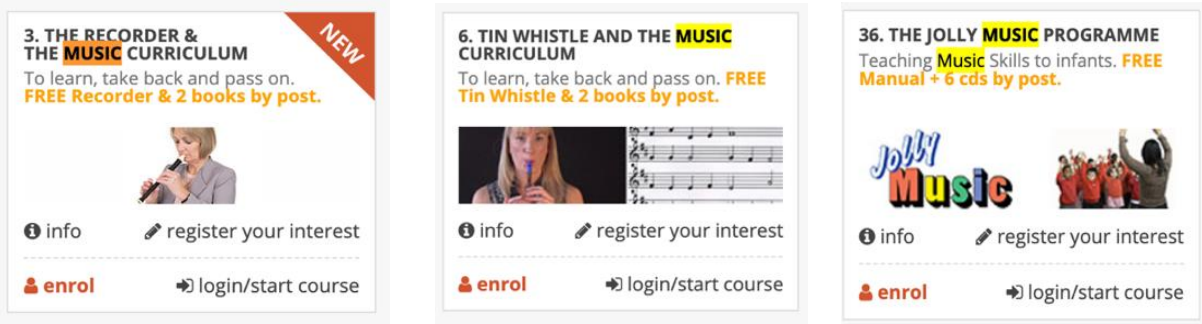
4.3.1 CPD Opportunities and Considerations in Music Education at Primary Level

The proficiency and confidence levels among participants interviewed varies greatly. This is a consequence of a range of factors including: different musical backgrounds or experiences with music in education and personal interest in music. To cater for all abilities, teachers need access to high quality Professional Development courses in music education. Unfortunately, upon review of Irish websites offering accredited CPD courses at primary level, there are only a small amount of music courses available, listed in Figure R.

Figure R - List of Accredited Teacher CPD Music Courses Available for Primary Level in Ireland

CPD College: Autumn/Winter 2020-2021

- Forty eight courses available: Three music courses



Flúirse Summer Courses 2020

- Forty courses available: No music courses

Rahoo Summer Courses 2020

- Five courses available: No music courses

INTO Summer Learning 2020

- Nine courses available: One music course (covering the arts)

The INTO Learning Summer Programme offers the following online courses:

- Moving from mainstream to SET **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Learning Through Play **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Digital Technologies in SESE and STEM **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Maths Problem Solving: A process, not a product! **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Our Environment, Our Lives! **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Literacy Through the Arts **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Global Citizenship Schools **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Creating an LGBT+ Inclusive School **(FULLY BOOKED)**
- Understanding and Supporting Pupils with Adverse Childhood Experiences **(FULLY BOOKED)**

Teacher Summer Courses

- Eleven courses available: One music course



Mastery of Music

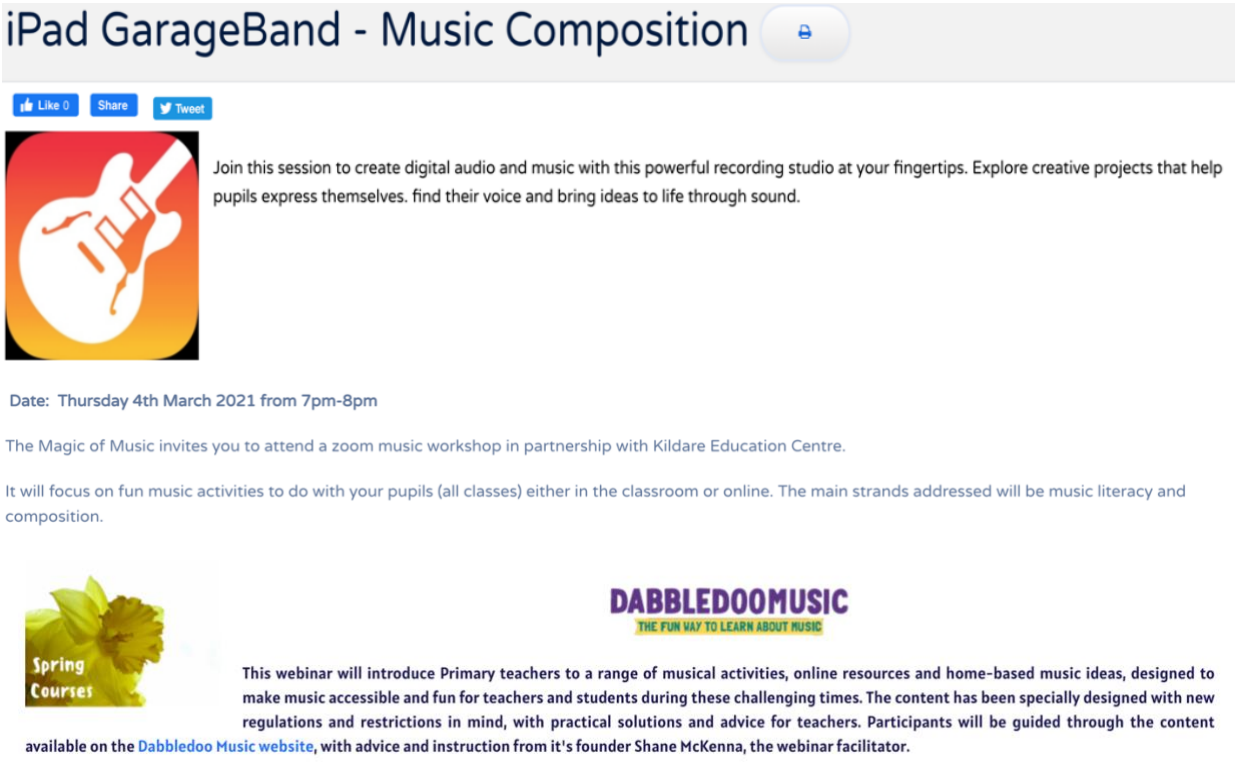
Bring the supreme joy of Music to your classroom, with our detailed information, instructional sequences and teaching suggestions for working within the Music Curriculum. We explore the various strands through online activities and tutorials, touching on listening, responding, performing and composing. Add an enjoyable dimension to your week's work.

*Summer courses listed have music as the central subject, other courses may have elements of music in them but as an additional extension of the main theme.

Education Centres Nationwide – 2020/2021

- Seven hundred courses available: Ten music courses





With eight hundred and thirteen courses listed online nationwide, only fifteen have a musical focus, which accounts for just 1.8 percent of available courses. Of the six primary level teachers interviewed, two participants mentioned that they had engaged with CPD in music. Two of the interviewees expressed unhappiness with the CPD courses offered, and explained how these music courses are out of reach for their current level of knowledge and confidence in music. Teacher 1 and 5 express their concerns when they stated:

> *I would love some very specific CPD and basically, you could gauge it say: beginners, intermediate, people who are advanced and start from where people are and go…go through the basics like. Explain the stave, explain the notes, explain everything and be very thorough* (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

> *…I always think the standard would be slightly beyond me so I think it would be too hard…so I suppose if I was to do CPD…I'd like it tiered…you see…I think I'd be afraid, I'd be put under pressure and people who are musical…you know it comes so naturally or they seem to just sing and just join in. Whereas I would be reticent about joining in… (*Teacher 5, May 2020:Interview*).*

This highlights the need to provide CPD for the range of abilities present among our primary level educators, and to engage positively with them to encourage participation and support. Hargreaves et al. (2003) refer to the importance of education and CPD in music in their study. They express a vital message when they declare:

> To be an effective teacher at a time when music is undergoing great technological change, and is increasingly important in people's everyday lives, will inevitably require a far broader range of skills (Hargreaves et al., 2003:11).

The primary level music curriculum hasn't been updated in Ireland since 1999. There is a new Draft Primary Curriculum Framework currently up for consultation. In this draft curriculum, at Stages One and Two (Junior Infants to Second Class), music comes under the heading of Arts Education. At Stages Three and Four (Third to Sixth Class), music is a stand-alone subject. With this new framework in mind, it is important to remember that there have been a plethora of technological advancements and transformations in music since the last curriculum was written. The only way to ensure that a subject continues to thrive and advance is through the constant upskilling and development of knowledge among the educators involved. This is especially important as Stages One and Two of the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework recognise Arts Education (Music, Art, Drama, Dance, Film and Digital Media) as one entity. This approach will require strong subject knowledge and skill to integrate these subjects. As cited in a Teaching Council report by Banks and Smyth (2010), research by Starkey et al. (2008) reveals how:

> In-service teacher education is also often viewed as an extension of preservice teacher education in ensuring that teachers, whether new or experienced, have up to date snapshots of the knowledge needed to be effective (Teaching Council, 2010:186).

It is imperative that more CPD opportunities are made available for primary level teachers, to ensure that music education can develop and evolve in line with current advancements across the curriculum and in society. Teacher 5 spoke about their only knowledge and instruction in music pertaining to their undergraduate programme, which was for Curaclam na Bunscoile (1971). She explained:

> *I suppose the biggest issue now is that…training was in the curriculum that's before the current one! (laughs) So I had, I mean I would say the training…I think they took it very seriously at the time…we were well trained, and I'd say the lectures were…at the top of their level…They were great, they were very good and very interested, but I mean times have changed…and the curriculum has changed* (Teacher 5, May 2020:Interview).

Teacher 5 also spoke of the gaps in her knowledge, as she only had half a day in-service when the Revised 1999 Primary Level Curriculum was introduced. This pattern continued throughout her career due to inaccessible CPD offered, which was compounded by a lack of confidence. Teacher 1 also voices similar concerns when she stated:

> *I think a bit more guidance I suppose, for teachers like myself like, to open up the (music) curriculum and to look at what's there. I go yeah that's lovely, but I don't understand what half of it means or I don't know how I could actually teach that…like I don't understand it* (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

4.3.2 CPD Opportunities and Considerations in Music Education at Secondary Level

Music education at secondary level in Ireland is completely different to that experienced at primary level. For staff, there is an active network of CPD for secondary level music teachers, and a collective 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998), with both interviewees citing the Post Primary Music Teachers Association (PPMTA) as their main source of information and collaboration. The Junior Cycle Curriculum has recently undergone an enormous transition, including the introduction of a whole new approach to music education with modernised curriculum objectives, content and more continuous forms of assessment. The new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum which will be discussed in Chapter Five, offers much more scope for

creativity and formative assessment for learning and reflection. However, from fieldwork research, it was far from a smooth transition. Teacher 2 explained:

> *I think the JCT overall approach hasn't been up to scratch and that's not the music team, that's the overall umbrella. I think teachers were landed in it and told to find your own way and we'll catch up with ye kind of thing. So yeah, it's disappointing* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

Both secondary level music teachers cited the teacher-led PPMTA WhatsApp and a private Facebook group as their main source of support for implementing the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum. Fieldwork interviews suggest that additional time and support was needed during the transition, as the interviewees were often navigating their own way through the curriculum. Bearing in mind that these teachers are specialists in music, it is imperative that primary level music is supported in a structured manner if change is to occur in the future.

4.4 Teacher Confidence

The issue of teacher confidence has emerged regularly as a theme in this chapter. Both research in the area and fieldwork participants have expressed concerns with confidence in teaching and delivering a broad and balanced music curriculum (Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). This issue did not appear among secondary level participants, as all subject teachers are specialists in their chosen field, having studied their subjects intensely at undergraduate level. This specialism is not reflected at primary level as generalist teachers teach twelve subjects to the children over the course of a week. Teacher confidence has been highlighted in fieldwork interviews as one of the main barriers to music education and music is often seen as an highly specialist subject, left to staff members with a musical background, or left entirely to outside music specialists. Confidence with subject specific material is a paramount trait of an effective educator. There is no current research relating to the views and concerns of primary level teachers and their confidence in the delivery of the primary level music

curriculum in Ireland. The latest study in 2009 from the INTO, shows a clear picture of the difficulties and concerns that teachers have regarding the music curriculum. In this study, fifty seven percent of participants felt very confident/confident teaching music. However, forty three percent of participants were not very confident/not confident at all. These figures are presented in Figure S.

Figure S - Teacher Concerns with the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum

Issues in teaching music	%
Teacher training and confidence	52
Organisation and planning	35
Resources	19
Age and abilities of children	10

Confidence in teaching music	%
Very confident	14
Confident	43
Not very confident	37
Not confident at all	6

According to the respondents in this survey, over half of the issues with teaching music are associated with teacher education and confidence. Research by Kenny (2017a) reflects this perception and analyses the views and opinions held by ITE students in relation to music education. Kenny explains how:

> …students perceived music as being a marginalised subject in primary schools as a result of their own school experiences and school observation…they are future generalist primary school teachers where engagement in the subject can often rely on personal interest, confidence and competence (Kenny, 2017a:119).

Hattie (2012) speaks about self-efficacy in relation to student attainment, and I believe that this concept can also be applied to teachers as learners. Hattie describes self-efficacy as "the confidence or strength of belief that we have in ourselves that we can make our learning happen" (2012:41). If confidence is to develop among primary level educators, it is essential to encourage positive attitudes around music education, to ensure that the subject is accessible to all staff. The confidence that teachers feel regarding a subject, has a direct

impact upon the quality of teaching that the children experience. Hattie reiterates this when he states:

> Teachers need to…have proficient knowledge and understanding of their subject content so that they can provide meaningful and appropriate feedback such that each student moves progressively through the curriculum levels (Hattie, 2012:19).

As primary level educators, we need guidance to build our own confidence, in order to provide opportunities for music making at primary level, and ensure children have the skills and self-efficacy to go forward and excel in the subject at secondary level.

Fieldwork interviews highlight a request from teachers for additional education in the subject specific knowledge encountered in music. This would build confidence in their own ability to effectively impart this musical knowledge to students. Teachers need to feel comfortable with the material in their lessons, to allow for ample exploration and creativity to flourish. It is important that as educators, we explicitly teach the pedagogies and methodologies needed to teach music in ITE courses, as well as equip teachers with musical knowledge necessary for the classroom. This can be achieved through enhanced and extended education within ITE courses and through ample tiered CPD courses for all abilities, ranging from beginner to advanced. To create a community of practice and elevate the status of music education within the school, schools should ensure that any teachers with additional training in music education are encouraged to share and develop these skills with their colleagues. This inclusive approach to music education for teachers of all abilities, coupled with developments in ITE and CPD would lead to increased confidence among teaching staff, and more effective and engaging lessons, with a heightened sense of accomplishment and enjoyment experienced by both student and teacher.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter focussed on three of the five themes which arose during fieldwork interviews relating to music education instruction – ITE, CPD and Teacher Confidence. ITE plays an extremely important role in the development of effective instruction at primary and secondary level. This chapter considers how research suggests teacher education students need strong subject specific knowledge, to enable them to reflect and impart information effectively and creatively through fun and engaging lessons in the classroom. High quality tiered CPD should be offered in music, to bridge the gaps in knowledge that exist, and to enhance and update the skills of current primary level educators. Research reveals that teachers feel confident engaging with subjects when they are comfortable with the subject-specific content. In order to achieve this in music, research participants have highlighted the need for stronger musical knowledge achieved through additional support in ITE and further tiered guidance through CPD. If these elements are developed, it will reflect in an increase in confidence levels experienced among primary level teachers, and an assurance that the most innovative and advanced approaches are utilised in the classroom, providing students with highly effective and engaging musical learning experiences.

Chapter Five: Fieldwork Part Two – Exploring Teachers' Perspectives of the Music Curriculum and Creative Practice

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the current music curricula at primary and secondary level and explores creative practice as an integral part of this process. It examines the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum in detail, and compares it to the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum at secondary level. This approach is taken to analyse the continuity in the music curriculum and to highlight the need for strengthened connections moving from primary to secondary level music education. An exploration of creativity and creative practice in the classroom is considered and the extent to which creativity forms part of the music lesson is discussed. This information is linked with fieldwork interviews to further explore the current status of music education among educators at primary and secondary level, and to see where the primary level music curriculum could be enhanced to further improve engagement with, and the overall quality of music education at primary level in Ireland.

There is not much research centred around teachers' perspectives of the music curriculum in Ireland. As previously discussed, the most up to date study based on an Irish context, was released by the INTO in 2009. This report opened a survey to one thousand teachers selected at random to participate. In the Education Statistics Report released by the Department of Education (2011:online), there were thirty two thousand, four hundred and eighty seven primary level teachers in Ireland in 2010/2011. From the one thousand participants chosen in 2009, two hundred and nine replied, which accounts for a twenty one percent response rate, and 0.6 percent of the teaching population for the following year. This INTO report features throughout this chapter, as it is the largest and most recent official study relating to teachers' perspectives of music education in Ireland.

5.2 Primary Teachers' Perspectives of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum

To explore the perspectives shared by teachers regarding the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, it is important to understand the structure and content of this curriculum.

The Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum has three strands:

- Listening and Responding
- Performing
- Composing

Within each of these strands, there are a range of strand units, covering various aspects of music and music making as seen in Figure T.

Figure T - Strands and Strand Units of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum

Strands	*Strand units*
Listening and responding	• Exploring sounds • Listening and responding to music
Performing	• Song singing • Literacy • Playing instruments
Composing	• Improvising and creating • Talking about and recording compositions

The **Listening and Responding** strand allows the children to explore, enjoy and most of all gain exposure to a variety of musical sounds and genres. It enables children to experience autonomy over their own musical learning experience and encourages them to become comfortable and creative, while discussing and justifying their own point of view. According to the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum document, this strand:

> …emphasise(s) the importance of purposeful, active listening in order to elicit physical, verbal, emotional and cognitive responses. It gradually builds on the experience of earlier classes by providing the child with opportunities to listen to a range of familiar and unfamiliar musical pieces, by focusing on a widening range of sound sources and by challenging the child to respond imaginatively with increasing precision and musical sensitivity (Music Curriculum, 1999:6).

In this strand, music is played, or experienced and both teacher and pupil respond through a variety of methods – discussion, movement or drawing, with individuals or groups presenting their responses. This is an accessible strand of the primary level music curriculum, as both teacher and pupil are exploring the music together and answers are subjective, as interpretations are unique to each individual. There is no right or wrong interpretation of music and it gives the teacher the scope to explore music with the children, as opposed to being the master of the content. This ease of accessibility is reflected in the 2009 INTO study, where participants cite spending between twenty six and fifty percent of their time on the Listening and Responding strand, with the most popular strand of the curriculum being performing.

The **Performing** strand encompasses three strand units – Song Singing, Literacy and Playing Instruments. It is quite a complex strand and Song Singing is the main strand unit used among the teachers from my fieldwork research. Song Singing is seen as the most accessible element of the strand as everyone encounters it in their daily lives and little to no resources are needed. From the teacher's perspective, the music is already prepared and the teacher acts as a facilitator, while the children are performing alongside an already complete musical piece. Teacher 4 shared this sentiment when he stated:

> *…performing (song singing) is probably the easiest thing for me anyway because at least you kind of… you set out a song for them, you'll play it a few times, they get the hang of it then themselves and you can break it out whenever you want…they do enjoy being able*

> *to get up and sing and move around the place and all that kind of stuff* (Teacher 4, May 2020:Interview).

The Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum highlights the importance of the voice and describes it as:

> …the first and most accessible instrument for the child, both for the sheer enjoyment of performance and as a means through which musical skills may be expanded (Music Curriculum, 1999:6).

However, Teacher 1 expresses concern with the skill content of her song singing lessons when she stated:

> …I suppose in a sense that we would have practiced our piece and that when it came to perform it, I'd like to think that they were confident in it but at the end of the day, I'm again…not sure that I'm actually ticking the correct boxes for performing (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

This reverts to Dewey's concept, cited by Greenwalt (2016), regarding the need for in-depth subject knowledge to ensure effective practice in teacher education. Due to their own difficulties with music, some teachers are unsure of how to develop musical skills through the strands of the primary level music curriculum and are engaging with the curriculum superficially. The children are partaking in music lessons, but explicit musical skills may not be developed as the focus, or even mentioned during these activities.

Literacy is the second strand unit of the Performing strand. Pupils learn to recognise, discuss, and represent music actively through voice or movement, and graphically using notation. Children are guided through this process in a gradual way to ensure understanding. According to the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum document, Literacy is:

> …explored through its two main components, rhythm and pitch. It occurs in response to a need to record or recall a musical experience—a rhythm pattern, a melody or an entire song—rather than being considered as a set of isolated skills (Music Curriculum, 1999:7).

Literacy develops the fundamental knowledge of rhythm and pitch in music which are built upon in a sequential manner throughout primary level education. Early literacy involving rhythm begins by linking words to musical beats at junior and senior infant level and builds upon this concept slowly progressing to stick notation by the end of second class. Early literacy concerning pitch focusses on linking sounds to themes at junior and senior infant level and progresses to simple two/three note tunes by second class. As the children become more familiar with the concepts of rhythm and pitch, they are combined in first and second class. Further exploration of the sequential content in the curriculum can be seen in Appendix C. Orla McDonagh, head of the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama, highlights the importance of musical literacy for children when she addressed the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht in 2018 with her piece entitled 'Music in Ireland Today'. She emphasises the importance of music in the life of the child and expresses concern with the current ability level among primary level children when she states:

> It is critical that all primary school children…finish primary school with a basic standard of literacy in music. There are some schools where this is done well, where pupils are lucky enough to benefit from the expertise of teachers who are particularly interested in music, but as a general rule, this is not the experience for the majority of pupils. (McDonagh, 2018:2).

Playing Instruments is the third strand unit of the Performing strand. The main instruments used in the primary level classroom for tuition are tin whistle and recorder. Playing instruments can also incorporate elements of Literacy as the children may progress to reading sheet music while playing their tunes. Other instruments used in the classroom are non-tuned percussion instruments for whole class activities. Some schools have been involved with string instrument programmes as described by Conaghan (2014) and other schools have introduced brass bands. The establishment of Music Generation has strengthened the

position of instrument tuition among the youth, and in schools immensely. These are very positive and worthwhile initiatives but, as discussed previously, research suggests school staff are often relying on external specialists in music education to supplement, or deliver their entire music education programme. Song singing and playing instruments cover a huge part of this specialist tuition.

Composing is the third strand of the music curriculum. According to the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum document, composing "seeks to develop the child's creativity and uniqueness, first and foremost by providing an avenue for self-expression" (1999:7). In the 2009 survey released by the INTO, most concerns regarding the music curriculum relate to composition, with eighty eight percent of participants sharing that they spend less than twenty five percent of their time on the composing strand, see Figure U.

Figure U - Survey Results on 'Time Spent' on each Strand of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum

Time allocate to the various strands	Listening & responding %	Performing %	Composing %
<= 25 %	39	9	88
26 – 50%	52	49	12
51 - 75%	6	28	
76 – 100%	3	14	

This opinion was also echoed by fieldwork participants with many sharing that they would not teach composing as regularly as the other two strands of the curriculum. Teacher 3, 4 and 5 explained:

> *I would have probably done maybe two/three lessons a year on composing…which is probably more than some people do but it wasn't ever enough to get to…moving from we'll say, like I said earlier kind of non-standard units or representations, to then getting to your solfas or your other notations or whatever* (Teacher 3, May 2020:Interview).

> *…well, I don't teach it as regularly as the other ones now I wouldn't say, because again, I wouldn't have the biggest background knowledge to it. I…consider myself weak at that the most I suppose. So, I do find that the hardest to teach which kind of has a knock-on effect on…my kind of attitude to teaching it* (Teacher 4, May 2020:Interview).

> *Yes, I would do the composing strand, it probably gets the least of the time to be honest* (Teacher 5, May 2020:Interview).

The 2009 INTO report shows how just between fifty and sixty percent of participants see the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum statements and Teacher Guidelines as useful, or very useful, seen in Figure V.

Figure V - Survey Results on 'Usefulness of Content' in Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum Documents

Usefulness of content	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful
Curriculum statements	12%	50%	32%	6%
Teacher guidelines	7%	46%	39%	8%

From the results above, it is clear that curricular documents are useful for teaching staff, with over ninety percent of participants citing the documents as Very Useful/Useful/Somewhat Useful. However, it would be very beneficial for music education if the number of participants who found the documents very useful could be increased. As they are the main documents that teachers refer to when creating their music lessons, it is paramount that they provide an accessible, tiered and succinct view of music education at primary level, to best support the needs of all of our educators.

5.3 Secondary Teachers' Perspectives of the Junior Cycle Music Curriculum

Both secondary level interview participants mentioned using attractive taster classes in first year to entice students to continue studying music, as music is not a compulsory subject at

secondary level. This highlights how music as an academic subject is beginning from a disadvantaged position. Teacher 2 and 7 described:

> *I know it's different in every school but in our school, they get a couple of weeks of a taster in First Year and then they choose to keep on the subject… I suppose I put huge effort into the tasters to try and make it really fun and make it really accessible for them* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

> *We have now moved to a new options system where students take all subjects for a taster at the start of first year and then make their JC subject decisions, so our first few weeks of school we are pulling out all the bells and whistles to encourage students to choose the subject* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview).

In recent years there have been extensive changes to the Junior Cycle curriculum at secondary level. These developments aim to make the curriculum more accessible to all students and relate more to the creative world that currently exists. The Department of Education describe the new Junior Cycle Curriculum as:

> …inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation, and outcome for all. The junior cycle allows students to make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place, and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them and are relevant to their lives (Junior Cycle Music, 2017:3).

5.3.1 New Junior Cycle Music Curriculum

There are currently two music curricula used at secondary level. The 1996 Music Curriculum at Senior Cycle Level, and the recently introduced (Autumn 2018 implementation) Junior Cycle Music Curriculum. For the purpose of this research, I focus on the new Junior Cycle Curriculum, as it directly relates to the continuity of curriculum when progressing from primary to secondary level. The new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum also presents the most modern curricular approaches to the teaching of music in our primary and secondary level education system. Overall, within the new Junior Cycle curriculum there are a set of key skills, represented in Figure W. Each subject must link their curriculum content back to these key

skills. Music relates more heavily to certain skills and teachers have the autonomy to pick the skills which are most applicable to the learning that takes place in their classroom.

Figure W - Key Skills of the New Junior Cycle Curriculum at Secondary Level



One of the key features of the new Junior Cycle Curriculum is being creative. (Junior Cycle Music, 2017:8). The concept of being creative features frequently in the music curriculum and this was reflected in fieldwork interviews with both participants. Students have ample opportunities to be creative through discussion and composition. Students must also submit

a collection of compositions for their classroom based assessments. Teacher 2 described the rich and varied learning opportunities experienced by her students using this creative approach when she explained:

> *…you're meant to compose in response to a stimulus. So, I gave them the picture of a troll and a poem about a troll, and they had to come up with a composition about the troll basically…they've written a ballad about homelessness – chords and…lyrics…or a rap. On Sound Trap…the stimulus was the scary night walk. So, thirty seconds using found sounds and music to create an experience as if you were walking down the street and you were hearing car alarms and siren sounds, music in the background. Another one was…a Tom and Jerry cartoon that I gave them – a minute and a half and they had to compose music using the studio to go with it* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

Teacher 7 described how through the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum, the learning experiences of students have been greatly enriched, and creativity is a much more prominent feature of this process:

> *Grace: Do you feel that this (new curriculum) has improved student engagement and outcome?*
>
> *7: Engagement, most definitely. Outcome, yes, I think so. Again, I can only refer to what I see in the classroom as no official exams have taken place, but I definitely think that the work my current Second years are producing is much more creative than last year's Second years. They are composing using graphic scores and music technology…I do think that I am imparting a lot more knowledge this year rather than imparting information – if that makes sense* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview).

The three strands of the 1989 Music Curriculum at junior cycle level mirrored those of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Curriculum accurately - Listening, Performing and Composing. Within the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum, the three strands have been completely altered. These three strands have been replaced by three more modern strands. The three new strands are Procedural Knowledge, Innovate and Ideate, and Culture and Context. A Venn diagram is used to represent the strands as seen in the curriculum (Junior Cycle Music, 2017), highlighting the strong links between them in Figure X. This representation also serves

as a visual reminder of the interdependency and intricate relationship between each strand of the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum.

Figure X - Strands of the New Junior Cycle Music Curriculum at Secondary Level



In the Junior Cycle Music Curriculum document (2017), **Procedural Knowledge** refers to:

> …developing a vocabulary in music by learning and using symbols to represent sound, exploring, and responding to expressive qualities in music and imagining and creating short musical motifs and soundscapes. It also involves experimenting with elements of music such as pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, style, and tonality (Junior Cycle Music, 2017:10).

This strand closely reflects the nine musical concepts listed in the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, along with the music literacy strand unit of the curriculum. The new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum document discusses how the content of this strand acts as a gateway to the other strands and it highlights the importance of the foundational musical knowledge required to access the rest of the music curriculum (Junior Cycle Music, 2017).

The second strand of the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum is entitled **Innovate and Ideate.** The curriculum describes this strand as an opportunity for students to "draw on their personal

experiences and perspectives to develop, refine, showcase and seek feedback on their musical ideas" (2017:11). This strand allows students to experiment with sound, listen to sound, interpret it, and make personal musical decisions to create and communicate new ideas effectively. This strand would closely reflect the composition strand at primary level, but fieldwork research suggests that the creative process plays a more prominent role at secondary level as the creative music making is not a stand-alone activity. It incorporates all elements of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum with Listening and Responding, Performing and Composing happening concurrently throughout the process.

The third strand of the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum is called **Culture and Context**. This strand aims to develop:

> …an understanding and a knowledge of music in past and present contexts; considering musical works as social commentaries on cultures and peoples; investigating music associated with particular times, places, social groups and feelings and sharing and discussing examples of music experienced at home, at school and in the wider community (Junior Cycle Music,2017:11).

This is a completely fresh approach in the curriculum and this strand links directly to the lives of the children. Teacher 2 mentions how accessible it is for all teachers regardless of their musical background, and she explains how it is one which could be implemented easily at primary level. Although music of other cultures is mentioned in the Music Curriculum Teacher Guidelines (1999:53), having a dedicated strand may give both teachers and primary level children a more concrete understanding of the impact and position which music holds in our lives. Teacher 2 highlighted this when she stated:

> *…getting students thinking about simple aspects of it (music) - what mood…what place does this music have or…why would we use this music…simple things like tempo or volume…not even delving too far into music but just getting them talking about music. Another thing that's coming up in the junior cycle is music for different occasions. So, we talk about…music in our life around us…what kind of music would be used for Saint*

> *Patrick's Day or what kind of music would be used for Christmas or…making playlists or discussing songs that are relevant to those times…or the kind of mood that you're trying to get across at those times, what would be appropriate…you know that's not I don't think…outside the reach of…(any primary teacher)* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

While it has not been examined yet, this new approach for the Junior Cycle Music Curriculum places more emphasis on creativity and allows for student self-expression and development throughout the learning process. Teacher 2 suggested that this creativity may be a relatively new concept for first year students when she explained:

> *2: …yeah well, they… they would have no…idea about composing at all…we would always start at the start in terms of crotchets and quavers and the notes on the Treble Clef and on the Bass Clef…*
>
> *(Further conversation)*
>
> *2: So, when I ask them what music they would have done before Secondary School, tin whistle is the answer.*
>
> *Grace: Ok?*
>
> *2: Tin Whistle or singing, that's pretty much all they'll say that they've done. I don't know maybe they've…you know with kids, you never really know what has been done, what's gone over their heads but that's basically where I feel I'm starting with them…because that's their experience. Unless they have been doing private lessons on an instrument and then they might already know the notes* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

Teacher 7 expressed concern with the standard of musicianship coming in from primary level. She also highlighted the lack of continuity and relative standards across different primary level schools regarding the quality of content taught, a sentiment shared by McDonagh (2018). Teacher 7 explained:

> *I find that I am always starting at the very beginning with students…because we have several feeder schools, it is impossible to know what has and hasn't been taught…It would be nice to know that something like note names, values and lines & spaces were taught in 5th or 6th class so that I would know that I can start into basic rhythms and my first years will know what I am talking about when I mention a quaver* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview).

It seems from fieldwork research that both secondary level teachers interviewed were very unsure about the content that is covered at primary level. The quantity of primary level music

education differed hugely among first year pupils in both schools. External tuition was highlighted by Teacher 2 and 7 as it creates a huge inequity in the knowledge and understanding of the subject in the classroom, another sentiment echoed by McDonagh (2018). Secondary level fieldwork participants expressed concern with the varying levels of music education experienced by students at primary level. They cannot build upon the primary level music curriculum as their students are not starting in the same place when they begin secondary level music education. Initially, the progression of the secondary level music curriculum may be influenced by the quality of music education received at primary level. That quality is reflective of the interest, subject knowledge, and status of music among the primary level educators in the various primary level schools. Research interviews suggest that these variables differ greatly at primary level, and secondary level music teachers must begin with the fundamentals of music again, to ensure equal access for all. If educators are to fully cater for a child's innate potential, an update of the curriculum at primary level and a clear progression in curricular content from primary to secondary level should be considered, to reflect a more structured and layered approach, with secondary level teachers continuing and supporting the child's learning in music education.

5.3.2 Enhancing Connections from Primary to Secondary Level

Some similar views from primary level interviews were also communicated at secondary level. Reflecting on these interviews, there are many valuable insights to be gained for primary level music curriculum specialists, considering the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework is currently out for consultation. As outlined above, there was a recent change to the Junior Cycle Music Curriculum at secondary level in Autumn 2018 and secondary level music teachers interviewed expressed both positive and negative opinions regarding this change. The concerns raised refer to time, support and resources. Both secondary level teachers

interviewed feel that this change in syllabus happened too quickly, and without the necessary input from current secondary level teachers. Teacher 7 expressed this when she stated *"I would like to see a LC reform soon, but not in the way that the JC was reformed. It needs to be incremental"* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview). Teacher 2 also highlighted that more time and guidance was needed to fully support the staff in this transition. Even though there were some support meetings offered, there was not sufficient support for music teachers in the transition from the 1996 to the 2018 Junior Cycle curriculum. Teacher 2 expressed this stating:

> *I spent last summer making my own music book for my students. Which has worked well so far and I'm confident that I have ticked off…all the different learning outcomes for the three-year course…Some examples were given at the JCT days that were of help…I feel like the JCT team are doing their best, but they are stretched. The music specialist…is…absolutely fantastic and has so many ideas and so much energy and really does want the teacher's experience to be great but unfortunately, she's not being given the support and resources…that she needs to deliver that on a larger scale for us. One day a year and then maybe one night-time course a year and maybe one webinar. It's not enough for them to help us* (Teacher 2, May2020:Interview).

As highlighted in Chapter Four, both research participants at secondary level cited the teacher led PPMTA WhatsApp group as their main place to express concerns and gain new knowledge, approaches and methodologies for the new Junior Cycle curriculum.

5.4 Musical Creativity

At primary level, teacher views surrounding creativity in the music curriculum differed enormously. Just as the definitions from psychologists and educators are diverse, the meaning and purpose of creativity expressed by participants varied. Some participants were not sure what musical creativity was, or whether it was present in their classroom during music lessons, and others felt happy that they were engaging in creative practice throughout their music programme. Views expressed during fieldwork research highlighted difficulties

understanding creativity and how to incorporate it in to lessons in the classroom. Teacher 1 voiced her concern when questioned:

> *Grace: …would creativity be a central aspect then of your music lessons?*
>
> *1: Probably not because…I would pick the song, or I have the theme. Whereas I think if it was a bit more…child led, it would be...probably have a bit more creativity…yeah definitely I think I'm more teacher led at the moment. So, I'd say we're probably cutting out a lot of creativity to be perfectly honest* (Teacher 1, May 2020:Interview).

An interesting pattern emerged among primary level teachers during interview. Responses to questions regarding the term musical creativity were more positive than those connected to the term composition. Creativity was highlighted by all as an important aspect of the music curriculum, yet composition, where creativity would often be most evident was a strand that many interviewees expressed a concern about, or a reluctance to engage with. This was evident when Teacher 4 was asked:

> *Grace: …do you teach the composing strand regularly?*
>
> *4: I do, well I don't teach it as regularly as the other ones now I wouldn't say because again, I wouldn't have the biggest background knowledge to it. I…consider myself weak at that the most I suppose. So, I do find that the hardest to teach which kind of has a knock-on effect on…my kind of attitude to teaching it I suppose* (Teacher 4, May 2020:Interview).

This position seems to be in direct contrast to how Teacher 4 feels about creativity when asked if creativity is a central aspect of his music lessons:

> *I think it would be yeah…it's important…performing would be my only one where music creativity wouldn't be…as vital I suppose…but I think music creativity is definitely important in other parts like* (Teacher 4, May 2020:Interview).

5.4.1 Supporting Teachers in Music Education and Creative Development

Reflecting on research and fieldwork, composition is understood to be a more difficult part of the music curriculum, which is especially daunting for a teacher who does not have a strong background in music. Developing meaningful practice in this area and understanding of the

importance of musical creativity will take time. primary level teachers may need guidance in facilitating learning experiences using creative methods in the classroom. Research by Kenny (2017a) shows the benefits associated with the inclusion of creativity in lessons with ITE students. It helps to improve confidence and enthusiasm for the subject, while also developing musical skills in an engaging and inclusive way. Kenny reflects on this when she states:

> In particular, this study has shown that through a foregrounding of creative, collaborative musical experiences, the students gained new understandings of music education pedagogies and practices which challenged their preconceived ideas of teaching music in primary schools. Providing spaces and time for such group music-making to occur in order to build shared creative musical practices is essential within higher music education. Following the constructivist theories set out in the study, it is only through living out such experiences that students can espouse such creative pedagogical practices in their own future classrooms (Kenny, 2017a:119).

Kenny is promoting a culture of creativity within the ITE music education lectures, as this has been highlighted in research as an informative and enjoyable way of developing skills and attitudes of creativity in music education. It is also an approach where students articulated increased learning experiences and positive engagement in their reflective documents. However, fieldwork interviews would suggest that this method alone does not seem to be translating into activities in the classroom environment after ITE. Teacher 4 expressed this sentiment when reflecting on a creative activity experienced in college when he stated:

> *…a lot of our college training was done with like performing. As in you'd get a song, you'd have the group…the whole group split into certain sections, in each section we'd be doing a different part. I know that's handy and all but like at the same time, I don't know was it…the most beneficial way we could have been taught music I suppose in college like. It was grand for the…people in my class who had like, fleadh wins and stuff…they'd be well exposed to music and they'd be happy to teach it but like for the likes me and other people who might not have had a huge musical background, it wasn't the easiest to kind of just come in and be told right this is what you do and then just expect it to be to be alright when you go out and do it yourself* (Teacher 4, May 2020:Interview).

As Teacher 4 expresses, it is often perceived that the better the teacher is at music in their personal lives, the more effective their ability to teach music. Through fieldwork research, it is apparent that a lack of confidence in the composition strand has hindered engagement with the strand in the classroom. Teacher 3 articulated a very interesting point regarding the accessibility of the primary level music curriculum, and more specifically the composing strand when he stated:

> *…it's like we did in our school recently…a review on PE because we had an inspection, and gymnastics was one of the strands that we weren't covering very well at all. In some cases, it wasn't being covered at all and in some…it was being covered very poorly and for most teachers it was a fear of…not being like the Olympics…they weren't able to do it like that, so they couldn't do it all. Whereas when we actually broke it right down, pulled it right back to what it was about…it's only rolls and jumps and stands and balances and all that. It's a little bit like that with music…you don't have to be Mozart like to teach composition* (Teacher 3, May 2020:Interview).

Teacher 3 believes that music is a much more accessible subject than perceived by many primary level educators. Policy makers must support teachers as they develop a further understanding of music making and creativity, which will enhance overall experiences in music education in the classroom. For an effective learning environment where music education will prosper, creative practice should be an essential element of the learning environment. Sternberg (2006) emphasizes the importance of an environment which promotes creativity when he explains:

> One could have all of the internal resources needed to think creatively, but without some environmental support…the creativity that a person has within him or her might never be displayed (Sternberg, 2006:89).

Hogenes et al.(2015) promote creativity and composition in music education. However, they explain that to achieve this successfully, teachers must be knowledgeable in facilitating creativity in the classroom. When describing teaching methodologies necessary for

composition, they explain how teachers would need to develop new pedagogical skills such as developing "forms of cooperative learning and differentiated instruction. This has consequences for teacher education" (Hogenes et al., 2015:45). Sternberg (2020) expressed the need for good subject knowledge for meaningful creativity to take place. The earlier fieldwork themes discussed in Chapter Four relating to developments in ITE and CPD would greatly support the progression of creative practice in the primary level classroom.

5.4.2 Balancing Creativity and Subject Knowledge

As discussed previously, creativity develops best when one has the Deweyan subject specific knowledge as discussed by Greenwalt (2016). Through fieldwork research, it became clear that teachers who had a background in music were more open to the ideas of composition and creativity in music. This was also reflected at secondary level with the specialist music teachers more comfortable with the musical concepts, and through the introduction of the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum, they have become more creative in their practice. To best support teachers creatively at primary level, they should have the necessary subject knowledge regarding the nine musical concepts explored in the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. Following this, teachers can develop their own creative ways to impart this knowledge and equip the children with the skills needed to be creative in music. It is imperative in ITE, that along with experiencing creative lessons, students are guided through the creation and formation of these lessons, with opportunities to implement these lessons in the classroom. The Cambridge University handbook expresses this view when it states:

> For creative thinking to deepen and extend learning, rather than be an enjoyable but superficial activity, it must be grounded in understanding of the content being investigated. It is vital that learners have sufficient understanding of the material with which they are being asked to be creative. Creative practice needs to complement diligent and deliberate practice that develops foundational skills – not be a substitute for it. (UCLAS, 2021:55).

This can be achieved in both ITE, CPD and in the primary level classroom through a balanced combination of subject specific knowledge and creative music making opportunities.

5.4.3 Creativity and 'Flow' in the Curriculum

Both secondary level teachers interviewed expressed how the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum provides for more creativity in their lessons. Teacher 7 spoke about how the new approach has allowed collaboration and creativity to occur naturally in the classroom environment. This suggests the natural facilitation of the Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) state of 'flow' within the classroom environment. As discussed in Chapter Three, Csikszentmihalyi describes flow as:

> …the way people describe their mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:8).

In relation to the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum and 'flow', Teacher 7 described how:

> *The new JC allows for lots of collaboration, and I think the younger ones enjoy that. They also love the freedom of creativity in the class. Someone will hop on the piano and start belting out a few chords and ten minutes later other instruments have been picked up and an 'improv' session just happens…I love trying new things and always encourage my students to do the same. I find the new JC allows me to do that a lot more freely than the old curriculum. Expression and discovery are key elements to music in our school* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview).

Importantly, as discussed by researchers from Cambridge University, the students had to have prior subject specific musical knowledge, to enable them to engage creatively with each other. Teachers 2 and 7 also highlighted the benefits of performing and being creative during music class at secondary level, with effects mentioned that reach far beyond the classroom. They explained:

> *…the difference is unreal in students when they become confident in their abilities and when they're given that time and encouragement to be creative and to express themselves. It can change a personality, I've seen it can change personalities completely. It's fantastic* (Teacher 2, May 2020:Interview).

> *While many students will leave school and never write another note in their lives, all of the students will have to "perform" in some aspect of their lives be it in an interview, on stage or delivering speeches/presentations. The confidence that is built in the practical classes in school will stand to students long after they've forgotten what a quaver is* (Teacher 7, May 2020:Interview).

Within this safe and engaging creative environment, there is a lot more than just musical knowledge being developed. The simple improvisation activity described by Teacher 7 above gives the students an opportunity for self-expression, listening, collaborating, turn taking and problem solving creatively.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter initially focussed on the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. It analysed the strands of the current curriculum, and linked it with fieldwork interviews, to highlight areas which require further development. These areas were discussed and analysed, along with supporting research to present a pathway for all educators moving forward with musical creativity holding a more prominent role. The integration of the strands of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum was discussed, and creativity was presented as an important element of music lessons to support the holistic development of the child. Following this, the new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum was presented and analysed. The positive elements of this curriculum were considered, and parallels made with possibilities for the primary level music curriculum. Information from fieldwork interviews with two secondary level music teachers was considered, in light of the primary level curriculum, to establish where the primary level curriculum could improve further, to provide more creativity and continuity from primary to secondary level. The importance of creativity was supported, and presented using fieldwork examples, along with the need for further

enhancements in education at primary level to implement more robust creative methodologies in the classroom.

Chapter Six: Moving Forward Creatively through Music in the Primary Level Classroom

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents opportunities for future advancement in music education in the primary level classroom in Ireland. It examines and links the five themes obtained from fieldwork research under the following two headings: Lifelong Learning in Teacher Education and Creative Curriculum Development. This section highlights possible progression in these areas to further enhance the primary level music curriculum. This approach will be mindful of ensuring inclusivity for all educators, while placing creativity at the heart of the musical process. As the *Creative Ireland* programme (2017) promotes and positively supports creative practice in education, the fundamental issue still remains, many primary level teachers in Ireland find it challenging to deliver a broad and balanced music curriculum. McAuliffe (2004) expresses this concern when she declares:

> Since 1900, successive governments and departments of education in Ireland have advocated the inclusion of music as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. However, as the historical investigation revealed, this policy has never been fully - or even partially - translated into practice in the classroom (McAuliffe, 2004:245).

This chapter provides recommendations to enrich the quality of musical learning experiences for primary level students by providing enhanced educational experiences and support for teachers, to ensure that all children have access to good quality music education during their primary level years.

6.2 Lifelong Learning through Teacher Education

As highlighted through fieldwork interviews, the interest, enthusiasm and engagement with music education can vary greatly among primary level teaching staff in Ireland. This is an element which requires further focus and development, to enhance engagement with the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. To increase the interest and enthusiasm for music education, an understanding and appreciation of the importance of music in education

is recommended for educators. Teacher 3 spoke about the apparent need for further development in the outlook regarding music at primary level when he described:

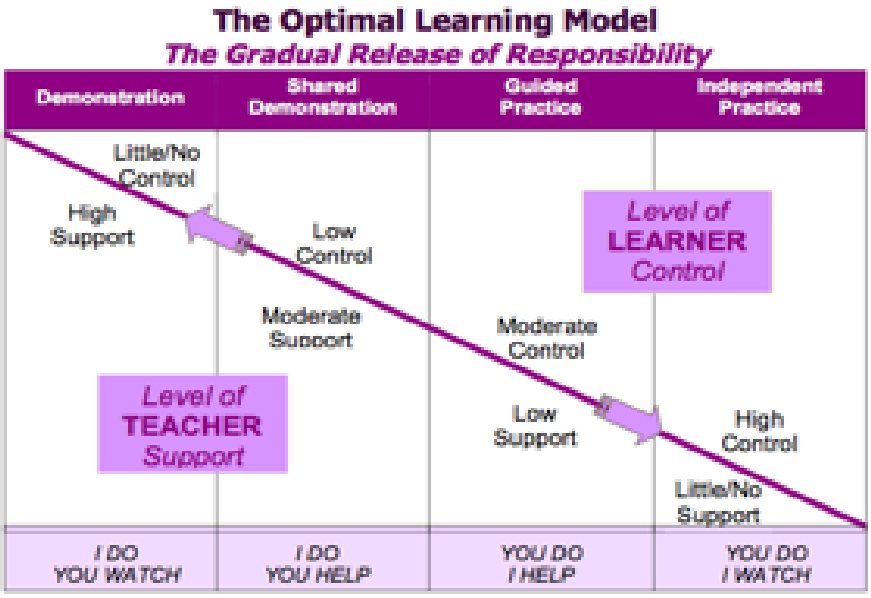
> *…it's more of a mindset change and maybe giving teachers an opportunity to…see how simple it is to deliver basic music lessons and…you can learn with the children as they go along…the music curriculum is, I don't think it's rocket science…teachers are clever people, and they are very committed to their job, for the most part…it's just a confidence thing. It's a little bit like a teacher trying to teach Irish. A lot of teachers say they can't teach Irish because they're not good at Irish but like a lot of the Irish that needs to be taught is…well it's not simple but…you know it's very doable and I think it's the mindset…is needed really…maybe that's because I'm into music, I don't have a fear of music…Coming from my perspective, I think that…we are well placed and we have the, the wherewithal to do it. It's just the kind of…a mindset with the teachers really…* (Teacher 3, May 2020:Interview).

For many students, the classroom may be their first, and sometimes only formal engagement with music. It is important that primary level teachers give children the opportunity to encounter a range of musical experiences and creative activities, to enhance their overall development. As discussed in Chapter Four, ITE is an integral part of development for student teachers. To engage in effective, high quality teaching, the educator is knowledgeable and confident in the material that they are teaching (Greenwalt, 2016). It is vital that student teachers have the time to experience a comprehensive introduction to the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum during their studies. The nine musical concepts listed in the primary level music curriculum should be discussed, recognised, and an understanding of each established with student teachers. They should be guided through the creation of good quality lesson plans, and afforded frequent engagement with the musical concepts during this time. Opportunities to implement these lessons in a classroom setting would be very beneficial, to allow students to adapt and improve their practice. To achieve this, sufficient time must be given to music lecturers in ITE, along with opportunities for active student engagement and development during the course, to acknowledge the integrative and central

role that music plays in enhancing the primary level curriculum (Moore et al., 2019; Kenny, 2017a).

For the current cohort of primary level teachers, a wider range of quality CPD opportunities should to be offered, to bridge the gaps that exist among the teaching staff today, as highlighted during fieldwork interviews. Teacher 5 expressed a desire for a tiered approach to CPD in music, to make learning accessible to all teachers, including those who are not confident in music, and those that have received little guidance in the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. If CPD is produced to cater for a range of abilities, it would mimic Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (1983), with teachers guided through the learning process, providing opportunities and time to comfortably progress at their own pace, see Figure Y. This would greatly increase understanding and confidence among primary level teachers in the area of music education.

Figure Y - Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (1983)



Fieldwork research suggests that some teachers would benefit from additional scaffolding throughout their learning experiences in ITE and CPD. Teachers never stop learning and developing, and this scaffolded approach would enable teachers to develop musically with more confidence, while also providing them with the methodologies and pedagogical knowledge to deliver a creative music curriculum.

6.3 Creative Curriculum Development

The current primary level music curriculum was introduced in 1999. Over the last twenty-two years the world has transformed significantly, and this should be reflected in the curriculum content at primary level. Music has also changed immensely during this time, with many new techniques, technology, and experiences available for people to enjoy. This is a time when a deeper exploration of the strands of the primary level music curriculum would be beneficial, as the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework is currently out for consultation. During fieldwork interviews, musical creativity was recognised as a more accessible term than composition. There were more positive responses to questioning surrounding musical creativity and it reflects the integrated nature of the musical experience. The new Junior Cycle Music Curriculum offers many opportunities for creativity and creative music making, and this approach would be valuable at primary level. The developments at secondary level provide an opportunity for policy makers at primary level to learn from the process, explore what elements were effective during the development of this curriculum, and what knowledge from the transition could be ascertained, to further enhance development at primary level. The voice and expertise of classroom teachers need to hold a central place in the decision-making process.

The three strands of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum are often seen as three separate entities when in fact, to achieve real musical synthesis, these three strands should be integrated and approached holistically. Music does not exist without the interrelationship of these strands. Musical experiences are embedded in our everyday lives and engaging with music is a multifaceted activity. If we analyse our everyday lives and connect our musical experiences to the strands of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, we can see how throughout this process the three strands of Listening and Responding, Performing and Composing are interdependent and interconnected. In terms of Listening and Responding, people listen to music every day. They respond to it in many ways by singing, dancing, humming, smiling or by expressing dislike and turning it off. In relation to Performing, people perform when they sing along to their favourite tune, or when they sing to soothe a child or family member. When people perform, others listen and respond, which highlights the natural links between these strands in the curriculum. Social Media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok have developed musically at an exponential rate, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, with people listening and responding to music through movement, making cover versions of popular songs, or by creating their own versions of songs using the original pieces as a stimulus. Composition is a central aspect of all music that exists today and creativity is an essential part of this process. If people throughout history disregarded their creative side and were not brave enough to take musical risks bringing them in new directions, new genres and styles would never have been discovered or developed. Humans continuously engage with the strands of the music curriculum on a daily basis, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and music cannot exist without the interrelationship of the strands of the music curriculum. The strands should be more accessible and relatable to all teachers, and the curriculum

needs to reflect the modern twenty-first century learner, with problem solving and creative thinking to the fore.

The 1999 Primary Level Curriculum favours a spiralled approach, with children interacting with the same strands each year, to ensure continuity and adequate exposure to the associated musical language. This approach is utilised in the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum, with all nine musical concepts listed in the curriculum documents for each class level. Concerns were expressed during the fieldwork interviews relating to these musical concepts. One view expressed, which was shared by many participants, suggested the need for a clearer and more layered approach to these concepts at primary level. As all nine concepts are listed every year, some are continuously overlooked in favour of concepts that teachers are more comfortable and confident using. This presents an absence of continuity and a lack of clarity for learning, and highlights the recurring issues with teacher confidence and subject knowledge regarding the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. This poses a real concern for music at primary level, and from research presented in previous chapters, it has a subsequent effect on participation in music.

6.4 Personal Experience

It is important that throughout education, teachers are provided with time to focus on active and practical creative music making opportunities. Ní Chróinín et al. (2013) discussed the importance of practical elements in teaching and learning at Third Level, while Kenny (2017a) highlighted the central role of creative, collaborative and reflective practice among student teachers. This process should be reflected in the primary level classroom setting, providing children with opportunities to develop collaboratively and creatively together. During my

studies, I attended a module in the Department of Music, UCC entitled Music and Community. This module highlighted how musical experiences afford participants with opportunities to develop a range skills outside of the academic curriculum with learning, socialising, healing and engagement taking place concurrently. As an educator, I often feel the need to be 'in control' of the learning in the classroom. Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (1983), as seen in Figure Y above, places the teacher as the facilitator of the learning experience, with children engaging independently with material on a phased basis. As the learning process progresses, the children are able to engage with the material effectively on their own, without the need for the teacher's support. Having taught music weekly to the children in my class, and regularly engaged in singing, instrumental and performance activities, I decided to implement one of the strategies encountered during my lectures in the classroom, before the Covid-19 pandemic. I chose a *Battle of the Bands* activity with my fifth class students. This facilitated children working in groups of five together and picking a school appropriate song to perform for their class. As the children were engaged in this activity, I circulated and provided feedback and support to each of the groups. To make sure that this activity was successful, I used mixed ability groupings. Each group consisted of at least one confident singer, along with someone that could play an instrument. By using this strategy, I could see each group engage in discussion, with people actively problem solving and making decisions to take on different roles, depending on their own personal strengths. This activity prompted a shift in my work, reflecting the constructivist theory mentioned earlier by Kenny (2017a), and explored and developed by many influential psychologists (Bruner,1990; Piaget,1972; Vygotsky,1930-1934/1978 & Dewey,1933). It gave the children greater autonomy over their learning, while still developing meaning as they were actively learning from their own creative musical experiences in the classroom, Cremin

(2006) refers to this autonomy in the 'possibility thinking' model (Cremin et al., 2006). Throughout this activity, I witnessed opportunities for development in the areas of problem solving, navigating the dynamics of group work, effective discussion and decision making with peers, along with opportunities for self-expression and collaboration with classmates. It was a welcomed opportunity for many students to shine and have fun together in a safe environment where they were free to express themselves. Teacher 3 spoke of the wider benefits of these activities when he described the confidence gained through the experience of being in a school musical production. He stated:

> *… a person is vulnerable when they're on the stage because you don't know what the reaction of the people watching you is going to be. It's the same when you go into an interview, that you're not quite sure what you're going to say, or how it's going to be received and…if you've been through that process at least once on the stage in your primary school, well at least you know that it can be successful and you have that kind of, an innate confidence* (Teacher 3, May 2020:Interview).

Creative practice through music builds a classroom environment which values creativity and problem solving, collaboration, and provides opportunities to build pupil confidence and support self-expression.

6.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from this research study:

- A comprehensive report encompassing a wider cross section of primary level teachers to follow on from INTO 2009 report creativity and the arts in the primary classroom.
- An update of the primary level music curriculum within the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework, in close consultation with primary level classroom teachers, to ensure understanding, practicality and accessibility for all primary level teachers, regardless of their musical background.

- The adaptation of the strands within the primary level music curriculum, to better reflect the integrated nature of music and the creative elements involved with music making.
- The development of high quality tiered CPD in music education that caters for the differing abilities among current primary level teaching staff.
- Increased teaching time for music in Initial Teacher Education, to allow students to develop their subject knowledge appropriately and to provide opportunities to progress creatively through music education.

6.6 Concluding Thoughts

Music has always held an interesting and thought provoking place in government policy and education. Recent developments in music education have greatly enhanced the position which music holds in the curriculum at primary level. However, fieldwork research has presented a number of challenges faced by primary level music teachers in the delivery of the Revised 1999 Primary Level Music Curriculum. The recommendations listed above are informed by the teachers' perspectives in this study. They highlight the importance and impact of the classroom teacher on the child's musical experience, and the need to further enhance the supports for generalist primary level teachers in music education. These recommendations present a pathway for policy makers, to incorporate the voice of educators at all stages of the planning process. This will lead to higher levels of engagement and confidence among educators, which will have a subsequent impact upon the children's musical learning experiences. Creativity fosters self- expression, problem solving, imagination, ingenuity and enjoyment, and it is a necessary aspect of the primary level music curriculum. Creativity in music education provides a world of opportunities where children are encouraged to explore and express their ideas and emotions in a way that is accessible

and unique to them. Future considerations for music education should acknowledge the vital role that creativity plays in the musical process, and the creative experience of the child should be placed at the centre of this structure.

> So let us continue to dream. Let us continue to love. Let us continue to encourage. Let us continue to create. For through our creativity, we live (Michael D. Higgins, 2019).

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www.president.ie/en/the-president/vision-for-presidency

www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131&Itemid=213

www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Registration/Documents/Curricular-Subject-Requirments-after-January-2017.pdf

www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/teacher-education/initial-teacher-education/

https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/website/en/teacher-education/initial-teacher-education/professional-accreditation-of-programmes/review-accreditation-2011-to-2020/completed-reviews/cycle-1-review-accreditation-reports.html

President Michael D. Higgins speaking about Art, Creativity and Imagination
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptXR7RNq06Y

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics



ucc

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

Information Sheet

Thank you for considering participating in this research project. The purpose of this document is to explain to you what the work is about and what your participation would involve, so as to enable you to make an informed choice.

The purpose of this study is to gather teacher views and perspectives in relation to musical creativity in the primary classroom. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part, along with other teachers, in an online interview. The interview will be carried out electronically to ensure that no issues arise due to Covid-19 restrictions. It will be recorded and is expected to take 30 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no obligation to participate, and should you choose to do so you can refuse to answer specific questions or decide to withdraw from the interview. Once the interview has been concluded, you can choose to withdraw your details at any time in the subsequent two weeks.

All of the information you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous by the researcher, who will make it available only to the supervisory team. The only exception is where information is disclosed which indicates that there is a serious risk to you or to others.
Once the interview is completed, the recording will be stored on an encrypted laptop. The data will then be transcribed by the researcher and all identifying information will be removed. Once this is done, the recording will also be deleted and only the anonymized transcript will remain. This will be stored in the University College Cork for a minimum of ten years. The information you provide may contribute to research publications and/or conference presentations and will also contribute to my thesis.

We do not anticipate any negative outcomes from participating in this study but should you wish to do so, you can choose not to answer questions, or to bring the interview to an end at any time.

This study has obtained ethical approval from the UCC Social Research Ethics Committee.

If you have any queries about this research, you can contact me at

Researcher – 108322287@umail.ucc.ie

Supervisor – m.finnerty@ucc.ie

If you agree to take part in this study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

Consent Form

I……agree to participate in Grace Hogan's research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Grace Hogan to be recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from the interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box:)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from the interview ☐

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from the interview ☐

Signed: _____ Date: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions

Interview Guide for Primary Teacher

Music and Education Pathways

- Tell me a little a little about your background in primary teaching?
- Do you enjoy listening to music?

Music in the Classroom

- Do you teach music as part of your weekly schedule? Do you enjoy teaching music? Can you tell me a little more about this?

Curriculum

- Are there parts of the music curriculum you use regularly in your practice?
- What aspects of teaching the music curriculum do you find easy/hard? Why?
- What are the most important aspects of the music curriculum to you?
- Are there additions or changes that you would make to the curriculum now?
- Do you think music is important to your teaching?
- Do you feel confident teaching music? Why? Why not?
- What do you think children enjoy about engaging in music in schools?

Curricular and Extra Curricular elements

- Do you think children enjoy music lessons in school?
- What parts of music in school do they enjoy most?

Music Provision and how it relates to musical pathways

- Do you have any experience in music (outside of College Education)?
- Do you feel that you had sufficient education in college to deliver a broad and balanced music curriculum?
- Do you teach the Listening and Responding strand of the music curriculum regularly?
- Do you teach the Performing strand of the music curriculum regularly?
- Do you teach the Composing strand of the music curriculum regularly?
- Do you feel confident teaching the Listening and Responding strand of the music curriculum?
- Do you feel confident teaching the Performing strand of the music curriculum?
- Do you feel confident teaching the Composing strand of the music curriculum?
- Do you understand the term – music creativity?
- Is creativity a central aspect of your music lesson?
- Do you follow a specific music programme in school?
- Do you feel your school has sufficient resources to deliver the music curriculum?
- If the timetable is particularly busy in school, would music be sacrificed in lieu of more 'academic' subjects?
- Would there be some element of music in your classroom daily? Across other subjects maybe?
- Do you think music holds an important place in the primary curriculum?
- Have you ever completed a CPD course in music?

Recap

- Are teachers adequately prepared in college to teach a broad and balanced music curriculum?
- Are schools adequately equipped to deliver this curriculum?
- What developments would you like to see to aid you in the deliverance of the primary music curriculum?

Interview Guide for Secondary Teacher

Music and Education Pathways

- Tell me a little a little about your background in music teaching?
- Do you enjoy listening to music?
- Do you play an instrument?

Music in your classroom

- Do you enjoy teaching music? Can you tell me a little more about this?

Curriculum

- What aspects of teaching the music curriculum do you find easy/hard? Why?
- What are the most important aspects of the music curriculum to you?
- Could you tell me a little about the new Junior Cycle curriculum?
- Do you feel that this has improved student engagement and outcome?
- How does the Junior Cycle differ from the Senior Cycle? Which do you prefer and why?
- Are there any additions or changes that you would make to the curriculum now?
- Have you seen an increase or a decrease in music as a chosen subject in recent years? Why do you think this is?
- What do you think of the standard of musicianship coming in from Primary School?
- Do you think it is important to have continuity from Primary to Secondary?
- If you were involved in the creation of a New Primary music curriculum, what would you suggest to help bridge the gap between Primary and Secondary music?

Curricular and Extra Curricular elements

- Do you think teenagers enjoy music lessons in school?
- What parts of music in school do they enjoy most?
- Are most of the students taking music lessons outside of school?

Music Provision and how it relates to musical pathways

- Do you feel that you had sufficient education in college to deliver a broad and balanced music curriculum?
- Do you feel confident teaching composition in the classroom? Why/Why not?
- Do you understand the term – music creativity? What does it mean to you?
- Is creativity a central aspect of your music lessons?
- Do you follow a specific music programme in school?
- Do you feel your school has sufficient resources to deliver the music curriculum?
- Do you think music holds an important place in the Curriculum?
- Are there many options for CPD in secondary music?

Recap

- Are teachers adequately prepared in college to teach a broad and balanced music curriculum?
- Are schools adequately equipped to deliver this curriculum?
- What developments would you like to see to aid you in the deliverance of the music curriculum?

Appendix C: Curriculum Content at Primary Level

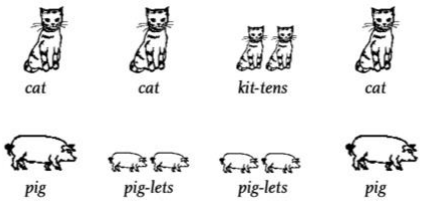
Junior and Senior Infants

- match selected sounds with their pictured source

  teacher hums 'Twinkle, Twinkle' or 'Pease Porridge Hot' and the child chooses a picture of a star or a picture of a porridge bowl as the appropriate matching symbol

- recognise and perform simple rhythm patterns from pictorial symbols

  teacher claps a simple rhythm pattern from a selection of known patterns comprising 'cats' (single beats) and 'kittens' (two half beats), which the child matches.



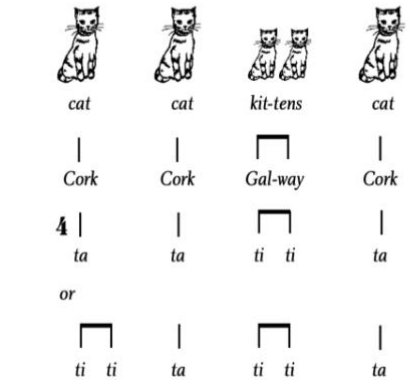
Junior and Senior Infant Curriculum

Pitch – Linking sound to source
Rhythm – Linking rhythm to symbol

First and Second Class

Rhythm

- identify and perform familiar rhythm patterns from memory and from notation

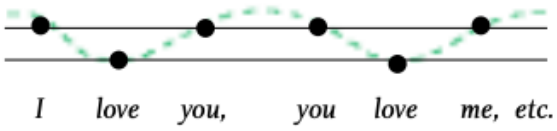


First and Second Class Curriculum

Rhythm – Move from representing rhythms using symbols, to stick notation

Pitch

- recognise the shape (contour) of a simple melody



First and Second Class Curriculum

Pitch – Using simple melodies with two/three notes. Recognising them as two/three different notes. Representing the notes using hand gestures, tonic solfa and simplified staff notation (simple two line stave)

- recognise and sing familiar tunes and singing games within a range of two or three notes*

  hummed

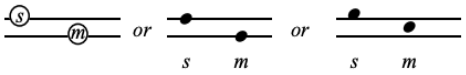
  sung to one syllable (e.g. da da da)

  from hand signs

  sung in tonic solfa (e.g. s, m or l, s, m)

  'Rain, rain, go away' (s, m, s s, m), 'Olé, Olé' (m, s, m, s)

  from staff notation (two-lined stave)



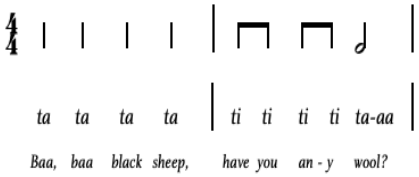
First and Second Class Curriculum

Rhythm and Pitch – Recognising and singing simple songs with two/three notes using rhythm and pitch notation.

Third and Fourth Class

Rhythm

- identify and define the rhythm patterns of well-known songs and chants



- recognise and use some standard symbols to notate metre (time) and rhythm

  one beat (crotchet)

  half beat (quaver)

  one-beat rest (crotchet rest)

  two beats (minim) as rhythm patterns in stick notation

  in $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ *or* $\frac{4}{4}$ *time.*

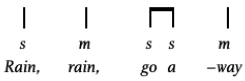
Third and Fourth Class Curriculum

Rhythm – Listening to, and recognising simple rhythmic patterns and metre(time). Learning to represent them using standard notation symbols

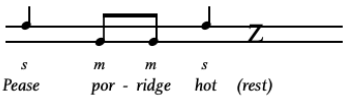
Rhythm and pitch

- recognise and sing simple tunes, from simplified notation, combining rhythm and pitch

  stick notation



  simplified staff notation



Pitch

- recognise and sing familiar, simple tunes in a variety of ways

  hummed

  sung to one syllable (e.g. da da da)

  from hand signs

  sung in tonic solfa

  'Here we go looby loo'—d d d m d s

- recognise the shape (contour) of melodies on a graphic score or in standard notation

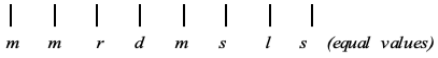
  'Green Grow the Rushes Ho!'—starts high, moves downwards in leaps, returns to high notes and eventually finishes on a low note

- use standard symbols to identify and sing a limited range of notes and melodic patterns*

  tonic solfa

  hand signs

  rhythm-solfa (stick notation with solfa names)



  simplified staff notation



  finger stave (each finger represents a line on the stave)



  full staff notation (five lines).



Third and Fourth Class Curriculum

Pitch – Recognising tunes of simple songs. Understanding the visual contour (shape) of a notated piece of music – high and low. Learning to represent these notes and melodic patterns using standard notation

Rhythm and pitch

- use standard symbols to notate simple rhythm and pitch

stick notation with solfa names written underneath

'Rocky Mountain'—American folk song



simplified staff notation (two or three lines)



or at a higher pitch



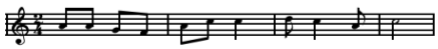
staff notation (five lines)



- discover how pentatonic tunes (based on five notes: *d, r, m, s, l*) can be read, sung and played in G *doh*, C *doh*, or F *doh*

familiar tune

'Liza Jane' in staff notation (F doh)



'Óró 'Sé Do Bheatha 'Bhaile' (G doh)



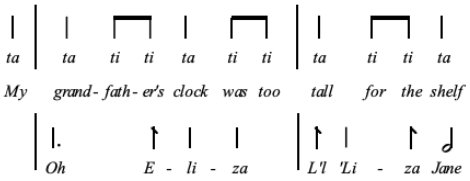
Third and Fourth Class Curriculum

Rhythm and Pitch – Beginning to use standard notation for simple rhythm and pitch, including tonic solfa and moving from a two/three line to a five line stave. Introduction of the pentatonic scale.

Fifth and Sixth Class

Rhythm

- recognise longer and more complex rhythm patterns of familiar songs and chants



- recognise, name and use some standard symbols to notate metre (time) and rhythm

one beat (crotchet)

half beat (quaver)

one-beat rest (crotchet rest)

two beats (minim)

four beats (semibreve)

three beats (dotted minim)

one-and-a-half beats (dotted crotchet)

as rhythm patterns in stick notation

in $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ *or* $\frac{4}{4}$ *time*

Fifth and Sixth Class Curriculum

Rhythm – Recognise more complex rhythmic patterns in songs and chants. Understand, express and use standard notation for metre(time) and rhythm.

Fifth and Sixth Class Curriculum

Pitch – Recognise the melody of familiar songs presented visually, aurally and physically(hand gestures). Understand step and leap movement of pitch from a graphic score/notation. Read, sing and play simple melodies from sight – tonic solfa, hand gestures, rhythm and solfa, finger stave, traditional notation.

Pitch

- recognise and sing familiar tunes in an increasing variety of ways

  hummed

  sung to one syllable (e.g. da da da)

  from hand signs

  sung in tonic solfa
  including full diatonic scale: d, r, m, f, s, l, t, d'

  sung from staff notation (five-line stave), following the general direction, shape and structure of the melody

  'Ding Dong Dederó'



- recognise the shape (contour) of a melody and movement by steps or by leaps, from a graphic score or from notation



- use standard symbols to read, sing and play simple melodies* from sight

  from tonic solfa (pentatonic, e.g. r' d' l s m r d l, s,)

  from hand signs

  from rhythm—solfa (stick notation with solfa names)

  from finger stave (each finger depicts a line on a stave)

  from staff notation (five-line stave)



Rhythm and pitch

- use standard symbols with increasing fluency and accuracy to notate simple rhythm and pitch

stick notation with solfa names underneath



staff notation



- recognise that melodies can be read, sung or played in different keys
- read, sing and play simple tunes from sight with C *doh*, G *doh* or F *doh*

  pentatonic tunes (based on five notes: d, r, m, s, l)
  'Here Comes a Bluebird'
  'Ailiú Éanaí'

- understand the function of major key signatures as indicating the position of doh

some key signatures



C major (no sharps or flats)



G major (one sharp)



D major (two sharps)



F major (one flat).

'Beidh Aonach Amárach'.



Fifth and Sixth Class Curriculum

Rhythm and Pitch – Continue to develop skills in rhythmic and pitch notation. Understand that there are different musical keys. Read, sing and play simple tunes using the pentatonic scale beginning on C, F or G. Understand major key signatures on the concept of doh(tonic solfa) in each.