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Prof. Bo Wah LEUNG
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Impact of Creative Music Making and Improvisational Approaches for Non-Music Specialists: A Case Study in Teacher Education in Japan

Yuki Morijiri
Tokyo Gakugei University
morijiri@u-gakugei.ac.jp

Abstract

The difficulties of teaching music by non-music specialists are widely debated, particularly in the Japanese music curriculum in primary school education in which the current ideas of creative music making are thought to be relatively new. The purpose of this research was to

explore how non-music major students in teacher training experienced activities of creative music making and how/what they could learn from such a session. This research study is based on one of these case studies. Japanese non-music major undergraduate students (n=50) submitted their self-reports after taking part in a ninety minute creative music making session led by a British instructor. All words in the self-reports were transcribed as data and were processed using software KH Coder 3 alpha as a text mining approach in order to elicit a lexical co-occurrence network. With these results, seven sub-categories were elicited. The most frequent words were classified into a category of 'an enjoyable approach for a music class' which included rhythmic activities learned by imitating the instructor. The participants also found the improvisational music approaches useful for general educational settings and showed strong interest in utilising creative music making in other classroom teaching.

Key words

music education, teacher training, creative music making, non-music specialists, generalist teacher

Introduction

In most primary school education settings, pupils are usually taught by generalist teachers who are expected to be able to teach all subjects. However, teaching music in primary school by generalist teachers has long been one of the challenges on a worldwide basis. In an earlier study, Mills (1989) reported that non-music specialist primary education students (hereinafter called “NMES” as an abbreviation of “Non-Music Education Students”) had little confidence in their ability to teach music. Hewitt (2002) compared two groups, which were ‘specialist’ and ‘generalist’ teachers in terms of musical training and found out that generalist teachers showed lower levels of confidence and self-efficacy in the composition process. Russell-Bowie (2009) conducted a research study across five countries (Australia, Namibia, South Africa, USA and Ireland) in terms of priorities and challenges for teaching music in primary schools, subsequently concluding that the lack of teachers’ experiences both professionally and personally in music and the lack of priority for music in schools are identified as profound problems, regardless of country. In addition to the lack of priority for music in academic achievement, lack of teachers’ knowledge, resources and structure about music teaching is a barrier to improve music curriculum in schools (Bresler, 1993). Research studies have widely established that generalist primary teachers who have fewer musical experiences and less perceived expertise are likely to have less confidence in their abilities to teach music in the classroom (Henley, 2011; Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006; Garvis, 2013; de Vries, 2013, Stavrou, 2012, Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). However, there is a study

suggesting that there is not necessarily a relationship between personal musical experiences and teaching music (Jeanneret & Degraffenreid, 2012).

One of the problems for generalist teachers in teaching music could be a specific perception that music is 'special', which is often believed, requiring something 'special' for doing musical activities (Mills, 1989; Hennessy, 2000; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). When compared with music specialists, who seem to have already acquired some 'special' skills needed for performing music, generalist teachers would perceive themselves as the ones who are 'not able to do music'. These perceptions could lead to a lack of confidence for teaching music. Another perception is that music is for someone 'talented': if the people perceive themselves as 'not musical', it weakens their confidence for teaching music (Stunell, 2010). The concept that musical ability should be cultivated by appropriate music learning and musical activities is believed by some teachers (Jaap & Patrick, 2015). However, non-music specialist teachers still seem to firmly believe that their capability for teaching music can be decided by 'special' training, experience and 'special' talent, which they perceive themselves as not having. These perceptions could lead the generalist teachers to keep music at a distance in their classroom teaching.

In their UK study, Holden and Button (2006) reported that non-music specialist teachers ranked their confidence in teaching music in the classroom the lowest among all subjects. They also added "not being able to read music made respondents feel very

vulnerable” as a reason (p.29). Hallam, Burnard, Robertson, Saleh, Rogers and Kokatsaki (2009) found that, in a primary teacher-training programme, the students who played one or more musical instruments showed a significant difference in their level of confidence teaching music compared to non-players. The students who were not able to play an instrument were significantly less confident than instrumentalists teaching music such as: singing to the class, singing to teach music, enjoying teaching music and playing an instrument for teaching. Also, according to Russell-Bowie’s study (2010), it revealed significant correlations between having confidence in teaching music and musical background, such as being able to play instruments. Perceived musical abilities and technical skills in music itself can have a substantial impact on creating the people’s perception of being able to teach music.

These examples of challenges for music education could be universal amongst many countries, although systems or curriculums for music education and teacher training are different in each country. Japan is not an exception. Shimojo, Hirata and Fukuchi (1996) conducted a questionnaire survey of Japanese primary school teachers regarding the difficulty of teaching each subject in their classroom. In this research, 582 teachers responded to the survey and it revealed that they thought the most difficult subject to teach in primary school was music. This research was also explicit about the main reasons why they felt teaching this subject was difficult, revealing particularly a lack of knowledge of content and a lack of

methods for teaching music. MEXT (2019) conducted a national survey of elementary and junior-high schools across Japan in order to explore the actual situation of teaching in schools. Nineteen thousand, six hundred seventy-one primary schools responded to this survey and the results showed the proportion of subjects taught by non-classroom teachers, namely specialist teachers, in the academic year 2018-2019 (April 2018 to March 2019). From Grade 1 (aged 6-7) to Grade 6 (aged 11-12), the proportion of music taught by music specialist teachers increased; Grade 1 = 12.2%, Grade 2 = 20.7%, Grade 3 = 40.6%, Grade 4 = 47.8%, Grade 5 = 54.0% and Grade 6 = 55.6%. Particularly in lower grades (Grade 1 – 2, aged 6-8), mostly classroom teachers who are generalist teachers teach music in their class. This fundamental situation has not changed much on a worldwide basis, including Japan, and is part of the critical issue of music taught by generalist teachers.

Creative music making in Japan

In Japan, the national curriculum has been set up and named the “Course of Study” by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for school education. This guideline has been revised approximately every ten years since it was officially published with legally binding force in 1958 (although the first tentative guideline was published in 1947). In the current music guideline, the subject has two areas: Music-Making and Appraising (MEXT, 2011, 2017a, 2017b). The area of Music-Making has

three sub-areas as activities: Singing, Playing Instruments and Creative Music Making. Among these three activities, the current ideas and concepts of creative music making are relatively new. In previous guidelines before 1989, the ideas for music creation were based on the Western Classical music tradition, such as making a melody based on a piece of tonal music, making accompaniment with chords, and arranging some parts of a piece of music with notation (Shimazaki, 2009). In 1989, a revised guideline for compulsory education was published by MEXT and introduced a new concept as 'creative music making'. This concept was influenced by more contemporary ideas from overseas, such as Soundscape by Murray Schafer and creative music making by John Painter. Including more exploratory and improvisational musical activities and the use of various sound materials, these new concepts were expected to expand the ideas of musical creation in music education. In brief, this new revision attempted to introduce new musical ideas or applications in music creation rather than continuing with the more conservative, conventional ideas of music itself in music education. It was believed that this new approach would enable pupils to make music by applying not only the approach based on the Western Classical music tradition, but also on different styles of music making.

However, in spite of the intentions of the government, schools actually faced a difficult situation. In music education in Japanese Schools, music activities in a class had emphasised practice and rehearsed music and there were fewer opportunities for improvising and creating.

In an extensive survey involving 911 elementary schools in Japan, 52.3% of elementary school pupils responded that they liked or would rather have the activity of creative music making in music class, whilst 68.1% of them responded that they generally like music classes (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2015). By comparison, only 32.7% of elementary school teachers agreed positively that pupils are highly likely to be interested in making music with musical structures and the process of constructing music. Furthermore, only 15.5% of the teachers believe that the pupils easily acquire creative music making (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2015). Adachi and Chino (2004) reported that activities of creative music making were incorporated into music education by only 66% of the elementary schools which responded to their survey. They also pointed out two reasons why creative music making is not practiced. The first reason was that people believe “only exceptional people with a special talent or extensive training can actually create such music” (p.307). This perception is associated with a conventional understanding of music. The second reason is the lack of a long-term vision of teaching the activities of creative music making. For teachers in elementary schools, it was quite challenging to teach music with this new concept of creative music making, particularly for musical activities for which they had no teaching experience and no personal experience in music creation. Creative music making is understood as one important aspect in music education, however teachers generally have less confidence in engaging students in creative activities (Henry, 1996; Dogani, 2004).

Alongside teachers who already had experience teaching in schools not being able to cope well with the new ideas of creative music making, this situation was highly likely to create additional consequences for students enrolled in teacher training in higher education. In teacher education, some influences come from what the students had experienced in their own school education, as well as their own musical skills and background (Hennessy, 2000; Russell-Bowie, 2010). In teacher training, the students learn how to teach music based on the National Curriculum in domestic contexts. In addition, they will reflect what they had received in their own school education, and their basic concepts of teaching music will be influenced by the range of their own experiences of learning music, as most NMES only receive music education in school settings. Critically, it could be said that there might be fewer opportunities to learn new concepts in the understanding of music and how to teach music in schools in a teacher training programme in higher education, unless the students have prior knowledge of the teaching approaches which they have not experienced.

Since the current ideas of creative music making were introduced to Japanese music education, creative music making activities have been challenging for both pupils and teachers. If the pupils have not experienced creative music making sufficiently in schools, it will be difficult to look back at their creative experiences in childhood as fruitful learning when they grow up. Their experiences of music creation could also form the basis of their understanding of music. If the students in teacher education perceive themselves as not being

able to teach creative music making because of a lack of experience or expertise, higher education needs to cultivate these skills in the students. Seddon and Biasutti (2008) reported that NMES showed improvements in confidence in their personal musical abilities and their abilities to teach music in the primary school after participating in 'blues activities', which were aimed at playing an improvised 12-bar blues on an electronic keyboard for beginners. Russel-Bowie (2010) also emphasised the importance of higher education for trainee teachers as a chance of empowerment. Abilities and confidence for generalist music teachers can be improved in higher education and in their experience of learning (Henley, 2017; Holden & Button, 2006).

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore how NMES in teacher training experience activities of creative music making and how/what they could learn from these sessions. As many generalist trainee teachers are likely to believe that music is special and teaching music can only be done by someone who acquires special skills or has talent, this research aimed to investigate exploratorily their perceptions on creative music making after taking part in an improvisational creative music workshop.

Methodology

Participants

The participants were 50 undergraduate students (Male = 19, Female = 31) in their 3rd year

Bachelor of Education, who majored in primary school education and also had a sub-major based on a subject at university in Tokyo, Japan. All of the participants were non-music major students, namely NMES. The details of their major subjects are shown in Table 1. Art Education in the university indicates studying pedagogy in terms of visual art, such as; painting, graphic design and craft, which are not related to music or drama.

Table 1 *Sampled students' major subject in primary education*

Major subject	Number	%
Art Education	23	46.0%
Mathematics Education	19	38.0%
English Education	5	10.0%
International Education	2	4.0%
Calligraphy Education	1	2.0%
Total	50	100.0%

All of the participants were enrolled in a music pedagogy module. At the first class of this module, the participants responded to a brief survey about their musical experiences. In a part of it, they submitted comments about what the most memorable experiences were in music classes in primary and secondary schools. None of the participants reported Creative Music Making as the most memorable experience in music classes. Twenty participants (40%) reported activities related to 'Singing' as the most memorable ones and nineteen participants (38%) reported 'Playing Instruments'. Six participants (12%) reported the most memorable activities were in the area of "Apprising" and another five students mentioned other activities

(e.g. talking with a teacher). The participants took three classes (each class lasted 90 minutes) before taking part in the subject session and had learned basic concepts for primary music education, such as the purpose of studying the subject, a brief guideline of primary music education and some musical terms. They had also experienced some activities of singing and playing instruments.

Research design

Due to the specific educational situation, a case study was utilised as a research method. A case study is “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xi) and can be applied for an individual case, including a class, an event and a group (Gillham, 2000; Thomas, 2011). Particularly, an educational case study is “an empirical enquiry which is: conducted within a localized boundary of space and time... into *interesting* aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system” (Bassegy, 1999, p.58). Also, if the research question is based on exploratory views, such as “*how*” and “*why*”, the case study method could be interesting to examine (Yin, 2009). In this research study, the research questions are exploratory in a specific social context. The research session was conducted as a part of module with NMES and its data was derived from their comments, based on what they learned and how they felt. Therefore, it might be suitable to apply the case study method to explore the case as a research method.

The participants took part in a creative music making workshop, led by an English instructor at a university hall. The workshop lasted 90 minutes in total and was taught in English and translated into Japanese by a researcher for the participants when necessary. The workshop was designed within the context of this research study. Based on the concept of creative music making, the workshop was planned to include some potentially new concepts for the participants: improvisational approaches, the creative process of music making, and deviation from a written music score. The workshop was taught with the VOCES8 Method (Smith, 2013), that was inspired by Hallam's (2010) research study, as an implementational approach throughout the session. The VOCES8 Method includes using Latin and African rhythms, which are thought to be less familiar to Japanese students. This method embraces improvisational approaches to the performance of music without special musical expertise and accessible ways to create music for the general classroom environment. The workshop basically contained three different music activities which have not been introduced to authorised music textbooks for compulsory education in Japan. Each of the three activities focused on rhythm, melody and harmony.

The first activity mainly explored rhythm. The participants were asked to copy whatever the instructor did, for example body movement, body percussion, making sounds and creating rhythm. After this, they learned three different rhythmic patterns with hand claps, and then were divided into three groups to create layers using the rhythm and sounds which

they had learned in various ways. This first part lasted approximately 25 minutes.

The second part focused on harmony. The instructor demonstrated a cyclical harmonic progression comprised of four chords (F-Bb-C-F) on the piano to the participants. They were asked to pick out one note from each chord and sing it in various ways, for example by a vowel or humming. Approximately 10 minutes were spent on this part.

The final activity was creative singing of songs with melodies. A music sheet entitled 'Spiritual Medley', which consisted of 3 songs; (Wade in the Water, Hit the Road Jack, Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child) and 1 voice percussion, was provided for their information. The participants learned 1st (Wade in the Water), 2nd (Hit the Road Jack) and 4th (voice percussion) voices. They mainly sang the 1st and 2nd melodies by ear and tried a 'mashup' with the instructor's direction, using various singing styles, such as singing with lyrics or humming with changes of dynamics. This final part lasted approximately 20 minutes. In addition to the three main activities, the students had opportunities to listen to the theoretical background of the method, for example the intention of each musical activity, useful teaching skills and expected outcomes of the method. There was also time allocated for questions at the end of the session. The full session was recorded with permission granted beforehand and the researcher was present in the session as an interpreter and an observer. After the session, the recorded video was observed in order to understand the students' behaviour and submitted comments.

Data collection and analysis

In the case study method, qualitative data collection, such as observations, interviews and documents are often preferred (Stake, 2005), therefore this research study used self-reports as documents to analyse the data. A week after the workshop, the fifty participants submitted their self-reports about their experiences and thoughts about the workshop. All words were transcribed as data and were processed using software, KH Coder 3 alpha, as a text mining approach (Higuchi, 2016, 2017) in order to elicit a lexical co-occurrence network in the self-reports. This software enables us to draw a lexical co-occurrence network based on the Jaccard similarity coefficient. According to the developer, this approach suggests that researchers should go back to the original text data during analysis in order to ensure the reliability of its results related to the context of the original texts (Higuchi, 2016, 2017). In this case, some modifiers were excluded in the process of analysis, such as ‘really’ ‘quite’ and ‘very’ because these are not significant words to describe the content itself. After eliciting a whole lexical co-occurrence network, the context of each sub-category (subgraph in the network) was considered with the linked original texts in order to understand the contents and to label each sub-category as a component. In addition to a text mining approach, an observation was utilised to interpret the comments and students’ behaviour.

Results

From all data, 2,915 words were extracted, and 1,172 words were used for analysis. Table 2 shows the list of words which appeared more than 4 times in all data. Figure 1 illustrates a lexical co-occurrence network generated from all data. In Figure 1, the size of each circle corresponds to the frequency of the word it contains. Each line shows co-occurrence, for example the darker lines indicate the higher coefficient. According to the result of analysis, seven subgraphs were generated as Figure 1 illustrates.

Table 2 *Extracted words and frequency*

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Enjoy	46	People	12	Workshop	6	Listen	5
Music	35	Myself	11	Different	6	Method	5
Think	35	Use	10	Like	6	Impression	4
Rhythm	24	Move	10	Receive	6	Activity	4
Sing	22	Fun	10	Good	6	Participate	4
Sound	19	Chord	10	Language	5	Useful	4
		Appreciat					
Feel	17	e	9	Pupils	5	Time	4
Instructor	15	Together	9	Natural	5	Concentrate	4
Copy	14	Difficult	8	Various	5	Before	4
Class	13	Beginning	7	All	5	Communicate	4
Body	13	Make	7	Experience	5		

* Words that appeared more than 4 times

0.47 Jaccard Similarity Index with the term 'Think' and 0.41 with the term 'Music', followed by 0.39 with 'Rhythm' and 0.36 with 'Class'. These words are included in subgraph 1 in Figure 1. Subgraph 1 (bottom centre in Figure 1) comprises eleven words: Enjoy, Music, Think, Rhythm, Copy, Instructor, Sing, Feel, Class, Together, and Different. The sentences in the original data which were associated with this subgraph include the contents of the participants' joyful experiences by copying what the instructor did, which turned into structured rhythm patterns with some layers, and then into actual music. Also, the participants felt that they made music by themselves without special techniques or expertise. This category of the subgraph was named as an "enjoyable approach for music class". In this category, some participants described their experience as follows:

"... when three different rhythmic patterns were mixed together, it became a really interesting sound even though each rhythm was totally different."

"At the beginning, we just started to copy him [the instructor] and then realised this became rhythm. And then we layered a couple of rhythmic patterns ... I felt it was really great and got a new understanding of the power of music."

"I really enjoyed the session and I was impressed to be able to make great music

by just copying him [the instructor].”

“ ... I thought we (future teachers) would need to devise a way to let pupils enjoy music like I did in this session. If we can create an enjoyable environment, pupils could positively join in and it would help us to make active learning classes.”

The participants seemed to enjoy the rhythmic musical activity of imitating the instructor. Also, it could be thought that the participants were attracted by both the instructor’s manner of presentation and his personality; being energetic, appealing and engaging, in addition to the positive effect of being taught by a guest lecturer.

In this manner, the other six categories were delineated and given names relating to the words contained therein. Table 3 shows each subgraph, words comprised in its subgraph and the name of the category. Subgraph 2 (top right in Figure 1) was labelled as “general educational ideas” which includes the participants’ perspectives on educational leading in general educational settings, not only in purely music education settings. Improvisational approaches in music making prompts reactions, heightens attention to surroundings and increases concentration on what they are doing. Students in higher education rarely learn music pedagogy through learning improvisational approaches themselves. The participants were inspired by utilising this idea to capture people’s attention in a learning environment.

Some examples of the participants' comments are as below:

“ ... I really enjoyed and appreciated learning a way to get students' attention and to let all pupils participate in musical activities with a song and melodies, regardless of one's limitation at music.”

“It was a really useful way to get pupils to listen to a teacher and concentrate on activities. I deeply learned this essential skill as a teacher though learning music in this workshop. When I become a teacher, I definitely want to try this way.”

“I thought it would be useful for both class management and teaching a subject if this method could be applied in educational environments.”

“I think this method enables every pupil to participate in and enjoy music easily, although playing music could be thought to require technical skills. It was new for me as I didn't receive this kind of education in Japanese schools. It was informative.”

Table 3 *Category of subgraph*

subgraph	Name of category	Words in the subgraph
1	Enjoyable approach for music class	Enjoy, Music, Think, Rhythm, Copy, Instructor, Sing, Feel, Class, Together, Different
2	General educational ideas	Pupils, Workshop, Concentrate, Listen, Method, Receive, Participate, Impression, Appreciate
3	Various movements	Move, Various, Good
4	Natural introduction	Beginning, Natural, Before
5	Difficulty of singing in chords	Sound, Chord, Feel, People, Myself, Sing, Difficult, Activity, Like, Time
6	Non-verbal communication	Fun, All, Language, Communicate
7	Making music with body	Body, Use, Make

The third category was regarding “various movements”, which contained terms “move”, “various” and “good” (top centre in Figure 1). As the workshop included body percussion, some participants mentioned their experiences with various movements. The fourth category was labelled “natural introduction” (bottom left in Figure 1). The workshop did not start with many verbal explanations or introductions but rather was facilitated with an alternative way of communication, by copying body movements and making rhythm together with just a few physical instructions. Usual instructions for a class are more explanatory and formal in Japan. Some of the participants reported that they unconsciously started learning music and then realised that the activity at the beginning was a warmup in preparation for further musical activities.

The fifth category (bottom centre in Figure 1) was named “difficulty of singing in

chords”, which focused on the activity of singing notes within chords. The instructor asked participants to pick a note within a chord and sing it in different musical contexts. This activity was challenging for some participants and brought opportunities to think about what they had received in music education in their school lives. Some examples are as follows:

“When we made a harmony from a chord, if we had taken a bit more time to make sure of a note and build up a harmony slowly, we would have been able to enjoy the harmony in various ways. Around me, everyone just hummed the same tune as we didn’t have confidence.”

“ ... the most impressive activity was individually choosing one note from a harmony and singing it. When he [the instructor] said we could arrange within a harmony, most of us didn’t do that and hesitated. Japanese people are very good at doing the same things as others do. However, we are likely to be very passive, and avoid creating something original and doing something different from others. I tried to consider how to solve this fundamental problem, but it is difficult to reach a conclusion.”

Observation of this activity showed that the participants’ voices were quieter compared

to other activities and their facial expressions slightly more serious. It is understandable that they hesitated somewhat doing such a unique, improvised activity.

The sixth category (bottom right in Figure 1) was labelled “non-verbal communication”, as some participants gave their comments that music is a universal language with which to communicate. In this university, undergraduate courses are primarily taught in Japanese, making it unusual to take a class in English. This experience might make the participants think about the difference of languages and ways of communication. The participants felt they were communicating with each other through music. For example:

“I felt we could communicate with each other even though we cannot understand each other’s language.”

The seventh category embraced “making music with body” (centre in Figure 1). The participants found that they could make music effectively using their own bodies. One of the stereotyped prejudices could be that music is comprised of singing and instrumental sounds, such as piano, guitar and recorder in a music class.

“ ... I’ve learned we can create music with the whole of our bodies, not only by clapping hands or with the voice.”

From the data, the seven categories were generated. Each category embraced the contents of creative music making which the participants experienced in the workshop and included their perceptions of the musical activities. Also, some general educational perspectives were revealed from their self-reports.

Discussion and Conclusion

Data revealed that the non-music specialist, NMES' perceptions of their own experiences through the workshop on creative music making. The most frequent words (top 5) were categorised into the component of "enjoyable approaches in music education" and it mainly contains the activity using rhythm. The NMES specialists were highly likely to perceive that playing rhythms with their bodies is an enjoyable activity for many people, without a technical barrier, although the workshop contains other activities focusing on melody and harmony. They learned to play each rhythm separately and then made layers using the rhythms they had played, including improvisational ideas. Despite the fact that three rhythmic patterns were played and layered together, none of the participants reported that it was confusing or difficult. In contrast, they found it difficult singing a single note within a three note chord. There was a perceived gap between these two activities in terms of musical technical difficulty. There could be two main reasons for this. One reason would be related to

the features of each of the musical elements. Rhythm is thought to be a more primitive and primary musical element compared to harmony (Cowell, 2004). In most educational resources, studying rhythm is introduced to pupils before studying harmony. Rhythm and harmony embody different levels of musical complexity and therefore activities with rhythm could be more simple and more accessible, which enabled the NMES specialists to feel that they 'are able to' play and make music. The other reason could be the process of producing sound. In the activity with rhythm, they learned every single rhythm, then layered what they had learned. As a result, layered rhythmic patterns were created. However, the opposite process was required in the activity with the chords. The harmonies of the chord progression were demonstrated and introduced first. Then, the NMES were asked to choose a note they liked in each chord. When everyone chose and sang one note for each chord, the harmonies of the proposed chord progression were created. Thus, it could be suggested that the activity with rhythm was more like a "bottom-up" process of creative music making and the activity with chords was more like a "top-down" process. Also, as the NMES did not have much musical expertise, some of them found it difficult to hear and identify the individual notes of a chord by ear. Particularly, they did not have much confidence singing a different note from the others or arranging their singing in a chord. The lack of confidence in showing their creative ideas in the activity could lead us to conclude that they all gravitated towards the easiest choice, namely singing the same note as the others. From these observations, it could

be thought that a bottom-up process of learning as a small step with primitive musical elements would be easier and could make them feel more secure for music making. Additionally, it suggests that fundamental psychological states, such as confidence and security, could support their positive approach to and attempts to further participate in creative musical activities.

In relation to this aspect, one important role of creative music making in this study was to broaden the understanding of music held by most students, including NMES. They may believe that music is something which is played from a score, should be readable as a score, should be structured with technical knowledge, should be played by instruments and should be sung with a beautiful voice. This conventional understanding of music leads to the perception that 'music is special' (c.f. Mills, 1989; Hennessy, 2000; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). However, in this study, the NMES found that they could create music using only their bodies and voices. Some students were motivated to utilise these music activities outside music classes as general activities when they become teachers in the future. It could be said that their experiences brought them a new understanding of music, made them perceive music as less challenging and enabled them to expand their existing understanding of music, which could possibly change their stereotyped conventional understandings of music itself.

From this case study, we can suggest that, not only are there musical benefits to learning creative music making, but also that broader, general educational benefits for the

NMES were revealed. As improvisational approaches require concentration, prompt reactions and active engagement in the activity, the NMES realised the value of applying these approaches as a vital technique for classroom management. It is crucial that NMES acquire general teaching ideas from music teaching. Generalist teachers usually teach not only music, but all subjects. Therefore, fundamental educational skills which are adaptable for all subject teaching and classroom management are needed. Some improvisational approaches would be beneficial in a variety of educational settings in order to draw pupils' attention to their teachers or for engagement in learning. It was fascinating that, in their creative musical learning, the NMES specialists discovered a way to use this as a general educational technique to get pupils to engage in an activity. They found it applicable not only in music teaching, but also in general educational settings and were motivated to utilise this approach when they become teachers in the future in various educational settings.

Implications for higher education

This research study could suggest the value of these approaches to higher education, as it revealed positive possibilities to change non-music specialist teachers' conventional understanding of music and its application in the classroom. Russel-Bowie (2010) stressed the importance of higher education in order "to empower and encourage preservice teachers to develop their personal confidence and competence in music" (p.85). Part of the roles and

responsibilities of higher education in teacher training could be to expand students' comprehension of music education and reduce apprehensions and feelings of inadequacy about teaching music. From this research study, it can be concluded that it would be beneficial for NMES to be able to begin using creative music making with fewer technical barriers and alter any mental barriers they may have toward teaching music. Successful experiences could help them to break the perceived barrier of their level of musical ability and would contribute to developing their confidence in the creation of music. If the teacher trainees can feel that they are able to make music by themselves in enjoyable ways, these successful experiences could contribute to their confidence in utilising musical activities for teaching in the classroom and could develop a different understanding of music. If there are enough opportunities for experiences which raise the students' confidence in music and for learning various activities for wider musical understanding, creative music making in primary school education may be less challenging for generalist teachers.

For non-music specialist teachers, learning new ideas for creative music making could contribute to expanding not only their musical knowledge for teaching music, but may contribute to acquiring also general educational ideas about how to lead pupils in a classroom. Learning something new often has the power to change the students' perspectives on musical understanding. In this study, it was revealed that new styles of music teaching and creative music making were informative for and beneficial to the non-music specialists. It brought

them opportunities to re-think music itself and music education, and to explore wider educational practices. The student teachers learned about the process of creating music, and how to elicit important techniques for leading pupils and creating an enjoyable learning environment. Particularly, the students who felt technical barriers for conventional musical teaching needed to have an alternative way to teach music confidently. Through the successful experiences of creating music with fewer technical barriers, the non-music specialists also learned how to make music and then reflect upon how they achieved it. It was also an opportunity to compare these techniques with the teaching they had received in their music class while they were still students in school. Further they were able to reflect upon their personal musical experiences and think about their future vision as a teacher of music. Experiences with new ideas of creative music making could give generalist teachers a chance to develop their own ideas, both musically and educationally.

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