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Facilitating Elemental Composition in an Orff Classroom

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

This study sought to gain an understanding of how the programming and pedagogical decisions of an Orff teacher impact on the success of a group of children in composing in an elemental style. Orff-Schulwerk is a child-centred approach to music education, which uses songs, dances, rhymes, clapping games, poetry and stories from the child's world as the basis of music and movement activities. Carl Orff, originator of the approach, called this music and movement activity "elemental" – basic, unsophisticated, concerned with the fundamental building blocks of music and movement.

This self-study project focused on two questions: 1. What pedagogical decision-making facilitated student achievement of the music programme learning objectives? 2. What activity design factors facilitated student achievement of the music programme learning objectives? To answer these questions, a programme of work was planned and implemented with a group of sixteen Year 5 and 6 students. The students worked sequentially with a range of Orff processes and media before embarking on their own compositions. Data were collected through four methods: a personal reflective journal, video recordings of two sessions, the observations of two critical friends and a focus group made up of five students, randomly selected from the participants who were interviewed at the mid- and end-point of the programme. An inductive, thematic approach was used to analyse the data. Themes emerging from an analysis of journal reflections were compared and contrasted with themes emerging from an analysis of critical friend observations and focus group interviews.

This study found that the most successful pedagogical strategies that facilitated successful outcomes for this group of students were: creating a safe and supportive environment; facilitation of collaborative learning; encouraging and empowering the children to make connections to, and draw on, their previous learning; facilitating opportunities for in-depth reflection by the peer group and the students themselves; providing constructive feedback and feed-forward; the provision of sufficient time and opportunity; the use of humour; teacher

modelling: ensuring the aims and expectations are clear and managing classroom behaviour.

In investigating the general nature of activities, this study found that the most successful were those that: explored Orff media and utilised Orff pedagogy; energised and focussed the participants; involved the children in practical music making where they were using their whole bodies to sing, move and play; were scaffolded and allowed children to enter at a level that was comfortable for them; had clear links to both the short and long-term goals; and made links to children's lives and experiences. The specific activities that the students found most successful were those that explored the pentatonic scale and provided opportunities for improvisation and the playing activities, with both body and untuned percussion.

The study was limited to a small group of children in a high-decile school that was well resourced. All students except one had a strong musical background with some instrumental skills. Results may have been different with a cohort of students from a lower decile school, who may not have had the musical background that this group had.

Key words: Orff Schulwerk, composition, elemental, pedagogy, activity design

**Dedicated to my wonderful Dad who has always been
such an inspiration and who taught me that there are no
limits to learning.**

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Facilitating Elemental Composition in an Orff Classroom

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study sought to gain an understanding of how the programming and pedagogical decisions of an Orff teacher impact on the success of a group of children in composing in an “elemental” style” (Orff, 1963b). Because this was a self-study project, my investigation had a particular emphasis on the pedagogical and activity design decisions I made that were a catalyst or an obstacle to the students’ ability to meet the learning outcomes of the programme.

My personal interest in this topic has arisen from my passion for, and interest in, music education at the early childhood and primary level. I began learning recorder at the age of 6 and flute at the age of 10, both of which I carried through to diploma level. After leaving secondary school, I trained as a primary-school teacher with music as my specialist option. As a result, I found myself in specialist music jobs in primary and intermediate schools. When my own children were young, I had a break from classroom teaching and began to run pre-school music groups, which ignited my interest in music education at this age.

After a brief return to primary teaching, I gained a position as music and movement lecturer in the Early Childhood Programme at the College of Education. This began a hugely important learning journey in my life because, as well as teaching music and movement, I was given a range of other courses to teach. In particular, a course titled “Fostering Creativity” gave me a unique opportunity to investigate my own beliefs about creativity and to plan and implement a programme to support students in their understandings about creativity in young children. At the same time I was also finishing my undergraduate degree in Education and was relating what I was learning about creativity through my research and teaching to theories of child development. I became more and more convinced about the importance of providing multiple opportunities for the fostering of creativity in young children.

After ten years lecturing in Early Childhood, I took on the role of primary music advisor in the Canterbury region, right at the time when *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000) was being introduced into schools. This role demanded that I be on the cutting edge of changes in Arts education and have a clear understanding of how the learning objectives could be met. This Curriculum placed the creative aspect of the Arts primarily under the Developing Ideas strand:

In this strand, students draw on their experiences and perspectives to develop and refine musical ideas. They develop an awareness of different sounds and the potential of sound for resourcing and generating ideas and for communicating feeling...Students draw on their developing knowledge to inform their compositions, arrangements, and improvisations. (p. 54)

This document guided much of my work as an advisor and encouraged me to not only reflect more deeply on the importance of providing rich music experiences that fostered creativity in children, but to work with teachers to give them non-threatening pathways that would empower them to work creatively in music with their students.

Around this time I was approached by a Christchurch community music organisation, The Muse, and asked if I would be interested in taking Christoph Maubach, at that time a senior lecturer in music education in Melbourne, around some local primary schools to work with students using some basic Orff processes. That week changed my life! I was so excited by the simple processes that Christoph used with the students and how engaged they were in music making that I was committed to Orff Schulwerk from that point on. An encounter with Susie Davies-Splitter, another Melbourne-based Orff educator, later in the same year confirmed my belief that this was an approach I wanted to pursue further.

From there, I went on to do a Level 1 and 2 training course in Australia and my interest in, and commitment to, the Orff Schulwerk approach was well and truly cemented. When the opportunity came up for me to participate in the very first Orff Schulwerk paper at Waikato University, I jumped at the chance. I then went on to complete a post-graduate diploma in music education by completing the

three Orff papers and the compulsory research methods paper.

As part of the assessment in these papers, I had the opportunity to participate in some animated and in-depth discussions around a variety of issues related to Orff Schulwerk. These discussions gave me the opportunity to debate and share ideas around the pedagogical principles of the approach. One of the most interesting topics of these discussions was elemental music. I was really challenged by the task of defining the term and linking this definition with the concept of elemental composition. What did elemental composition look like? How did it differ from other composition approaches? How would I go about teaching it in a primary context? These questions led directly to my research topic.

The Orff Schulwerk approach to music education has contributed significantly to my development as a school music teacher and professional development advisor. By engaging with Orff Schulwerk pedagogy and processes, I wanted to show how this approach to music education places a strong emphasis on the child at the centre, the teacher's role and the importance of practical engagement and creativity, including composition. Elemental music is at the heart of the Orff approach and, by bringing it to the forefront of the composition process, I wanted to show how it inspires confidence, and is a source of motivation for young children engaged in composition.

There were two main questions that guided my self-study:

1. What pedagogical decision-making facilitated student achievement of the music programme learning objectives?
2. What activity design factors facilitated student achievement of the music programme learning objectives?

To answer these questions, it was essential that I planned and implemented a programme of work that would ensure the students had a range of knowledge and skills that they could draw on for their compositions. The students needed to work, in a sequential way, with a range of Orff processes and media before embarking on their own compositions.

Burton and Karoda (1981) reinforce the idea that creativity does not occur in a vacuum, but will only flourish when students have a wide range of knowledge and skills to bring to their creative process. Creativity is “a process of combining known factors (knowledge, skills) into new relationships to produce a new result – a new product, a new way of thinking and perceiving, a new way of performing” (p viii).

In considering the context in which I was working, it was important that the programme of work I implemented had clear links to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). In this document, the opening statement in “The Arts” sets out the guidelines:

In music education, students work individually and collaboratively to explore the potential of sounds and technologies for creating, interpreting and representing musical ideas. As they think about and explore innovative sound and media, students have rich opportunities to further their own creative potential (p 21).

This statement encourages the music teacher in a primary school to implement a programme of music learning that provides multiple opportunities for young children to explore sound, discover ways they can manipulate it, improvise and create with it.

The Arts achievement objectives also provide a framework for composition in our primary schools under the Developing Ideas strand. At Levels One and Two, the DI strand encourages students to “explore and express sounds and musical ideas, drawing on personal experience, listening and imagination” and to “explore ways to represent sound and musical ideas.” At Level Three, students are encouraged to take it one step further: “express and shape musical ideas, using musical instruments, and technologies in response to sources of motivation” and to “represent sound and musical ideas in a variety of ways.” The wording of these achievement objectives presents teachers with a challenge, and also a commitment, to ensuring students are given multiple opportunities to create through and with music.

However, despite this emphasis, New Zealand national monitoring data, resulting from four National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) studies in 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 of year 4 and year 8 students, indicated little or no increase in composition progress. (Crooks, Smith & Whyte, 2008). Chapter 5 of the 2008 report presents the results of the music surveys, which sought information from students about their involvement in, and enjoyment of, music curriculum experiences at school.

In school music programmes, there appear to have been small increases in listening to music and dancing or moving to music. Enjoyment of the activities has been maintained or slightly increased across the last 12 years, except for a small decline in enjoyment of singing. Opportunities to make up (compose) music seem to be very infrequent” (p. 4).

During my time as a music adviser in primary music in schools and national facilitator for primary music, I was somewhat dejected at the quality of music programmes in our junior classes in Aotearoa. With some very notable exceptions, most schools were satisfied with some singing, maybe some rhythm and beat exercises, and perhaps some playing on untuned percussion instruments. Another popular activity was “music appreciation” where students listened to a piece of music and reacted to it in some way, either in discussion or completing a related art or writing activity. Listening to music was an activity that teachers felt safe with - there was little expected in terms of preparation and musical knowledge and it was a passive activity that kept noise levels down and teachers within their comfort zone.

Even in schools where there were specialist music teachers, there were many activities being presented to children that were categorised under music but, in reality, were not promoting music learning at all. Activities such as creating posters of favourite bands, designing CD covers and music word-finds may have been good exercises in other curriculum areas such as research skills, visual art and literacy but certainly did not promote quality music learning.

As articulated in the NEMP findings, composition experiences throughout the primary years were rarely seen, being considered too threatening, too unattainable

and certainly too time consuming in an already stretched-to-the-limit curriculum.

This neglect of the composition process, and its importance in the musical education of a child, is reinforced by Kaschub and Smith (2009b):

We regularly engage in three dimensions of musicality - creation, performance and reception - but the creation aspect that is so easily observed in children's daily activities is often overlooked in educational settings. Yet, it is in the act of creating, or making something completely new and original to ourselves, that we evidence our capacity to shape, manipulate, and reveal our musical understandings. (para. 8.)

Webster (1996) is critical of the emphasis school music programmes place on aspects of music education such as the ability to read music, giving multiple public performances and students winning prizes at solo and ensemble contests and that these are sometimes considered an indicator of a teacher's success. "Of course, this is nonsense, for without the understanding about music that comes from thinking in sound while engaged in creating it, all is lost" (p. 11). Glover (2000) agrees: "Children's independent compositional abilities are too easily undermined when music education places value on performing and listening at the expense of improvising and composing" (p. 2).

With the reduction of hours in music education in pre-service teacher training and the demise of the music advisor roles in New Zealand Colleges of Education, it is clear that ways must be found to support teachers to confidently implement successful programmes of work that result in quality improvisation and composition experiences for all children. My hope, in sharing my programme of work and results from this study, is that teachers will be empowered to plan and implement similar experiences with confidence and enthusiasm.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Composition in primary schools

Children are capable of a great deal as composers, if enough is expected of them, and if the tasks they are set are not so narrow as to constrain them (Mills, 2005, p. 40)

This section begins with a review of the literature on the importance of encouraging and enhancing the creative development of children and, in particular, how the goal of fostering creativity is threaded throughout The New Zealand Curriculum. It will consider the importance of young children having a wide range of skills and knowledge to bring to the creative process, discuss a rationale for including composition experiences in the primary classroom and the role composition plays in developing musical understandings. In light of the fact that this project has been a self-study, the role the teacher plays in fostering composition in young children will also be discussed.

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) sets as its vision for our education system a commitment to develop young people who are “confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners” (p.8). The importance of creativity in upholding this vision is emphasised. “Our vision is for young people ... who will be creative, energetic and enterprising” (p. 8). The Curriculum also sets out the values that are to be encouraged, modelled and explored in a school setting and, in this section, it emphasises the importance of innovation, inquiry and curiosity. “Students will be encouraged to value...innovation, inquiry, and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively” (p. 10). Following on from the values, the Curriculum identifies five key competencies that are considered important capabilities for living and lifelong learning, ‘Thinking’, ‘Using language, symbols and texts’, ‘Managing self’, ‘Relating to others’ and ‘Participating and contributing.’ The importance of providing opportunities for creativity is given emphasis under the Thinking competency. “Thinking is about using creative, critical, and meta-cognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas” (p. 14).

Jones and Robson (2008) provide support to the notion that education in our schools must encourage and enhance the creative development of our young people in order to meet the future needs of society. “The successful individual will require the ability to think and act in a creative manner” (p. 65). They highlight the challenge of striking a balance between the teaching of skills and knowledge and encouraging innovation. The processes that individuals are engaged in as they are being creative are described as “using imagination, pursuing purposes, being original and judging value” (NACCCE, 1999, cited in Jones & Robson, 2008, p. 67). Jones and Robson (2008) also emphasise the importance of allowing time for these phases to occur and list the key characteristics of any creative process as being purposeful, imaginative, valuable and original.

Craft et al (2006, cited in Craft et al, 2008) reinforce the importance of the imagination and originality in their definition of creative learning describing it as...

...significant imaginative achievement as evidenced in the creation of new knowledge as determined by the imaginative insight of the person or persons responsible and judged by appropriate observers to be both original and of value as situated in different domain contexts. (p. xxi)

Smith’s (1966) general definition of creativity emphasises the importance of the prior knowledge and experiences people bring to the creative process. “Creativity is sinking down taps into our past experiences and putting these selected experiences into new patterns, new ideas, new products” (p. 4).

In a music context, creativity is expressed through improvisation and composition experiences. The important role composition experiences play, not just in children’s musical development but also in the development of their personal creativity, is referred to by Paynter (2000): “I have long believed that all school pupils should be encouraged to compose music, not only because it is an essential area of musical education but also because it benefits the general development of imagination and inventiveness” (p. 6). Jones and Robson (2008) also reinforce the value of composition as a means of expressing feelings and emotions:

Improvisation and composition are seen as an active and practical application for creative thought, a medium through which imagination can become a reality, and a means by which ideas may be put into action. Creative abilities require a practical application for development to occur: listening and responding to music, performing music and in particular creating and composing music are all ways of giving form to thoughts, feelings and emotions. (p. 65).

Other writers identify composition as a way of allowing children to explore their emotional and intellectual capacities. (Archer, 2005; Kaschub & Smith, 2009a; Veloso, Carvalho & Mota, 2010). “Beyond the development of skills, attitudes, and preferences, the study of music composition allows children to explore their innate emotional and intellectual capacities within and through an artistic frame” (Kaschub & Smith, 2009a, p. 4).

There is widespread support in the literature for the argument that, in order to be creative in any field, children and adults need a range of experience, conceptual understanding and skills to bring to their creativity (Archer, 2005; Burnard, 1995; Kaschub & Smith, 2009a; Mills, 1991). Burnard’s (1995) study into task motivation in composition showed that “increased motivation may result when students are allowed the opportunity to draw on their own experience in music making” (p. 44). Kaschub & Smith (2009a) discuss how, in creating music, a composer “draws upon all prior music learning to construct works that uniquely represent perspectives on and in music” (p. 7).

Smith’s (1966) ‘sinking taps’ definition has significance when it is related to the *Model of creative thinking in music* (Webster, 1990) which demonstrates that, in order to be creative, children must have a range of skills, information, knowledge and dispositions (i.e. enabling skills) to “sink their taps into”. Webster (1990) reinforces this, linking divergent thinking to the creative process:

Divergent thinking requires the mind to survey its data banks for possible musical content, so the more that is in those banks, the better. It is impossible to expect individuals to think creatively if nothing is there with which to think creatively. (p. 24)

Elliott (2005) believes that successful creative development and composition depend on students having sufficient musical skills and understandings to be competent music-makers and composers.

Historically, school education programmes have focused more on producing outstanding performers than in involving all children in developing their abilities in composition (Graham, 1998; Jones & Robson, 2008; Kaschub & Smith, 2009a; Mills, 1991). However, according to Kaschub and Smith (2009a), the study of composition is a unique way of bringing together the full breadth of musical knowledge and skills that the children possess. Several writers reinforce this belief that composition is not an isolated activity, but an important means of helping students construct musical understanding (Elliot, 1995; Kaschub & Smith, 2009a; Paynter, 1992; Sessions, 1970).

The valuable role composition plays in broadening the experience of music and enhancing other areas of musical development such as listening and performing is another important reason found in the literature for providing quality composition experiences for young children. By participating in composition opportunities, students...

...begin to understand more deeply the intentionality of music, the idea that composers *mean* something, they add a new, deeper dimension to their musical understanding when they've used music to express their own ideas, emotions, and imaginations and enhance their critical listening skills and performance ability. (Brown, 2010)

In his study of twelve compositions, created by children between the age of eleven and fourteen, Loane (1984) suggested, "the assessment of music learning must be the assessment of musical creation itself" (p. 227). He maintained that children's musical thinking is embodied in their compositions.

Both Kaschub and Smith (2009a) and Webster (1996) present a rationale for composition, which asserts that children's appreciation and understanding of music as a human practice grows as they explore, improvise and create their own music and that, with each act of composition, children also learn how music works and how others react to their music.

The importance of the teacher's role in the composition process is emphasised by a range of writers (Burnard, 2009; Glover, 2000; Kaschub & Smith, 2009a; Mills, 2005; Richards, 1997). Wright (1991) discusses the changing view of the teacher's role – where once the teacher sat back and observed creativity take place, now there is a greater expectation that the teacher must play an active role in providing a range of experiences and opportunities for skill development. Seefeldt's (1987) study into the role of the teacher in the arts indicates that children's self-expression and artistic expression, their perceptual skills and their responsiveness to the environment can be improved when a teacher takes a more active role. According to Burnard (2009) teacher pedagogies that enable creativity include “allowing children choice and ownership of their learning, time for reflection, creating a stimulating environment and modelling creative action within a genuine partnership” (p. 5).

Both Glover (2000) and Webster (1996) discuss the importance of the teacher's role in helping the child composer to find their inner voice. Glover (2000), for example, emphasises the role of the teacher in helping children gain a sense of themselves as developing composers. “These are the early stages in finding a musical voice they can recognise as their own” (p. 74). She suggests that the teacher has a crucial role to provide stimulating and relevant musical experiences that will develop skills, understandings and ways of thinking and talking about music.

Elliott (1995) argues that creative achievement is a potential outcome of a music programme in which students learn competent musicianship, operate in a supportive environment that promotes risk-taking, are given constructive feedback and appraisal, and can devote sustained periods of time to creative endeavours and are allowed, taught and motivated to participate in a range of musical styles.

Amabile (1989) reinforces Elliot's view and describes environments that support creative expression as ones where time limits are removed, intrinsic motivation is highlighted, praise is not overused, children are encouraged to self-evaluate and adults provide a good balance between setting challenges and providing support.

The importance of supportive environments is also reinforced by Wiggins (2005):

The social environment of the classroom initially established by the teacher will affect students' comfort levels, feeling of ownership (of the instruments, of the learning situation, of the musical problem at hand, of their musical product), relationship with the teacher, relationship with peers, and general way of being in the classroom. (p. 35)

Burnard (2009) also discusses the importance of the teacher's role in providing spaces that...

...enable pupils to connect areas of experience in innovative and imaginative ways and promote: questioning and challenging; making connections and seeing relationships; envisaging what might be; playing with ideas and keeping options open; representing ideas in a variety of ways. (p. 4)

Task design is another important role of the teacher that needs to be considered. Burnard (1995), in her study, designed to look at the relationship between task design and students' experiences of composition, found that the nature of the compositional task impacted on the ways students related to composition and the musical outcome.

Choice of task may be a critical component when students, across a range of backgrounds, are required to complete common tasks. Students with advanced levels of formal tuition may require tasks that encourage experimentation, risk-taking and personal meaning. Students with less training may seek more guidance from tasks to ensure they are sufficiently secure yet challenged by the experience. (p. 45)

There are other aspects of the environment that need to be considered according to some writers. As well as being immersed in the concepts and skills they need, there must be an atmosphere of safety and trust where risk-taking is encouraged and mistakes are seen as learning opportunities (Brown, 2010; Richards, 1997).

The importance of positive teacher and student interactions in ensuring learning outcomes are met is considered fundamental by a number of authors writing on this subject (Burnard, 2009; Erion, 1996; Jalongo & Stamp, 1997, Mills, 2005; Paynter, 2000; Rohan, 2005). Giving specific feedback and feedforward to the

students ensures that the creative experiences are focused and purposeful and that the children are encouraged to develop and re-shape their ideas (Rohan, 2005). Both Mills (2005) and Paynter (2000) discuss the specific verbal modes teachers can use to respond to students' compositions: questioning, suggesting and encouraging. Gilpatrick (1996) expands on this by suggesting useful question openers such as "Can you show me another way to...?" "Where else can you...?" "Could you make that pattern with...?" (p. 18) and the teacher's main role at this stage is to ask open-ended questions that foster thinking and extend ideas.

There is considerable debate about setting parameters around children's composition tasks. On the one hand, Frazee (2006) is quite clear that "you will want to set careful parameters for your young composers. Perhaps they will be working only with pentachordal or hexatonic melodies or they might be asked for a diatonic setting after they have completed their first hexatonic example" (p. 51). On the other hand, Mills (2005) and Erion (1996) argue against insisting that students should be expected to stick to specific stimuli or parameters, asserting that having to stick to teacher-imposed limits could prevent composers from developing compositions considerably more inspired than the teacher has envisaged. Webster (1996) goes as far as to say "constantly insisting that young composers or improvisers work with strict limits of timbral, tonal and rhythmic materials so they will have "safe" sounding music is malpractice" (p. 11).

Amabile (1989), Burnard, (2009), Erion (1996), Jones and Robson (2008), Locke (2012), Mills (2005) and Paynter (2000) all identify the importance of allowing sustained periods of time for students to work and re-work their compositions, allowing time for the process of exploring, experimenting, listening and refining in order for students to gain satisfaction from their success as composers. Van Ernst (1993), in a study of the compositional processes of a group of Year 10 girls, suggests that "an open ended approach to the time available to complete a composition" (p. 35) is an important condition to support the composition process. On the other hand, in a study of a collaborative composition project with a group of Year six students, Locke (2012) found that, although there was less time to establish foundational composition skills, the time constraint did mean there was a "high degree of urgency and focus in bringing the project to completion" (p. 14).

Along with the importance of allowing plenty of time for composition processes, is an acceptance of the need to provide many opportunities for exploration and experimentation. Gilpatrick (1996) refers to this important phase as “the meat and potatoes” of creating and that, during this time, the children “build a repertoire of possibilities to draw from later” (p. 18).

In their report on a composition project with a group of New Zealand primary students, Locke and Locke (2011a) asked students to describe how they went about making up their own music and their answers demonstrate how important this exploration phase is. In their questionnaires the students used wordings such as ‘played around’ or ‘fiddling.’ Many of the group talked about the importance of the experimentation phase and how they played with, and considered, a range of options before settling on an outcome.

It is clear from the literature that composition experiences have an important role to play, not just in supporting children’s musical development, but also in fostering creative thought and action in all areas of their development.

2.2 Orff Schulwerk/ Elemental Music

“The Schulwerk was not my discovery. It had been with us – in the air, so to speak – all along. (Orff, 1978)

Whenever a passionate Orff Schulwerk teacher is asked to explain the meaning of Orff Schulwerk, he/she is faced with a challenge. How do you describe it in a way that encapsulates its essence? Shamrock (1997) suggests that “a precise definition of this approach is difficult to formulate” (p. 41) and Goodkin (2002) and Jorgenson (2010) both declare that the definition is too large to fit into a single sentence but must be experienced in order to be understood.

One of the most fundamental misconceptions is that Orff Schulwerk is a method for teaching music (Perlmutter, 2009). Orff Schulwerk is, instead, an approach, a philosophy, a way of teaching and learning which has much scope for adaptation to any cultural context (Goodkin, 2002; Jorgenson, 2011; Orff, 1963b). In a

similar interpretation the authors, Novello and Marquis (1967), refer to it as an “educational principle” (p. 19). Orff (1963b) himself claimed:

Those who look for a method or ready-made system are rather uncomfortable with the Schulwerk; people with artistic temperament and a flair for improvisation are fascinated by it. They are stimulated by the possibilities inherent in a work, which is never quite finished, in flux, constantly developing. (p. 69)

In the introduction to the seminal text, *Elementaria*, by Keetman (1970), Werner Thomas reinforces Orff’s claim, making the following key statement: “Working with Orff Schulwerk does not entail the study and performance of melodies and songs with ready-made accompaniments, but rather a continuous *ars inveniendi*, a spontaneous art of discovery with a hundred ways and a thousand possible structures” (p. 13).

Burkart (1970) supports the idea of this continuous discovery as being an essential feature of Orff Schulwerk by arguing that process “could quite conceivably and validly be the highest form of content” (p. 15) and that the main thrust of Orff Schulwerk is in the process and not the product. Goodkin (2003) expands on the importance of process by emphasising that the process itself should be an act of beauty and describes the Schulwerk as being “a dynamic process in which the means are as aesthetic as the end” (p. 11). Maubach (2006) reinforces this belief that the process is equally important as the product asserting that “the responsibility for aesthetic quality is high and must be applied both to the chosen content and the proposed learning outcomes” (para. 2).

The artistry inherent in Orff Schulwerk and emphasised here by Goodkin and Maubach is fundamental to the approach. “The Schulwerk is an artistic model that promotes person centred and creative music learning” (Maubach, 2006, para. 1).

The importance of adapting the approach to the cultural and social context in which it is situated is emphasised by a range of writers: Banks, 1982; Frazee, 1987; Kugler, 2011; Mittleman 1969; Orff, 1963b; Steen, 1992. Frazee (1987) discusses Orff’s use of rhymes, proverbs and poetry from the German language to

teach the rhythms of that culture and explains that, because he couldn't find material in the pentatonic scale, he wrote his own. As his approach spread throughout the world Orff emphasised the importance of teachers from all cultures finding or writing their own material that had relevance to their children. Banks (1982) also refers to this, emphasising that much of the Orff Schulwerk literature is sourced from street games and chants that children learn from each other. "Orff songs are collected locally and reflect the local environment as well as the feeling tone of the children. Orff teachers are trained to compose music and accompaniments that are meaningful to their students" (p. 42).

Without doubt, there are features of the Orff approach, which are non-negotiable. Perhaps the best way to determine what these non-negotiable features are is to consider what an Orff classroom would look and sound like if an uninitiated teacher were to enter.

The first thing that this teacher will notice is that all the children in the room are participating (Goodkin, 2001; Orff, 1963b) and they are all involved and actively engaged in the creation and performance of music (Banks, 1982; Frazee, 1987; Goodkin, 2001; Jorgenson, 2011; Nash, 1964; Steen, 1992; Wuytack, 2007). "In Orff classrooms, all children are active and involved in part of the ensemble – moving, conducting, playing as well as singing...children are not passive observers" (Banks, 1982, p 43). Wuytack (2007) considers activity to be "the key to real enjoyment of a music experience" and believes that "children must feel and live the music vocally as well as instrumentally" (para. 3). In the opening sentence to her book, *Discovering Orff*, Jane Frazee (1987) has this to say: "Carl Orff's great gift is to children. In essence, that gift is a way of looking at music that deeply involves them in its creation, and thereby entails respect for their capabilities" (p. 9).

Many writers refer to the importance of fostering a sense of playfulness in an Orff classroom (Burgess, 2012; Goodkin, 2002; Kennedy, 1996; Maubach, 2006; Orff, 1932; Shamrock, 1995; Steen, 1992; Wuytack, 2007; Zook, 2012). Wuytack (2007) refers to this need for children to play as *pedocentry*:

Children have the need to play. They play with joy and gravity. The teacher has

to know the psychology of the child, his points of interest, his dreams, fantasies, feelings, his games, songs, rounds and dances, his language, nonsense syllables and his love of animals and nature. (para. 7)

In this classroom, then, the teacher will be building on the activities of children's play, the sounds and movements that they experience every day while they are interacting with the environment, the way they are re-shaping the things that are familiar to them (Shamrock, 1995).

Musical instruction for a child does not begin in the music lesson. Playtime is the starting point. One should not come to music – it should arise of itself. What is important is that the child should be allowed to play, undisturbed, expressing the internal externally. Word and sound must arise simultaneously from improvisatory, rhythmic play. (Orff, 1932, p. 68)

A keen observer in this Orff classroom will see children exploring Orff media - games, speech rhymes and poetry, songs, dances, body percussion and instruments (Goodkin, 2002; Shamrock, 1995). Frazee (1987) also includes listening as an important media in the Orff approach, stressing that if the listening task is relevant to the experience of the children, they will be much more willing to listen.

Children in this Orff classroom are likely to be playing games of all descriptions inside and outside the classroom. Goodkin (2002) suggests that through playing games, children will be clapping and stepping rhythms, reciting rhythmic chants, singing in a range of keys, moving together, creating their own actions and acting out stories and, most importantly, having fun while learning and exploring. Cole (1999) and López-Ibor (2005) add to the reasons for including games in the classroom programme, emphasising the value of games in preserving culture as they are handed down from one generation to the next. Another writer, Ramsay (1999), sees games, which develop important perceptual motor skills, as an essential pre-cursor to instrumental and movement work. Banks (1982) discusses the value of games to sensitize children's awareness of space, time, form, line, colour design and mood.

The use of speech as a starting point for creative music making is emphasised by several writers (Frazee, 1987, 2006; Goodkin, 2005; Keetman, 1970; Lange, 2005; López-Ibor, 2005; Shamrock, 1995; Thomas, 1969; Thresher, 1964). The importance of beginning with the rhymes and chants of the children's own culture is advocated by Goodkin (2005) and López-Ibor (2005). Thomas (1969) dedicates a whole article to the significance of the spoken word, beginning with children's names, moving onto the use of rhyme, song-texts and ballads as valuable starting points for music making. Shamrock (1995), Nykrin (2000) and Frazee (2006) all discuss the importance of using speech to provide opportunities for children to explore qualities of words and sounds, rhythm and pitch and poetic imagery. Orff (1958), Pratt (1999) and Goodkin (2002) emphasise the importance of focusing, not just on the utilitarian aspect of the speech, but paying attention to the sound of language. "See that each word is spoken in such a way that it becomes alive, and concentrate particularly on the sound of each word" (Orff and Keetman, 1958, p. 141). So the observer in our Orff class will hear children exploring the sounds, rhymes and rhythms of chants, poetry and proverbs, in particular those that have strong links to things children are interested in and know about.

One of the instruments that children carry with them at all times is their body. Several authors writing on the Orff approach emphasise the importance of providing multiple opportunities for children to use body percussion (or sound gestures as it is sometimes referred to) to explore all the different sounds their bodies can make through clapping, rubbing, slapping, stamping and finger-snapping (Frazee, 1987, 2006; Goodkin, 2002; Lange, 2005; Shamrock, 1995). Carl Sachs (1937, cited in Goodkin, 2002, p. 67), a mentor and friend to Orff, notes this about body percussion:

The original time beater is the stamping foot...to the dull stamping sound is added the sharper sound made by slapping the hand on some part of the body; thus the upper arm, the flanks, the abdomen, the buttocks and the thigh become musical instruments. (p. 177)

Untuned or non-melodic percussion instruments have a vital part to play in the Orff Schulwerk approach (Frazee, 1987; 2006; Goodkin, 2002; Gray 2002; Steen, 1992; Thresher, 1964). In *The Schulwerk*, Orff (1978) talks about the instruments

that were used in the early days of the Güntherschule – rattles, skin drums and tambours, castanets and triangles – and explains how he and his pupils spent many hours experimenting with new instruments and all the different ways sounds could be produced. Goodkin (2002) reinforces how valuable untuned percussion is, not just for its use in a rhythm band, but also for its ability to connect body, voice, movement and percussion in a musically satisfying way.

The instrumentarium is an important aspect of the Schulwerk. Orff (1963b) was determined to move away from the emphasis on piano music being used in physical education and wanted the students to be improvising and composing themselves: “I therefore did not want to train them on highly developed art instruments, but rather on instruments that were preferably rhythmic, comparatively easy to learn, primitive and unsophisticated” (p. 136). Orff (1978) and Goodkin (2002) both refer to this need Orff had of finding a different instrument that could be used to develop melodic and harmonic ideas. The serendipitous arrival of an African xylophone, sent by two Swedish puppeteer sisters, who thought he might enjoy exploring the possibilities of this instrument, was just the inspiration Orff needed. After finding someone who was prepared to build these instruments, the xylophone was added to the fast-growing instrumentarium. Metallophones, made in the same style as the xylophone but with metal bars, were added later.

Shamrock (1995) describes these instruments as “specially built keyboard percussion” that have removable bars placed over a box resonator. The joy and satisfaction children get from playing these instruments at a level that meets their needs is a particularly important aspect of the use of tuned percussion (Frazee, 1987; Goodkin, 2002). Banks (1982) expands on this idea by emphasising the beautiful sounds these instruments make without the necessity for years of study and practice.

While some authors focus on the history of the instrumentarium, others place a strong emphasis on the importance of developing correct technique (Cole, 1998; Keetman, 1970) while others discuss the important musical understandings children gain from playing these instruments. Aspects such as pitch relationships,

pitch names, the concept that the longer the bar, the lower the sound, and the importance each individual contribution makes to the musical whole, are all valuable skills and understandings learned while playing barred percussion (Frazee, 1987; Goodkin, 2002; Lange, 2005; Steen, 1992).

Another instrument of the Orff instrumentarium, that the observer in this Orff classroom will see and hear being played, is the recorder. When he was contemplating what he could use as a melody instrument, Carl Orff went to his friend and mentor, Curt Sachs, who strongly recommended he use the recorder: “You should use recorders, then you will have what you need most ... a melody instrument to your percussion, the pipe to the drum” (Orff, 1978). Doug Goodkin (2002) advocates strongly for the use of the recorder in the Orff approach with seven reasons why the recorder should be introduced: the recorder is a melody instrument; the recorder has a unique timbre; the recorder is a wind instrument; the recorder is an authentic historical instrument; the recorder is an adaptable ethnic instruments; the recorder is portable; the recorder lends itself to music reading and the recorder is an important teacher’s tool. Other authors who refer to the value of the recorder in their writing are Gilpatrick (1997) who discusses how movement can be used to teach and reinforce the actions needed for recorder playing and Frazee (2006) who explores a possible curriculum for an Orff teacher to follow. Erion (1997) and Locke and Locke (2011a) discuss their use of the recorder as a composition tool, exploring its sound making potential with students.

Many writers consider the importance of integration with movement to be of prime importance in the Orff approach (Bevans, 1969; Goodkin, 2002; Keetman, 1970; Kugler, 2011; Orff, 1963b). In her seminal text, *Elementaria*, Keetman (1970) considers preserving and developing the unity between movement, dance and speech to be one of the main tasks of Orff Schulwerk. The importance of movement in fostering a physical response to music, becoming proficient in a range of locomotor and non-locomotor responses and facilitating self-expression are identified as important reasons for integrating movement into a programme (Frazee, 2006; Goodkin, 2002; Lange, 2005; Salmon, 1999).

A group of children in this typical class may be working together to learn some new steps for a folk dance. Although there is little mention of folk dance in the seminal material, Orff clearly states in the introduction to *Music for Children*, (Orff & Keetman, 1958), that “the traditional nursery rhymes and children’s songs were the obvious starting point for this work”. As Goodkin (2002) points out, “Why not include folk dances along with folk rhymes and folk songs?” (p. 39). As well as being a very effective way of fostering an awareness and feel for the beat, rhythm, phrase, melody and form in music, folk dancing also has some important social and cultural outcomes as children learn to work together to ensure the flow of the dance and to understand the way different cultures use dance as a means of celebration (Goodkin, 2002; Riley, 1999; Underhill, 1999). Goodkin (2002) links learning through folk dance to Howard Gardner’s (1983) model of multiple intelligences, articulating ways that folk dancing, as well as building musical skills, also supports learning through logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinaesthetic, linguistic, intra and interpersonal means.

In this Orff classroom, children might also be engaged in creative movement, exploring space, time, energy, body parts and relationships and responding to sound through movement (Frazee, 1987, 2006). Salmon (1999) talks about the body as being “an instrument of understanding” (p. 11) and how creative movement develops an awareness of self and others and is a “vehicle of artistic expression that can be completely natural and individualized” (p. 11). Goodkin (2002) sums up the synergy between music and movement in the Orff approach in a succinct sentence: “Music is sounded movement, movement is danced sound” (p. 17). Therefore, in this classroom, the observer will see music and movement integrated naturally and seamlessly.

Some authors use the term Orff pedagogy as a way to explain the essential elements and processes that children in this classroom will be engaged in (Frazee, 1987; Maubach, 2006). Frazee (1987) uses the term to describe the processes of imitation, exploration, literacy and improvisation. Shamrock (1995) uses similar terms, although she excludes literacy and includes creation and refers to them as learning processes.

This raises the issue of the importance of musical literacy in the Schulwerk. There is widespread support in the literature for the belief that the use of notation is an aspect of learning that can be integrated at every stage of the learning process (Calantropio, 2005; Goodkin, 2002; Keetman, 1970). Some writers place a very strong emphasis on the importance of experience with sound preceding notation, in the same way that a child learns to talk before they can write (Frazee, 1987; Orff, 1932; Shamrock, 1995; Steen, 1992). Steen (1992) expands on this and talks about the importance of student motivation giving purpose to the learning of notation – that they are “motivated to master these skills when they realise they will be able to preserve what they and the class create” (p. 6). This belief about students’ motivation is reinforced by Frazee (1987), when she quotes Orff speaking at a Toronto Symposium in 1962:

It is not difficult to convince a child of the need for notation, particularly if continuous improvisation creates the desire to keep a record of the melodies invented. In the long run it is not possible to make progress without knowing notation (p. 30).

So, in this classroom, some children may be working together to produce a graphic score for the music they have created and others may be working with the teacher to write down a melody they have been working on using conventional notation to ensure the melody can be repeated the next time music class comes around.

Imitation is described by Shamrock (1995) as a process that involves repeating what is heard or seen. Frazee (1987) goes on to divide imitation into three categories: simultaneous imitation, where the “imitated response happens at virtually the same time as the cue” (p. 26), remembered imitation, also known as echo response, where the children “repeat a gesture, a sound, a rhythm pattern, or a melodic motive exactly as given by the teacher” (p. 27), and overlapping imitation where students imitate the previous pattern while a new one is being presented. Shamrock (1995) considers the importance of imitation as the transmission medium for many of the world’s traditional musics and its use in the Schulwerk for teaching set pieces.

Both Frazee (1987) and Shamrock (1995) discuss exploration as a process of discovery through experimentation where students are encouraged to “play” with the elements of music and experiment with different sound sources. Steen (1992) discusses the many forms exploration can take: reapplying previous knowledge, transferring knowledge to a different context, comparing all the possibilities, altering elements to achieve a different effect and thinking about the music as they listen and perform.

The children in this classroom will have multiple opportunities for the development and growth of their creativity through both improvisation and composition experiences. There are many authors who place the role improvisation and composition play at the very heart of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy (Frazee, 1987, 2006; Goodkin, 2001; Maubach, 2006; Solomon, 2000). Frazee (1987) points out that imitation and exploration are important steps towards improvisation and, because improvisation leads to the invention of new ideas, it is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their musical independence. Other authors emphasise that creative experiences should not be a ritual for just a gifted few, but must be the daily work of all our children (Banks, 1982; Gilpatrick, 1996).

In considering the importance of the fundamental processes of imitation, exploration and improvisation in the Orff Schulwerk approach, the concept of simple to complex is emphasised by a range of authors (Goodkin, 2001; Maubach, 2006; Steen, 1992; Thresher, 1964). Keetman (1970) epitomizes this important concept in *Elementaria*, by setting out the rhythmic and melodic building bricks that children need to be familiar with, and have had the experience of, before they are able to move on to more complex exploration and creation of music.

So what are the techniques, the musical tools that the children in this Orff classroom will be utilising? Frazee (1987) refers to the terms and stylistic principles of the Schulwerk as Orff Theory and, while acknowledging that the list is by no means comprehensive, she discusses the use of ostinati, melody, pedals and borduns and other accompaniments as being fundamental to the Orff approach. Maubach (2006) adds to this list including drone, “sound carpet”,

tremolo, glissando and the important concepts of text to rhythm and body percussion to instrument. Many other authors (Frazee, 2006; Goodkin, 2002; Steen, 1992; Thresher, 1964) give clear and practical information about the meaning and use of these important tools.

A term that is central to the Orff Schulwerk approach, and brings together all of the above characteristics, is “elemental music”. A concise and clear definition of the term has always been a challenge and a matter of some debate and confusion for Orff educators worldwide (Wild, 2004). Carl Orff (1963) asks and answers the question with, perhaps, the most well-known definition:

What then is elemental music? Elemental music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance and speech. It is music that one makes oneself, in which one takes part not as a listener, but as a participant. It is unsophisticated, employs no big forms and no big architectural structures, and it uses small sequence forms, ostinato and rondo. Elemental music is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and experience it and suitable for the child. (p. 144)

What is common to all the definitions, and not disputed, is the child-centred nature of elemental music. Mary Shamrock (1986) describes elemental music as music whose material is “simple, basic, natural and close to the child’s world of thought and fantasy” (p. 42). Brigitte Warner (cited in Wild, 2004), in describing Orff-Schulwerk as elemental, explains that it speaks to a child “in a language he understands and is able to respond to instinctively” (para. 7). The simplicity of elemental music is reinforced by Calantropio (2005) who describes elemental music as “music that has been stripped of intellectual complexities, closely related to speech and movement, and draws its inspirations from those human impulses that are common to all people” (p. 3).

This integration of rhythm, speech and movement and their relationship to elemental music, discussed here by Calantropio, appears to be another aspect writers on the subject do agree on. Warner (cited in Wild, 2004) refers to the “inherent use of rhythm and movement, the unity of speech, drama, sound and movement with rhythm as the vital force...” (para. 7) and Maubach (2012)

identifies the connection between music, dance and speech as a core aspect of the Orff praxis: "...for instance, dance movement can give rise to music. Poetry or text may evoke dance, in turn, this may again inspire musical creation" (p. 40). Wild (2004) describes elemental music as "pattern-based music built on natural speech and body rhythms, familiar melodic patterns, and simple forms that can be learned, created, understood, and performed without extensive technical or theoretical musical training" (para. 5).

Keller (1963), in his attempt to define elemental music, takes us right back to the two meanings of the word element: "that of being indivisible and fundamental as well as central, the centre-point" (p. 118). He considers a definition of elemental music from both these perspectives (fundamental and central) by defining elemental music as music whose "basic material" comes into the foreground and functions as a centre of energy for musical development. He goes on to break down his definition by defining what "basic material" means in musical terms as at least three elemental processes, rhythmic, melodic and harmonic. He asserts that elemental music does not have to be written down but comes to life as it is played.

Calantropio (2005) agrees with Keller that elemental music is music that is easily separated into its component elements and parts, and is drawn from the basic elements of rhythm, harmony, melody and form. Another author who perceives elemental music as related to the elements of music is Tim Purdum (2012) who encourages Orff teachers to use the four basic elements of melody, rhythm, harmony and form to analyse a piece of music to see if it qualifies as elemental.

Simplifying elemental music down into analysis of the elements appears to me to be where the tension lies in formulating a clear definition. This rigid approach to the analysis of the music fails to take into account other important characteristics of elemental music such as the simplicity referred to above, its role in nurturing the spirit and, most importantly its integration with elemental movement. Hepburn (2012) reminds us that it was the Expressionist Dance Movement in the 1920s that "directly influenced the improvisatory nature at the core of the Schulwerk

pedagogy through the merging of elemental dance with elemental music at the [Günther] school” (p. 13).

Günther (1962) herself identifies the important role that elemental music and dance experiences play in nourishing the spirit:

The child should accompany his/her rhythms, as they are danced, with his/her own musical possibilities. In order to provide child-appropriate possibilities, so desperately needed for spiritual growth, the original indivisibility that for all humans in the elemental sense was once a fact of life, should again be the goal in children's dance and music making, which for all humans in the elemental sense was once a fact. (p. 18)

Finally, Barbara Haselbach (cited in Hepburn, 2012) reminds us that elemental music “seeks to be a human experience” (p. 13).

Orff Schulwerk aims to address the whole person so as to stimulate and foster body, soul and mind through a creative process in which experience, action and comprehension condition each other. (p. 13)

2.3 Elemental Composition in the context of an Orff classroom

“Composition is, at its most elemental, a very natural activity for children” (Harding, 2012, p. 30).

In *The Schulwerk* by Carl Orff (1978), he describes in vivid detail the journey he and his students took through their exploration and discovery, and brings to life for us the extraordinarily creative experiences that they engaged in. He evokes a picture for us of the way they tried out various instruments, experimented with them, and explored different ways of creating sounds by stringing together stones, shells, nutshells and dried fruit. He shares with us the different ways they created sounds on the drum using a flat hand, an individual finger, the ball of the thumb or by striking the centre of the skin or the edge of the skin. For Orff these explorations were the genesis of elemental music making. “For my idea of developing an elemental music style, the percussion instruments, whose origins stretch back to earliest antiquity, had the most decisive significance” (Orff, 1978, p. 22).

Because my research question focused on elemental composition, I needed to consider how the definition of the term elemental music related to the art and process of elemental composition.

Much of the literature around elemental composition in an Orff classroom emphasises the fact that elemental composition is an activity available to all (Burgess, 2012; Harding, 2012; Keller, 1962; Purdum, 2012).

The ability to be creative in an elemental way is inherent and can be released, not only in every normal person, but also even in the mentally disturbed or those almost or completely incapable of logical thought...Material of this kind indicates the pre-logical and pre-intellectual nature of elemental artistic expression (Keller, 1962, p. 120).

Purdum (2012) expands on this idea by emphasising that “elemental music and arrangements represent the best way to involve all students in the creative and performing process and they break down the barriers that our society has created around being a musician” (p. 27).

It is not possible to discuss elemental composition without considering the importance of the exploration, imitation and improvisation that precede composition itself. All Orff teaching sits on a continuum with a progression through imitation, exploration and improvisation where students reach from what they know already into the new and unfamiliar. As we imitate, we play with the elements and use them in new ways to improvise and compose (Burgess, 2012; Erion, 1996; Shamrock, 1995).

Burgess (2012) discusses how elemental composition is a “natural extension of the playful approach of Orff Schulwerk” (p. 22) and emphasises how valuable the exploration stage is to support children’s compositional learning and to provide “critical exposure to the language of music and a necessary foundation for this elemental approach to composition” (p. 23). She views this playful exploration as the “heart of elemental composition” (p. 24) and as a stage of development where “students become musically conversant and grow expressively with the tools and elements of music” (p. 24). Orff (1932) talks about the importance of this stage,

describing how children “find melodies, short phrases that keep recurring and that seem to suggest themselves particularly to children” (p. 70).

According to Burgess (2012), imitation builds the musical skills and language that children need to bring to the composition process. Through imitating songs, chants, rhymes, and dances, children absorb important information about musical structures. Through imitation children also learn patterns and procedures and this type of learning enables teachers to “provide students with raw materials and tools for further creative development” (Gilpatrick, 1996, p. 18).

Improvisation is at the very heart of the Orff Schulwerk approach to music education and its role in the elemental composition process is crucial. Orff (1976) highlights its importance:

Spontaneous teaching that comes totally from improvisation is, and remains, an excellent starting point...it is a play of their imagination that can be achieved through the building-up of the most simple rhythms and melodies, drones and ostinati, with the inclusion of all possible kinds of instruments, and it is the imagination that should be awakened and trained by these means. (p. 131)

Erion (1996) draws attention to the discussion that can take place when students are reflecting on their improvisations and discusses how this process of critique involves the generation, selection and re-framing of students’ ideas. Frazee (1968) discusses the value of the Orff instrumentarium in facilitating improvisation and suggests that children who have had the experience of improvising on an instrument begin to understand the creative processes used by a composer.

In the summary of his article, *Wilhelm Keller’s way of improvising and composing*, Hauschka (2012) refers to Keller’s belief that “trying out and improvising with instruments and voice should stand at the beginning of the composing process” (p. 25). Burgess (2012) reinforces this: “Within the developmentally appropriate context of elemental theory in Orff Schulwerk, students can improvise with amazing skill, and through those experiences they can construct compositions with real meaning” (p. 24). Keller emphasises, though, that facilitating improvisation with children cannot be taken lightly:

Nothing may be less improvised by the teacher than lessons in improvisation with children! The teacher's primary task is preparation to find successful ways and means through which to stimulate the children's individual awareness and discovery of elemental music procedures. (p. 23)

Orff and his students spent many hours practising rhythmic improvisations using simple ostinati as the foundation. "Improvisation is the starting point for elemental music making. From the beginning we practised freely-made rhythmic improvisations for which simple ostinati served as foundation and stimulus" (Orff, 1978, p. 22). These simple ostinati could be used to accompany speech, poetry, song and instrumental improvisations, and created an abundance of opportunities for elemental improvisation.

The use of a range of different forms for fostering improvisation and composition is drawn attention to by a number of authors (Hauschka, 2012; Keller, 1962; Shamrock, 1995). Shamrock (1995) explains some of the forms that can be used to foster improvisation and composition:

The first musical forms associated with the above activities [improvisation and composition] are the question/answer, with a given pattern eliciting a contrasting reply; the ABA form, with contrasting material (often improvised), inserted between two performances of a set section; and simple rondo forms, with more than one section of contrasting material; inserted between repetitions of a set section. (p. 19).

In discussing Keller's work, Hauschka (2012) describes how a rhythmic or melodic theme with a simple ostinato accompaniment can form the starting point for a composition. Keller (1962) himself emphasised that forms used in elemental composition...

...are restricted to structural elements that when heard, can be understood and committed to memory without visual aids (written notation). These structural elements can then be thought of as models that can be brought to life through being played. These prerequisites are fulfilled by the types of form such as strophic, variation and rondo and all their varieties. (p. 124)

There is widespread support in the literature for the importance of the teacher's role in providing well planned and structured scaffolds in Orff Schulwerk media and pedagogy, that ensures students have the wide range of experiences, knowledge and skills to draw on for their improvisation and composition processes (Burgess, 2012; Harding, 2012; Shamrock, 1995).

Without sequential and explicit instruction along the way, students simply experience “creative activities” that lack purpose and never take them to the depth of understanding of which they are capable. The process from preliminary play into and through improvisation can provide scaffolded and sequential experiences students need to become fluent, expressive composers. (Burgess, 2012, p. 22)

Burgess emphasises here that an important goal of our music programme is to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to translate their musical ideas into satisfying compositions.

In discussing the role of the teacher, in contrast to literature on general composition, there appears to be agreement between writers on Orff pedagogy that children will be more successful composing in an elemental style if there are clear parameters around their composition brief (Erion, 1996; Gilpatrick, 1996; Keller, 1974; Locke & Locke, 2011a). In their New Zealand study, Locke & Locke (2011a) found that a compositional restraint served two pedagogical functions:

Firstly, it supported students by providing them with a ‘ready-made’ solution to a compositional problem and made the task achievable. Secondly, and paradoxically, it offered a challenge to their creativity by forcing them to innovate within the terms of the brief and ‘liberated’ content by imposing a set of structural parameters. (p. 272)

Keller (1974) provides some suggestions for the parameters a teacher could set, “Perhaps they will be working only with pentachordal or hexatonic melodies or they might be asked for a diatonic setting after they have completed their first hexatonic example” (p. 51). Erion (1996) agrees that the setting of parameters is important, but warns against becoming too prescriptive, emphasising that the parameters should be helpful and not restrictive. “We will get narrowly focused

formulaic offerings from our students if the 32 bar melody assignment or the 4-bar answering phrase is the extent of our teaching repertoire” (p. 14).

Another feature that receives considerable attention from writers on the subject of elemental composition is the issue of notation in the composition process (Burgess 2012; Hauschka, 2012; Kugler, 2011; Orff 1932). Orff’s position on notation is clearly articulated by Kugler (2011), who reminds us that, in all his early writing, Orff emphasised the secondary nature of written notation. His belief, that the notation should not come before the experience of music making but follow it, is clearly and regularly articulated. In his article, *Thoughts about music with children and non-professionals*, Orff (1932) described how the idea of writing something down comes from the children themselves, that the desire to record what they have made up leads to a desire to use musical notation. He also noted that words and pictures have their place alongside traditional notation. Locke & Locke (2011a) found that the students in their study became frustrated at the need to notate their compositions. When they realised that the compositions were stored safely in their memories, they gave up on the job of notation. “The urge to continue the exploratory journey was stronger than the urge to ‘fix’ their composition in notated form” (p. 272).

Keller (1963) maintained a more conservative view, believing that, “because notation remains the main pathway toward musical independence in the Western art tradition, it is a logical outcome of instruction in an Orff classroom” (p. 46). He did suggest that young children might use graphic notation to express their intentions. Burgess (2012) celebrates the notion that, because Orff philosophy has an experiential and elemental approach to literacy, where music making comes before the notating, composition is accessible to all students. Orff (1932) noted that, as students begin to write down their compositions, they gradually learn to read notation and can then be introduced to the world of written music.

An important aspect of the Orff philosophy is the belief that the process is as important as the product and that, with every piece, there are opportunities for further development (Burgess, 2012; Frazee, 2006; Shamrock, 1995). Students come to expect that pieces are never completely finished, that there are always

new possibilities to be considered or changes to be made. “Material for study is presented, not as something to be performed as perfectly as possible, but as a resource for further development” (Frazee, 2006, p 19). For Burgess (2012), the long-term learning of students will be the result of teachers viewing the composition process as a learning tool. Thomas (cited in Shamrock, 1995) reinforces this:

The fact that it [Orff Schulwerk] does not concern itself with compositions as final ends but with the possibilities of realisation which, at the moment in which they attain, push forward toward further formation and only as an end product are written down-this is what endows the Schulwerk with its spontaneity and power of fascination. (p. 20)

To conclude this section, it is pertinent to refer to Walter Panofsky’s comments on the response to the introduction of the Schulwerk to German children by radio:

The numerous letters and essays, questions and stimuli that have been sent in during this last half year give credence to the high pedagogical value of this musical work. It lies in education for independence. If school children send in melodies they have written – from the clumsy drawing of the staff to the nine part score sent in by a nine-year old – it is not a question of unusual talent but of children who have been awakened, for whom the elemental originality of the Schulwerk way of making music has released in them musical powers, that, if their musical education remains solely reproductive, stay buried. (Orff, 1976, p. 218)

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

For this study into facilitating children's elemental composition, I selected a self-study research design. According to Cochran-Smith & Donnell (2006), self-study research is one of the 'versions or variants' (p. 503) of practitioner inquiry or practitioner research. They use the term practitioner inquiry "to refer to the array of educational research genres where the practitioner is the researcher, the professional context is the research site and practice itself is the focus of the study" (p. 503). They point out a number of features the research genres share:

- the practitioner in the role of researcher where collaboration with others is a key feature;
- that all participants in the research community are regarded as "knowers, learners and researchers" (p. 508) and that the knowledge generated is most useful in the local context;
- that the inquiry takes place in the professional context and the researcher's questions may be immediately referenced to particular situations;
- that the boundaries between inquiry and practice are blurred which can potentially generate innovative research as well as tensions and dilemmas; the belief that inquiry is integral to practice;
- that notions of validity and generalisability in research are different from traditional criteria and application to other contexts;
- all share the features of "systematicity", which refers to ordered ways of gathering and recording data and "intentionality", the planned and deliberate nature of the research

Because my research questions focused on aspects of my own practice, the self-study approach to research was considered the most appropriate. In investigating a possible relevant research design that would answer my research questions, I was drawn to a definition of self-study by Samaras (2002, cited in Samaras & Freese, 2009):

I use the words self-study to mean critical examination of one's actions and the context of those actions in order to achieve a more conscious mode of professional activity, in contrast to action based on habit, tradition, or impulse. (p. 10)

Loughran (2004) discusses self-study as having emerged from teachers' and teacher educators' "attempts to better understand the problematic worlds of teaching and learning (which) have led to an increasing focus on their work so that researching their practice better informs them about their teaching and enhances their students' learning" (p. 9). He asserts that self-study has become a focal point for educators who want to better understand their own practice.

In considering the purpose of self-study, Samaras (2011) suggests that it offers us a new way to consider professional accountability. "As teachers conduct self-study research projects, they are reminded about the important role they play, and *can* play in addressing performance measures and improving the educational system" (p. 15). Smith (2003, cited in Samaras, 2011) supports this and suggests that teachers' voices need to be heard as they ask their own questions and challenge their practice. "When educators propose a personal and situated inquiry and take ownership, recognition and responsibility to undertake that inquiry in a supported and guided forum, professional development is enhanced and fears involving the change reduced" (p. 16).

Samaras (2011) emphasises the immediate applicability of self-study as an important goal, where teachers can apply their reframed knowledge directly to their teaching practice. In reinforcing this, Loughran (2007b, cited in Samaras, 2011) asserts, "one immediate value of self-study is in the way it can inform and almost immediately influence practice" (p. 19).

In considering reasons for conducting a self-study, Austin and Senese (2004) raise personal credibility as an important factor. In order to be a credible educator, it is important to know why we teach the way we do, and how we can align our beliefs to our practice. They claim that, through using constant reflective practices and continuously re-examining their assumptions, practitioners can come to a more

realistic picture of both their actions and their underlying values and beliefs.

Bullough & Pinnegar (2001) remind us that self-study won't necessarily give us definitive answers to the problems we are encountering, but can enable the teacher researcher to highlight the problem and discover new ways of working. "The aim of self-study research is to provoke, challenge and illuminate rather than confirm or settle" (p. 20).

In considering the purpose of a self-study, Loughran (2004) highlights the importance of modelling. He cites MacKinnon (1989), describing modelling as "experimenting and the inevitable mistakes and confusions that follow are encouraged, discussed, and viewed as departure points for growth" (p. 11). Because of the creative nature of the project I was engaged in, the modelling of how we can learn from our experimenting and risk-taking was important. "That is why it is so valuable to involve students in the processes of self-critique, since it demands of them precisely the critical reflection that they require as learners" (Barnes, 1998, cited in Loughran, 2004, p 10).

Learning through self-study by modelling creates new ways to understand and shape experiences by inviting learners to learn rather than expecting them to absorb information, ideas and points of view. It creates genuine situations whereby the teacher is also a learner and invites new ways of seeing into the teaching and learning situation – it can give one the courage to continue to take risks and approach teaching and learning in new and meaningful ways. (Loughran, 2004, p 13)

Loughran (2004) does remind us that the term modelling can be misinterpreted if seen as a teacher indoctrinating his/ her students or "the creation of a model or template for easy replication" (p. 11). In the Orff approach to music education, the emphasis is not on providing models for replication but using the models as a starting point, a spark or a catalyst to future development.

In my own study, I wanted to know how effective I was as an Orff teacher, what pedagogical strategies enhanced the learning of the students I was working with and what activities I facilitated for the students in order for them to become

confident composers in an elemental style. Were the beliefs I had about teaching reflected in the way I taught?

In discussing the difference between action research and self-study, Samaras & Freese (2009) claim that both methodologies involve the researcher in investigating issues situated in practice, engaging in a research cycle and gathering and analysing data, but self-study may also involve personal history, narrative inquiry and reflective portfolios.

Self-study builds on the personal processes of reflection and inquiry, and takes these processes and makes them open to public critique. Self-study is not done in isolation, but rather requires collaboration for building new understandings through dialogue and validation of findings. Self-study research requires openness and vulnerability since the focus is on the self. And finally, self-study is designed to lead to the reframing and reconceptualizing of the role of the teacher. (p. 5)

Samaras and Freese (2009) discuss their own experiences of action research, which led them to realise...

...when we engaged in action research, the focus was on our students and what they learned. However, through our dialoguing, we realized that by focusing on the students we left out a very important aspect of the study – the self, the role we played in the research, and what we learned and how we subsequently changed. Self-study and our work with students reinforced our belief that teaching needs to be purposeful. And we found that by studying and systematically examining our teaching, we became more focused on our purposes and whether we were aligning our beliefs with our practice (p. 12).

Like Samaras and Freese, Austin and Senese (2004) see the difference between action research and self-study, not in the method or the purpose, but that the difference “lies in the focus of the two experiences.” Action research is conducted “to find out how, as a teacher, my planning, thinking and behaviours can affect students learning and success”, whereas self-study “requires that I put myself, my beliefs, my assumptions, and my ideologies about teaching (as well as my practice) under scrutiny” (p. 1235).

Herr and Andersen (2005) state that self-study is a *form* of action research which gives the researcher “a focus on one’s own personal and professional self” (p. 25) and they describe self-study as insider research where the researcher, who is in the teacher role, is studying his/ her own practice and “is committed to the success of the actions under study” (p. 33).

On the other hand, Whitehead and McNiff (2006) describe self-study as a *component* of action research.

Practitioners investigate their own practice, observe, describe and explain what they are doing in the company of one another and produce their own explanations for why they are doing it...the theories they generate are their own theories and they constantly test these theories against crucial responses of others to see if they can withstand criticism, in other words have validity. (p. 13)

In reflecting on the various definitions of self-study, I situate myself alongside Herr and Anderson’s (2005) belief that self-study is a *form* of action research. The project I initiated fits neatly into the definition of action research as a natural part of teaching, where teachers observe their students, design, implement and reflect on an intervention in order to improve student outcomes (Miller, 2007). By tailoring the project as a self-study, the focus of the action research is on my own practice, reflecting on what aspects of my pedagogy and activity design are successful in meeting the outcomes and how my beliefs and actions are reflected back to me by the students themselves and my critical friends.

Samaras (2011) introduces the methodological components of self-study by presenting “The Five Foci Framework”, which provides a format to understand and apply self-study. Self-study research is: personal situated inquiry; critical collaborative inquiry; improved learning; a transparent and systematic research process; and knowledge generation and presentation (pp. 10, 11). Expanding on each of these more fully, Samaras (2011) discusses how self-study draws directly from the personal experience of the teacher within her classroom and provides an opportunity for teachers to examine their practice and to discover whether or not there is any contradiction between what the teacher believes and what they do in

practice (*personal situated inquiry*). The importance of feedback from others and the value of critical friends in encouraging questioning and offering alternative perspectives is important in validating claims (*critical collaborative enquiry*). Self-study enables us to determine what does and doesn't work in our classrooms and enact change as a result of our findings (*improved learning*). Having a disposition of openness to the views of others is crucial, as the research process requires open and honest feedback (*transparent and systematic research process*). The contribution a self-study can make to the personal and professional knowledge base is important in establishing its validity. "Making the study public allows it to be available for review and critique. It contributes to the accumulation of pedagogical, content, and issue-based knowledge and serves to build validation across related work" (*knowledge generation and presentation*) (Samaras, 2011, p. 11).

La Boskey (2004) also argues that self-study has a range of characteristics. She asserts that it is *initiated by and focused on us as teachers* and "seeks to determine whether or not our practice is consistent with our evolving ideals and theoretical perspectives" (p. 820). It is *improvement-aimed* with the goal of transforming our own practice in order to improve our students' learning. Self-study is *interactive*, involving the students themselves, critical friends and other observers to guard against the limitations of individual reflection. It employs *multiple methods* and is reported to the *professional community for deliberation, testing and evaluation*.

In Samaras and Freese (2009), the authors discuss an added characteristic of self-study and that is "reframing" where, "through dialogue and collaboration with other teacher educators and students, the researcher can frame and reframe a problem or situation from different perspectives" (p. 8). The importance of reframing in the self-study approach is crucial as, through this reframing, teachers have an opportunity to think about things differently, change what's happening in the classroom and consequently improve their practice.

Underpinning self-study is the process of reflection. Osterman (1990) describes reflective practice as "the mindful consideration of one's actions, specifically one's professional actions ... and critical assessment of one's own behaviour as a

means towards developing one's own craftsmanship" (p. 134). Self-study methodology has been strongly influenced by research into reflection and reflective practice, with researchers finding that "teachers could examine and problematise their teaching by reflecting on their practice and becoming reflective practitioners" (Samaras, 2009, p.4)

Austin and Senese (2004) list the active stages of reflection: self-questioning; thinking critically; deliberating creatively; and finally applying the new realisations. These stages of reflection were particularly relevant to my research: What was I doing well and what could I do better? What was important about what I was doing? How could I improve my practice to ensure the intended outcomes were met? What did I need to do to make those changes?

Samaras (2011) argues that self-study is *more* than just reflection and that it requires "dialogue, public critique and presentation from the researcher's personal reflection" (p. 54). In comparing reflective practitioner research and self-study, she asserts that, in practitioner research, reflection is at the centre of teacher professional practice, whereas in self-study research, reflection is just one research technique selected by the researcher. "In self-study research, teachers reflect on what they will do and how they will act upon their classroom dilemmas...they question and investigate their role in a renewed process of knowing" (p. 55).

The importance of feedback from others, where critical friends encourage questioning and present divergent views and different perspectives, is crucial to the process of self-study (critical, collaborative enquiry). Samaras and Freese (2009) emphasise the importance of collaboration in a self-study approach, "Self-study is not done in isolation, but rather requires collaboration for building new understandings through dialogue and validation of findings" (p. 5).

As a relatively new researcher, this self-study design was appropriate to my goal of analysing my practice and finding out, after 35 years of teaching, what aspects of my teaching pedagogy were relevant and successful. It was also important for me to find out whether the activities I planned were successful in meeting the

intended outcomes. I wanted to discover just how successful my teaching approach to this topic was and whether I had made sound pedagogical decisions based on personal reflection, interviews with my students and discussions with colleagues.

3.2 The research context and sample

This project was undertaken with a group of sixteen Year 5 and 6 students in a decile 9 school in a culturally diverse community. The school has a long tradition of excellence in music and has employed a music specialist for a number of years. There is a separate music room which is well equipped with resources including a class set of Orff tuned percussion instruments. I received strong support from the specialist music teachers and the school principal who were interested in the work I was doing. Because I had been employed in the school for the previous two years as a specialist music teacher working with an extension junior music group, I was a familiar face and knew my way around the school and the resources.

My intention was to have a group that was diverse in cultural and musical backgrounds with a range of musical skills and knowledge. With this intention in mind, I approached the four Year 5 and 6 teachers at the school and asked them to each suggest four students who they felt would respond well to a specialised programme and would value the opportunity. What happened in reality was that all of the children selected, except one, had some previous musical background so I didn't get the range I had anticipated. Culturally the children came from diverse backgrounds – the group consisted of three Asian children, nine Pakeha New Zealanders, two Maori, one German and one English. There were twelve girls and four boys in the sample group.

This study obtained ethical clearance from Waikato University Ethics Committee before proceeding. This was made known to the participants, the caregivers and the school when seeking their consent. Because the participants in this study were children, I sought informed consent from both the children and their caregivers. I sent out a letter of information setting out the process and seeking consent from all concerned. Because I was using school time, rooms and resources, I also

sought permission to carry out my study from the school principal and Board of Trustees. Participants were assured that pseudonyms would be used to ensure confidentiality.

I received parental and participant consent from all 16 children who had been recommended to me by their teachers. An information evening was held to enable all parents/caregivers/participants and interested school staff to come along and learn more about the Orff Schulwerk approach, what my main objectives were and to ask any questions they might have. Interested parents and staff were also invited to attend teaching sessions and the final presentation of compositions.

3.3 Data collection methods

With any research methodology, the planning is important. Samaras (2011) suggests that it is crucial that the “inquiry and question drive the study instead of just collecting data without a purpose in mind (p. 162). To this end I carefully considered what research tools were going to be the most useful to me in my data collection.

Cresswell (2003) describes the characteristics of data collection in a qualitative study: “In many qualitative studies, inquirers collect multiple forms of data and spend a considerable time in the natural setting gathering information” (p. 185). He refers to four types of collection procedures: observations, interviews, documents and audio and visual characteristics. In my research proposal I indicated that I would use five methods of data collection: interviews with the students, before, during and at the conclusion of the programme; a reflective journal in which I would record each day reflections on pedagogy and activity design; a collection of the children’s compositions at various stages; video recall where I would record some sessions in full to watch and reflect on; and observations by two critical friends, one focusing on the quality of the Orff pedagogy and activity design apparent in the lesson, and the other focusing on my general teaching pedagogy. During the programme I came to realise that most of the children were not producing written scores but were, instead, committing their compositions to memory or just using a set of instructions for their own benefit so,

although I took a few photos of their work in progress, I did not do any formal analysis of artefacts as planned. An addition to my data collection methods was a simple questionnaire where I asked the children to mark on a continuum how helpful they had found each of the practical activities I had offered.

3.3.1 Initial interviews

My data collection consisted of initial interviews with the students in a group setting (3 at a time) where I encouraged them to share their musical experiences to date, their attitudes to classroom music and their evaluations of themselves as composers (See Appendix 1). Anderson (1990) defines an interview as “a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter” (p 222). I conducted semi-structured interviews where, as well as asking a set of prepared questions, I also included opportunities to probe question responses further and ask for clarification (Samaras, 2011). Kvale (1996) defines this approach to research interviewing as “an interview whose purpose it is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 6). He identifies seven stages in the interview process: thematising the purpose of the interview, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting the findings. It was important in the interview process that I ask carefully worded questions and prompts that did not impose my own beliefs on the responses received.

In order to understand other persons’ constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them...And to ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and *a priori* by ourselves) and in a depth, which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings. (Jones, 1985, p. 46)

It is recognised, in a self-study, that researchers bring their own world-view, histories and goals to the interview process and that this needs to be considered; the “who” in a self-study is both the interviewer and the interviewee (Samaras and Freese, 2009).

Although these initial interviews did not relate directly to the research questions

about my own practice, they were important in helping me begin to understand more about the musical background and personalities of the students, their ability to articulate their musical knowledge and their group dynamics.

The questions that I asked were designed for me to gather information about their personal interest and involvement in music experiences, what their beliefs were about composition and the skills and knowledge they felt they needed in order to compose. I also wanted to determine their understanding of the basic elements of music, beat, rhythm, tempo, pitch, dynamics and tone colour as I believed that understanding (and applying) these concepts is crucial to any composition work. It was interesting to note in my reading on the topic, though, that studies have shown that students may not necessarily be able to define these concepts verbally or in written form but evidence shows that they are able to demonstrate these concepts in their compositions.

Thus, while studies of harmony, counterpoint, and analysis are often considered mandatory preparation for composition, performing experience (even at a beginning level) is arguably a more basic and practical starting point for composing, because performing gives students a firsthand, practical experience of the materials and the procedures of musical discourse in specific musical-cultural practices. (Martin, 2005, p.167)

This reinforced my commitment to providing a programme of work where the children were fully engaged in the practice of music making and exposed to these elements in an experiential way.

A week after the interviews I sat with the children and let them read through the transcript. This gave them all an opportunity to confirm it as an accurate record of what they had said, make any extra comments and ask questions. This ensured I had “a loyal written transcript of the interviewee’s oral statements” (Kvale 1996).

3.3.2 Reflective journal

Personal reflection in the research process is now widely accepted as a valuable tool for data collection in qualitative research. Researchers are encouraged to talk about themselves, the assumptions they bring to the research, their practice and

the context that influences that practice. Increasingly qualitative research is...

...presented in ways that make it clear how the researcher's own experiences, values and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced their research interests, the way they choose to do their research, and the ways they choose to present their research findings. (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001, p. 325)

In my role as a self-employed specialist teacher and professional development facilitator, receiving feedback about my teaching was extremely rare. Consequently the task of generating my own feedback and reflecting honestly was important to my personal and professional development. As noted by Michael Shepherd (2006), who used journaling in his role in helping to develop managers in developing countries: "... for cultural reasons I am rarely given feedback on how well, or how badly, I perform in my work. Without feedback there is little opportunity to understand from my client's perspective what "works" for them, and how we can improve what we do together" (p. 333).

It was important for me to know that I practise what I preach. Does my teaching really reflect what I believe? "By subjecting accounts of my practice to critical reflective inquiry I am able to recognize the dissonance between what I espouse to practice and what I actually do" (Shepherd, 2006, p. 333).

In defining a research journal, Mutch (2005) refers to the provision of a "place for important emerging ideas to be articulated, refined, reshaped and, later, retrieved" (p. 158). Samaras (2011) refers to this type of record keeping as a "self-study teacher researcher log" (p. 175) and describes it as a...

...notebook that documents the self-study teacher researcher's meta-conversations to himself or herself and to critical friends of an unfolding of questions, reflections, meaning making, and shared insights of his or her self-study research project; can include notes, reflections, and preliminary ideas on the unfolding, enactment, and assessment of pedagogical strategies. (p. 175)

Because my research questions demanded that I scrutinise my pedagogical strategies and the quality of the activities I was offering, I kept a record of my weekly formal planning and reflected on the daily experiences of my time in the

music classroom. I took note of the strategies that worked and the ones that didn't, how the children responded and the activities that were the most successful in meeting my planned outcomes.

3.3.3 Critical friend observation

In order to have other perspectives, I invited two teachers to come and observe me working with the children. These two teachers took on the important role of critical friends. McNiff (2002) describes a critical friend as “someone whose opinion you value and who is able to critique your work and help you see it in a new light” (p. 22) and emphasises the important role the critical friend has in the triangulation of data. Samaras (2011) describes the importance of these critical friends in the self-study approach: “Self study teachers work in an intellectually safe and supportive community to improve their practice by making it explicit to themselves and to others through critical collaborative inquiries” (p. 74).

The first teacher was a music specialist with Orff training to Level 3, who focused on the appropriateness of the activities presented, and the second teacher, a generalist class teacher, focused on teaching strategies and pedagogies that I engaged in. I provided them both with specific aspects to focus on and engaged in a reflective discussion with them at the end of each session.

Critical friends work to mutually contribute to and enhance each other's research. They provide optimal feedback, enhance self-reflection, help articulate and make explicit one's thinking, and ease anxiety, as they are continuously accessible and available. (Samaras, 2011, p. 75)

3.3.4 Focus group interviews

A focus group consisting of five of the children was randomly selected, and these children met with me at the mid- and end-point of the programme to share their learning and experiences in this composition project (See Appendix 2). I wanted to find out from them what activities they had enjoyed and how these activities had supported them in the composition process. I also wanted to know what I had done as a teacher facilitating this process, my pedagogical strategies, and which of these had acted as a catalyst or obstacle to their composing.

David Morgan's (1996) definition of focus groups has three main components: one, focus groups are a research method devoted to data collection; two, the interaction in the group discussion is an important source of data; and three, the acknowledgement of the researcher's role in facilitating the group discussion. While my research questions were not about the interaction of the group in this project, I was interested in how ideas and answers to my questions would be generated by this interaction. I was also very aware of the important role I would play in asking the questions that would generate the information I was seeking.

The importance of the interaction between group members is emphasised by Kitzinger (1995), who defines focus groups as "a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data" (p. 299). She goes on to discuss the difference between focus groups and general group interviews; focus groups "explicitly use group interaction as part of the method" (p. 299).

Mutch (2005) describes focus group interviews as being "generally of the structured type with pre-set questions but some negotiation of responses, depending on the purpose and the composition of the group" (p. 127). She emphasises the value of focus groups as combining the best features of a survey and an interview, but that skill is required in their facilitation to ensure useful information is derived. Although I went into the focus group with a range of questions, I was well prepared to expand and adapt my questioning according to which direction the discussion went in.

3.3.5 Activity questionnaire

At the end of the programme I was interested to find out how helpful the children found the specific activities I facilitated. They each filled out an activity questionnaire which asked them to fill in a chart identifying whether they found the listed activity extremely helpful, moderately helpful, made no difference, somewhat unhelpful or very unhelpful. (See Appendix 3). The activities I included in the questionnaire were body percussion exercises, activities with untuned exercises, working with the pentatonic scale, experiences with

improvisation, soundscapes to poems, listening to others compositions and providing feedback and having the “tool-kit” available to refer to.

3.4 Data Analysis

The most relevant analysis tool for this study was the recognition and coding of themes. Mutch (2005) discusses thematic analysis as a strategy that takes its categories from the data rather than using pre-determined categories. Burnard et al (2008) refer to this as an inductive approach, which involves “analysing data with little or no pre-determined theory or framework and uses the actual data itself to derive the structure of analysis.” A method that resonated very strongly with me was a form of constant comparative analysis devised by Le Compte and Preissle (1993, cited in Mutch, 2005) where they refer to the following steps of analysis:

- perceiving (What am I looking for? What do I notice?)
- comparing (What can I see/read that is similar? What things go together?)
- contrasting (What can I see/ read that is different?)
- aggregating (What groupings are evident? Why do these things go together?)
- ordering (Does any pattern or order appear? Are some themes stronger than others?)
- establishing linkages and relationships (What does this remind me of? How do these themes relate to the literature?)
- speculating (How would I explain this? What other research needs to be done?). (p. 177)

Samaras (2011) also refers to coding, and encourages researchers to read and re-read their data, paying “particular attention to any repeated statements, behaviours and actions across the data set” (p. 199). She encourages researchers to reflect constantly on their work and learning and to give themselves permission and time to reflect honestly.

Another important factor for me in the analysis of the data was that it was ongoing throughout the teaching programme. After each of the sessions I facilitated, I wrote in my journal under the headings: pedagogical strategies, activity design, evidence of students’ learning and planning ahead. I would analyse the data I had

gathered from the session and adapt my planning accordingly. Each time, as I considered the data gathered, I would become aware of the gaps I needed to fill in the students' knowledge and understandings or areas where I could extend their learning in directions I hadn't contemplated previously. Samaras (2011) calls this a hermeneutic process:

Self-study research is a hermeneutic process: *a dance of data collection and data analysis*. Consequently, data collection and data analysis are not linear processes. Data analysis is not something that is done after you finish collecting all your data. To the contrary, it is recommended that you begin your early and preliminary analysis of data *as* you collect them so that you can begin to manage them systematically, store them for easy access later and "see" and document what is happening as your research proceeds. (p. 197)

In the analysis of the data, the focus was on my own practice. I read my journal entries and engaged in reflective discussion with both the students and the observers to build a picture about the activity design factors and pedagogical decision-making that impacted on the children meeting, or not, the planned learning outcomes. I also involved the students in informal discussion around what activities they enjoyed the most, what activities really helped them move forward in their elemental composition and what I did that helped or hindered them.

Data from the activity questionnaire will be compiled into a column bar graph to show which activities the children found the most and least helpful.

3.5 Limitations of the study

This study was limited to a small sample of students, only sixteen, in a high-decile school and, although I didn't specifically request it, the group selected by the teachers was a group of children who, in all cases except one, already had a musical background where they were involved in some kind of music learning outside the school context. The programme I planned might have produced quite different results in a different context.

Another issue was that, because I hadn't provided enough guidance to my critical friends, the data I gathered from their observations was limited. With hindsight I would have given them both more specific criteria to focus on to ensure I got more authentic data.

Due to the nature of the programme, I developed a strong and warm relationship with these children where fun was an important element and developing a supportive environment was crucial. Consequently it was difficult to get authentic feedback from the children about any negative aspects of the programme and/ or my teaching. Their desire to please me may have made it difficult for them to articulate any concerns they may have had. In hindsight, I would have been better to ask another independent person to ask the questions, at least for the final focus group interviews.

Chapter 4: Programme of work

4.1 The participants

Before I began the research it was important to find out more about the students who were in my research group; their attitude to classroom music, their motivation for being in this group, their musical interests, their understanding of what it means to compose and a little about their musical knowledge. This information would give me guidance as to what activities I would plan for them and the pedagogical strategies that would be required.

Fifteen of the sixteen children had agreed to participate willingly and there were a range of reasons for this willingness to be involved. Five out of the sixteen of these students had been part of a Junior Specialist Music Programme, which I had run in the previous years, so they felt comfortable with me and had some understanding of what the programme might involve. All of those five students mentioned their previous experience in an Orff focused programme with me as a reason to be involved. For example:

I agreed because I love music and I had already had the experience of Junior SMP last year. (Susan)

I did Junior SMP and it was really fun and interesting. (Katherine)

The importance of music being fun was emphasised by many, and their belief that this particular project would be fun appeared to be an important factor in their motivation to take part:

I think it will be fun and I will learn a lot. (April)

Because I heard it was going to be lots of fun. (Kerri)

There was also a strong belief that they would learn more about music and add to their knowledge and skills:

I'd expect to learn lots of new things about music from this programme...

(Dylan)

Probably better, bigger, harder stuff...(Ben)

I will expect to learn more. (Helen)

The composition aspect of the programme had particularly motivated four of the sixteen children:

I expect to get lots of music experience and it will help me with composing (Pippa)

I think this programme will help my composing skills (Susan)

I'm interested in music and I expect to get more composing skills out of it (Ben)

To learn how to compose (Jemima)

Others were even more specific about what they thought they might learn, suggesting that they expected to learn how to write music:

I joined because I have never actually composed a piece without forgetting it because I never wrote it down. (Dylan)

I expect to learn how to write music (Kerri)

I expect to learn different music symbols (Abigail)

Only one out of the sixteen had obviously felt coerced into volunteering:

My mum and dad made me agree. (Brendon)

Because it was important to me that all the children were committed to this project, I gave them all an opportunity, after the second session, to decide whether or not they wanted to continue. They all agreed to stay on, including the child who had felt coerced.

The second question we discussed was about their attitude to music learning in the classroom setting. This school employs a specialist music teacher so all the children in the school have a music session on a regular basis. I wanted to know how much they enjoyed this music learning and the reasons behind their attitude. 75% of the children had a very positive attitude to the classroom learning:

I do enjoy learning music with (specialist) because I learn a lot about dynamics and musical words. (Pippa)

I do enjoy music from the classroom because I have lots of fun, especially when we play the instruments. (Clare)

Yes, because we do fun stuff and learn in a fun way (Helen)

Yes. It is fun and enjoyable and I learn lots of new skills (Katherine)

Yes, because we get to play lots of instruments and learn about different artists. (Debbie)

The remaining 25% of the children commented that, although they enjoy the music, they felt they were not learning anything new:

Sometimes it's boring because we learn everything that I've learnt already. (Abigail)

...but also don't enjoy because they repeat things I already know. (Clare)

In ascertaining the musical activities the children were involved in, it was clear, that, although I hadn't specifically requested children who already had a strong musical background, all except one of the sixteen, played or sung in music groups at the school and had lessons on an instrument. It was useful to know the musical background of each of the children so I could call on these skills and talents to bring to the composition process.

The next questions focused on composition and I was interested to find out whether the students had done any composition previously. 50% of the children said they had never tried and one of the sixteen claimed he had had a go but felt it was unsuccessful. The other 50% shared experiences they had of composing for themselves:

Yes, at home-I just started playing. (April)

Yes, I have and I have trouble getting the tune to change at points. (Susan)

Yes, me and my friend have changed around a certain song to make it different and it's called Malaguena. I also made another one up on my own called Flying Kites.(Clare)

At home I made up this short piece in D minor. (Pippa)

At home only, writing songs. (Debbie)

At home, a minor melody on guitar and piano. Chords and notes..." (Jemima) (At the end of the interview, Jemima handed me the notes and chords to the piece she had written with the letter names of the chords and notes!)

I do some composing at home. (Ben)

I composed a song called 'On the Hills' on viola. Also wrote a pop song called Tell Me with Your Voice. (Kerri)

I next asked the children to share with me what skills they thought they needed to be a composer and it was interesting to hear the range of answers they gave me:

...know the notes, the instruments, timing, rhythm, technique (Debbie)

...memory, hearing (Ben)

...how to write music and read music. Also to have a good voice (Kerri)

...need to know how the beat and rhythm goes (Abigail)

I think to be a good composer you need to be able to read and understand music (Pippa)

Things about musical notes like the names where to put the musical notes. (Clare)

You need to know how many beats each note is. (Helen)

19% of the children stated they didn't know what skills a composer needed.

It was interesting for me to note that many of the students related composition to the art of writing it down and/or the musical knowledge and skills needed. None of them mentioned the importance of the source of motivation or the creative process except perhaps one comment, which I loved:

You need the feeling (Susan)

In response to the final question where I asked them to explain the meaning of eight musical terms; beat, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics, tone colour, ostinato and melody, their answers highlighted the fact that I had students in this group with a wide range of musical understandings, or perhaps just a range of abilities in articulating their understandings. Many had the elements confused or simply stated they "don't know" or "don't know how to explain it." This led me to speculate on whether these students would confirm study results that show that students might not necessarily be able to define these concepts verbally or in written form but be able to demonstrate these concepts in their compositions (Martin, 2005).

In conclusion, this data from the students gave me a wealth of information to guide my planning for the intervention. Most importantly, the programme needed to be playful and engaging with plenty of fun and humour and I needed to ensure that there was new learning that would advance their knowledge and skills. It was important that there was plenty of active music making and the programme needed to be challenging in order to develop and extend the knowledge and skills the children already had.

In reflecting on the children's perception of what a composition is, I realised I was going to need to be very clear about a definition for elemental composition. How did it differ from other ways and styles of composing they had experienced? In my planning, it was essential that we worked together on examples of elemental compositions and how they were created using the building blocks of Orff Schulwerk pedagogy to ensure they had a good understanding of what they were expected to produce.

In planning my programme, I realised it was important that we discussed relevant aspects of the composition process and shared ideas about what motivates a composer and how they might go about the task of creating music in an elemental style.

4.2 The intervention

With the information above, and my knowledge of Orff Schulwerk pedagogy, an intensive programme of learning was planned and implemented. (See Appendix 4 and 5). The specific learning objectives for the programme were:

The students will:

1. identify and use the elements of music: beat; rhythm; pitch; dynamics; tempo and tone colour to create interest and contrast in their compositions;
2. demonstrate an understanding of elemental rhythmic and melodic patterns through music and dance;
3. use a range of techniques for playing untuned percussion instruments to create different effects;

4. apply the processes of imitation, exploration and improvisation to their creative work;
5. demonstrate correct tuned percussion playing technique;
6. develop ideas in music and movement using the concepts of ostinati, melody, and bordun;
7. identify and utilise form in their compositions;
8. express, shape and represent their musical ideas in a composition that can be performed to others;

A range of learning activities was planned to support the students in successfully meeting these learning outcomes.

Identify and use the elements of music: beat, rhythm, pitch, dynamics, tempo and tone colour to create interest and contrast in their compositions.

In the early sessions of the programme, the emphasis was on building the student's musical vocabulary and conceptual knowledge. The elements of music were introduced using chants, rhymes and poems and multiple opportunities were provided for the children to explore and manipulate the elements using their voices, their bodies and the instruments. When introducing a poem, I would encourage them to try each line at a different tempo or using a different dynamic. Beat and rhythm were reinforced constantly through the warm-up activities and the games we played. We would discuss the different tone colours that could be produced by playing an untuned instrument in a different way or using a different mallet on a tuned instrument. The students were encouraged throughout the programme to critique their own and others' creative work using the language of the elements.

Demonstrate an understanding of elemental rhythmic and melodic patterns through music and movement.

In her book, *Elementaria*, Gunild Keetman (1970) refers to the basic rhythm patterns as rhythmic building bricks and the sol-fa intervals as the melodic building bricks. It was very important that the students were confident in using these building bricks, both rhythmic and melodic, to bring to their creative work. In the early sessions of the programme, I introduced the rhythmic building bricks

using imitation, with the students echoing my body percussion patterns and using beat canons. We also played with the rhythmic patterns using different-sized cups and chairs to represent beats. Adding in movement, where the students walked while imitating patterns, increased the complexity. The students were given leadership roles where they had to take responsibility for leading the echo play and were encouraged to use interesting body and voice sounds.

Melodic building bricks were introduced beginning with the so-me interval (the minor 3rd) and slowly extending the range. Hand signs were introduced early to support tuneful singing. Once again, imitation was used, where the children echoed my patterns and were encouraged to create their own patterns for others to echo. Echo play was extended to question and answer, where the children sung back an answer to my question.

Use a range of techniques for playing untuned percussion instruments to create different effects.

Untuned percussion instruments were introduced early in the programme, both as a tool for introducing important musical concepts and as a sound-maker that the students could use in their creative work. Once they were familiar with the names of each of the instruments, the students were given time to explore and find out how many different sounds they could make with the same instrument. This increased their sound palette and ensured that had a range of possibilities at their disposal. Some time was also spent identifying the four main categories of untuned percussion: wood, skin, shaker and metal. The concept of texture in music was reinforced through a “drum circle” activity where the leader conducted the group bringing in and stopping the different categories and /or soloists at various times.

Apply the processes of imitation, exploration and improvisation to their creative work.

The processes of imitation and exploration were fundamental in every session of the programme. From the beginning, where the students echoed chants and poems exploring the elements, copied body percussion rhythms and echoed melodic motifs, imitation was an essential tool in their learning. Simultaneous imitation,

where the response happens at almost the same time as the cue, occurred when I was introducing the students to the tone-colour possibilities of body percussion and when they copied locomotor actions in an introductory movement activity. Echo imitation, the most common form of imitation, was used repeatedly to introduce the rhythmic and melodic building bricks. Echo imitation is a useful assessment tool and enabled me to see immediately which students were building rhythmic and melodic memory. Overlapping imitation was evident in the beat canon, where the students followed four (or two) beats behind me.

Exploration was also fundamental to the composition process. To foster exploration, students were given multiple opportunities to explore and manipulate the expressive elements, to “play” with rhythmic and melodic phrases and to experiment with varying sound palettes using voice sounds, body percussion, and tuned and untuned percussion.

Once the students had a number of tools at their disposal, the concept of improvisation was introduced. In a well-defined sequence of activities, the children’s understanding of, and confidence in, improvisation was gradually built up. The first introduction to improvisation was a question and answer activity where the students “answered” a rhythmic or melodic “question”. Body percussion rondos (ABACA, where A is a repeating pattern everyone knows and joins in and B and C are improvised patterns) came next and ultimately improvisations on tuned instruments using the pentatonic scale. Students were given lots of opportunities to improvise both individually and in small groups.

Improvisation in movement was also encouraged. For example, having to respond through movement to a shape offered by a classmate emphasised the need to think on the spot and take some risks, both of which are essential in improvisation.

Demonstrate correct tuned percussion playing technique.

Before doing any playing on the tuned percussion instruments, the students were introduced to each of the instruments and given an opportunity to listen to the sounds, compare the metal and wooden sounds and listen to the varying pitches on different sized instruments. Mallet technique was then introduced to ensure

that correct technique was taught and understood. Using mallets only, the students held one in each hand, climbed their hands up the mallet, made letters and numbers and copied actions such as mallets on their shoulders, then crossing over and making antennae on head. Students “playing” on the carpet or “playing” on their knees introduced the important bilateral movement skill of using alternate mallets. The next step was to give them a single bar off a xylophone and let them practise striking the bar in the same spot with each mallet slowly at first then moving onto the mallet roll. They were also encouraged to “bounce” the mallet on the bar to ensure good resonance. These exercises were used to warm up before every tuned percussion activity to continually reinforce these important aspects of mallet technique. Moving onto the instruments, activities such as echo play, where the students echoed a rhythm on a particular bar, were introduced. Pieces from Jon Madin’s (1998) *Marimba Music for Little Kids* were used to reinforce mallet techniques and introduce students to some simple performance pieces.

Develop ideas in music and movement using the concepts of ostinati, melody and bordun

The term ostinato was introduced early in the programme as an Italian word that was fun to say in a rich Italian accent with appropriate hand waving! Its important role in elemental composition was first introduced as an accompaniment to a poem. The students were encouraged to pick out a phrase from the poem or some words related to the poem’s theme and use these as the repeating pattern (ostinato). By beginning with speech patterns, where there was no melody to remember or difficult rhythms to master, the students were able to achieve instant success. As their confidence and skill increased, different ostinati were included and layered in to create the first performance pieces. These ostinati were then transferred as rhythms to untuned percussion and ultimately as melodies on tuned percussion.

The next step was to introduce the pentatonic scale of C to the students. After quickly establishing that pentatonic meant five tones and the scale was formed by removing the semitones (in the case of C pentatonic the Fs and the Bs – the frogs and the butterflies), the students were shown how to carefully remove the necessary bars from the instruments. Beginning again with echo patterns on a single note and gradually adding in more notes, the students were encouraged to

create their own patterns for the class to imitate. Ostinati patterns were created, played and layered in to show the children how the pentatonic scale was a great tool for improvising. Familiar strategies such as echo play and question and answer were used to familiarise students with the possibilities and build their musical memory.

The concept of the bordun (an open fifth) was then introduced as an accompaniment to pentatonic melodies. In the C pentatonic, the notes are C and G, and the students were shown four different borduns: the simple bordun, the broken bordun, the arpeggiated bordun and the level bordun (See Appendix 5L)

Identify and utilise form in their compositions

To open up the possibilities of form in their compositions, the students were taught about binary, ternary, rondo and canon forms. Practical examples of each were provided in a scaffolded sequence and the students were given opportunities to explore each form through both music and movement activities.

Express, shape and represent their musical ideas in a composition that can be performed to others

Throughout the whole programme, students were given tools they could utilise to express and shape their ideas. They were building up a vocabulary of musical terms and concepts that they could reference to refine their creative ideas. An important role for me as their teacher was to use the language regularly, scaffolding their individual learning and acting as a facilitator by supporting and guiding their learning in such a way that it enhanced their creativity and not put up blocks. Opportunities for performance were provided throughout the programme and all the students were encouraged to take part to grow their confidence and build their skills.

From the beginning I was aware that expecting the children to write their music down using conventional notation would be a real challenge to some and, consequently, would have a detrimental effect on the outcomes. Because of this, I ensured that they had a range of tools they could use to ‘record’ their ideas. Possibilities offered were large staves to record melodies using conventional

notation, graphic notation to depict sounds or just notes about how the performance would evolve.

In the end most of them used a combination of all three or felt more comfortable committing their ideas to memory and giving clear verbal instructions for their performers to follow.

4.3 Games

Beginning each session with a game, which we repeated often as favourites emerged, was a strategy that energized the children and built their learning from a familiar and fun-filled place. As well as the importance of the playfulness of these games, each one introduced or reinforced important aspects of music learning. For example, a passing game such as *Son Macaron* reinforced beat as the beat was passed around the circle in time to the lyrics of the song, developed pitch as the song was sung tunefully, rhythm as we changed the rhythm for the tip-tip-tip, and tempo as we sped up and slowed down the song. The lyrics are nonsense words fostering playfulness in language. As Doug Goodkin (2002) says, “these games are bursting with rich language, patterned math, colourful history, scientific observation, physical challenge, visual design, rhythmic dance and exuberant music—a complete curriculum by any school’s standards” (p. 11).

4.4 Self and peer critique

At the very beginning of the programme, I spent time discussing with the students the importance of supporting each other in their creativity, to always be looking for the positives and to critique openly and honestly in a way that ensured no one felt uncomfortable or threatened. We worked together to establish a critiquing process, where we would reflect on the work of others through a process of “Positives and Advice”. What did you like about what you have just heard? What suggestions could you make to improve it or just to do something differently? To begin with I realised I would need to model this process until the children understood how to critique fairly and honestly.

We discussed the issue of “over-praise” and I shared with the children a visual example of how, if a young child brings us a picture of a house drawn in the stereotypical way, with a pointed roof and a chimney (with smoke coming out), a door and two windows, and you tell her how wonderful it is, she will bring you the same picture day after day. If, instead, you praise her and then take her outside to observe a house, talk to her about its features and guide her in her drawing with suggestions (verbal only) she will draw a much closer representation of a house with important details and perspective.

Over the course of the project, I continued to take the time to reinforce the importance of constructive critique, often providing examples to get them started. Many students became adept at critiquing and learned to listen carefully for aspects they could comment on and to draw on their own experiences for offering advice.

4.5 Adaptations to planning

The detailed programme in Appendix 4 was the programme that was actually implemented with this specific group of children. Before beginning the unit of work, I had planned the programme in detail so I knew where I was heading, what I wanted the children to achieve and what activities I would present to support their learning. Although my specific learning outcomes never changed, the aims of each session were adjusted according to the data I was processing. At times I realised I needed to extend the students’ learning by increasing the challenge and at other times I realised the students needed to spend more time on a particular skill or concept to ensure it was well embedded. As favourite games and activities became clear, I adapted my planning to include these more often and, as learning needs of individuals or groups of children became apparent, I would consider how those needs could best be met.

Chapter 5: Findings

The purpose of this research was to investigate the pedagogical strategies and the activity design factors that were effective in facilitating elemental composition in an Orff classroom. Data were gathered through a personal reflective journal, observation by two critical friends, video reflection of two sessions and focus group interviews with a small group of the students at the mid and end point of the programme. At the completion of the programme, I also did a small survey where I asked the children to grade on a continuum how helpful each activity was in supporting them to reach their goal. Each of the data sources was analysed for reoccurring themes. In this chapter I will take each of the data gathering tools and comment on the themes that emerged.

5.1 Reflective journal

Because this research was a self-study, the reflective journal was an important component of my data gathering. At the end of each session, I recorded how the session had gone, what I had learned about my teaching and the changes I would make in my planning and implementation for the future. The purpose of the journal was to reflect on the success of my activity design and pedagogical strategies.

I focused my reflections using the headings: pedagogical strategies; activity design; evidence of student learning; planning ahead. Because my research questions were focused on the success of my pedagogical strategies and activity design in meeting my specific learning objectives, I will share my findings under these two headings.

In analysing my data, I read carefully through my journal entries, and where I identified a pedagogical strategy I wrote it at the top of a page and then added relevant sections of journal entries under the main heading. In this way I was able to summarise journal entries that re-enforced the identified pedagogical strategies. I also used the journal entries to reflect on the two video recordings I had taken. These reflections are integrated throughout the journal.

5.1.1 Pedagogical strategies

At the conclusion of the first lesson I reflected on the importance of establishing a strong relationship with each of these children and that an important part of my role in fostering musical creativity was in creating a supportive learning environment that was inclusive, caring and cohesive.

Journal entry 20 June 2011

Today I spent time getting to know the children a little better and giving them an opportunity to ask me about myself and to ask questions about the programme. Their curiosity about my life and how I had ended up doing the job I did showed me how important it was that we build up a warm and trusting relationship. I wanted them to feel safe to experiment and explore ideas. We spent some time discussing the importance of supporting each other, that there would be times when they felt frustrated and it was at those times that they would need support and inspiration from me and their peers.

There were several entries with a similar theme where I discussed how the children and I talked about the importance of listening to each other, valuing others' ideas, offering constructive criticism and ensuring everyone in a group felt included. Below is another example:

Journal entry 11 July 2011

I had today's session videoed and later in the day spent some time reflecting on the lesson. With their first venture into a very simple group activity today, it was clear that there were some very strong leaders who took over and others who were very quiet and didn't get involved in the decision making at all. I stopped them and presented them with a challenge to give everyone in the group a chance to offer an idea and then take some time to decide on a favourite or combine some of the ideas to create a new pattern. This worked well and it was great to see and hear the positive way they responded to each other's suggestions and integrated them into a pattern that they could all have some ownership of.

The importance of making valid connections to the children's previous learning, and building on that learning, was evident throughout my journal. One of the challenges I faced was to ensure I was not wasting time building knowledge and

skills they already had but consolidating what they knew with new learning and ensuring that the new learning was relevant to the tasks ahead.

Journal entry 20 June 2011

I realised today that the children all had varying degrees of knowledge about aspects of music such as the elements and basic rhythmic building bricks. It's going to be important that I take what they know already and challenge them to expand that learning: how the elements could be used to create contrast and interest; how the rhythmic building blocks can be "played" with to create patterns and form....

Journal entry 4 July 2011

As soon as I introduced body percussion echo patterns to the students today, I realised their musical memory was well embedded and I needed to use the process of echo patterning to extend their skills in this area. Consequently, I quickly extended it to an eight beat pattern, added body and voice sounds and got them to walk the beat with their feet while echoing a rhythmic pattern with their hands and voices. They responded well to the extension of this activity and some of the children took the opportunity to lead the group.

Journal entry 14 October 2011

Katherine has been working really well with lots of focus on her composition. Today she came to me for help to write out the pentatonic melody she had made up on the xylophone because she was really pleased with it and was worried she would forget it by the following week. Rather than just writing it out for her I talked her through what she did know about how to write a melody using conventional notation and we went from that point.

Another theme that I noted re-occurring in my journal was the challenge of integrating the knowledge and skill learning with creative learning and to scaffold opportunities for improvisation and creativity in a way that built confidence:

Journal entry 4 July 2011

It was interesting to see today that, although they have a reasonably firm understanding of basic rhythms, when it came to improvising their own in a question and answer format, most of the children found it very difficult to think

on the spot. Almost all, except Debbie and Brendon, echoed what I had just clapped. To scaffold their learning in this area and increase their confidence, I encouraged them, firstly to echo the pattern I clapped but vary the body percussion. The next step was to copy the first four-beat rhythm using a different part of the body but vary the second group of four beats. In this way they slowly built up the confidence to think more spontaneously. I will need to repeat this activity regularly to ensure they have plenty of practice at improvising.

One month later it seemed that the scaffolding I had done had reaped some benefits:

Journal entry 8 August 2011

Today was very interesting! After the difficulty they had with the improvisation asked for in the rhythmic question and answer format, I expected them to balk at the expectation that they create their own sol-fa patterns for others to echo. However they surprised me and I was really impressed with the way they approached the task. Out of the sixteen, twelve volunteered to participate and successfully sang a simple phrase in tune for others to echo. When I asked them why they found the task less threatening than the rhythmic one, the comments were “I remembered to keep it really simple and that simple is good!” and “I don’t mind making a mistake any more cos we all do sometimes.”

As in any creative process, the importance of sound classroom management emerged as a theme throughout the journal.

Journal entry 11 July 2011

Even though this is a great group of children it is still obvious that they need careful boundaries established in such a way that the experiences are safe and pleasurable for all of us. In watching the video tonight, I observed that I spent quite a lot of my time managing the children’s behaviour with regular reminders to stay focused on the task, lots of positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour and a few growls when I felt the children weren’t listening to instructions. Effective behaviour management is going to be crucial to ensure that valuable leaning takes place without distraction and still flexible enough to foster spontaneity.

An over-riding factor in the management of the children was the preparation I had done. In a lesson where I had under-prepared and just relied on the lesson to flow, I almost inevitably found that the session lacked focus and neither me nor the children felt able to articulate what we had gained. With a well-prepared session, although it would rarely go exactly to plan, I had a stronger sense of what I wanted to achieve and the lesson would flow more smoothly.

Journal entry 4 July 2011

Today's lesson brought to mind a quote I read recently in Introduction to Music for Children by Wilhelm Keller (1963):

“Nothing requires more meticulous preparation than guiding and supervising lessons in discovery and improvisation! Nothing may be less improvised by the teacher than lessons in improvisation with children. The teacher's primary task in preparation is to find successful ways and means through which to stimulate the children's individual awareness and discovery of elemental music procedures” (p. 23).

I had not done the preparation I should have done for this lesson. Although my planning was written down I hadn't gone through it to ascertain how the activities might flow together and what difficulties the children and I might encounter. I needed to have a wider range of strategies in hand to ensure I could adapt to the needs of the students as they arose.

This was important learning for me – preparation and a clear sense of direction are crucial to the success of a lesson involving creative processes.

For ease of classroom management, in the initial sessions using tuned percussion, I would set up the instruments myself but, in Week 8, I realised that setting up the instruments was an important part of the learning process.

Journal Entry 22 August 2011

I've been reading Introduction to Music for Children by Wilhelm Keller (1963) which sets out some really basic and important aspects of Orff pedagogy (most of which apply to any good music teaching session!) where he suggests children should set the instruments up themselves:

"The children should learn to arrange and prepare the instruments by themselves from the very beginning, especially building the bar instruments, breaking them down, and putting them away, so that they become familiar with the 'tools' in every situation" (p. 23).

The learning that took place as they did this task became more evident as the unit progressed:

Journal entry 5 September 2011

I realised today that through doing this task themselves (setting up instruments), the children are learning about the difference in pitch between the soprano, alto and bass instruments, (for example, in some cases, the soprano xylophone is bigger in size than the alto and they realised they had to make the sound before they could tell which was which), they're taking the opportunity to experiment with different mallets to decide which are going to make the best sound and they are beginning to develop an affinity with a particular instrument that they might use in their compositions.

It was evident from the beginning of the unit of work that allowing sufficient time and opportunity for exploration was very important in the creative process. While it was hard not to feel pressured by deadlines, it was clear from my journal entries, that the students needed time to explore and experiment with sounds and sound-makers, accept and reject ideas that came up and refine their work.

Journal entry 1 August 2011

In introducing the untuned percussion instruments today I was surprised to find that not all the children knew the names of the instruments and that they had very limited ideas about the varying techniques that could be used to produce different sounds. Consequently we spent some time sharing our knowledge about instrument names and had some exploratory time to see how many different ways they could make a sound on each of the instruments. They enjoyed the opportunity to think outside the box about how the sounds could be produced and hopefully this has extended the sound palette available to them.

As the deadline loomed close, I could sense that some of the children were tempted to take shortcuts or rush through the process, and the importance of allowing sufficient time and resources began to show up in my journal regularly.

Journal entry 7 November 2011

Some of the children expressed anxiety today that the performance date was looming and they were worried they wouldn't get finished in time. A big part of the problem is taking children away from their composing to perform in the compositions of their classmates. I have made the offer to come to school over a few lunch-hours to allow them time to come and work on their compositions in the music room with access to all the resources and my support.

Early on in the programme I realised that I had made some false assumptions about the ability of children to work together in a group situation and I needed to facilitate successful group collaboration. In one session I had given them a movement task to do in a group and quickly realised that they weren't sure where to start in sharing ideas and making decisions that would result in each person feeling they were a valued member of the group.

Journal Entry 1 August 2011

The children really struggled with the body sculpture activity today-they were self-conscious and half of them stood still looking very lost and not making a contribution. I need to model clearly the expectations and demonstrate in a practical way.

Consequently I adjusted my planning and introduced some activities to foster simple collaboration through the making and accepting of offers from classmates. We then took the time to discuss the roles students can play in a collaborative task and how they need to ensure that everyone feels they have an important role to play. It was clear that this group of children had some very strong leaders and a small group who lacked confidence in sharing ideas, so it was important that I drew on the different strengths of the children and facilitated activities with care to ensure the varying needs of the group were met.

In my reflective journal I would regularly note examples of children who had surprised me with a particular action or comment, and how I might use that teachable moment to enhance that child's learning.

Journal Entry 29 August 2011

Brendon surprised me today. He is usually very quiet and reticent and when the group was established to create a performance piece I expected him to take a back seat role. Instead he sat for a while listening to the others, nodding and suddenly said, "Why don't we try this? Chanting the poem is a good place to start, then we could make up a body percussion pattern to go with the poem-like each of us doing one line at a time then coming in at different places... like a round."

I went over straight away to ensure maximum benefit from his contribution, praised him for his idea and asked one of the other children to repeat back what Brendon had suggested. Debbie did this successfully and there was a huge sense of relief from the group that they had a starting point.

Another example that provided an opportunity to exploit a teachable moment was later in the process when Dylan came to ask about changing the key of the piece. Up until this stage all the children had been working in C pentatonic and I had taken it for granted that they would be satisfied with that:

Journal entry 31 October 2011

Dylan was working away on his own, playing a pentatonic melody he had created. When I came over to him he looked up and said; "I really want my piece to have an F in it" and proceeded to play me a piece in F pentatonic. What a great teachable moment! I sat with him and explained how a pentatonic scale is made up and challenged him to tell me what notes would be removed to create an F pentatonic and he rightfully told me B and E (I didn't push the fact that it would be a Bb at this stage!). He was delighted to find that the melody he had created was in F pentatonic. Even better, he was able to explain it to the rest of the class when I asked him to at the end of the lesson.

Once the composition process began, my journal entries revealed how important clearly established expectations were to the students' feelings of success. Throughout the early sessions, I had provided many models of the elemental composition process, modelling some aspects myself and providing multiple opportunities for the children to explore and experiment with the material at every stage. I was, therefore, confident that when it was their turn to compose in an elemental style, they would be very enthusiastic and approach the task with gusto. I was disappointed when this did not happen and knew I needed to reflect on why this hadn't gone according to plan and devise some strategies to support the children to understand what was expected.

Journal entry 26 September 2011

Today's session is the second one I have videoed and I was interested to see what I could observe about my management of this session. It was a bit of an eye-opener for me - after all the preparation we had done I had made the assumption that the children would begin the task confidently and know exactly what was expected. How wrong I was!! After discussion, where we went through all the tools they had to bring to their composition, I sent them off to begin work. I closely observed their immediate response to the task and what their first steps would be. Two out of the sixteen children picked up an instrument and started playing around with notes. Two went straight to the piano and told me they'd made up something already and the rest bunched up in groups and talked to each other. Although the conversations began with ideas for their compositions it quickly changed direction to just being general chat or a lot of random drum and tambourine banging!

This session reminded me how important it was that children understood exactly what was expected of them. I knew they had the tools they needed but it was obvious they weren't sure what to do with those tools. It was at this point that I realised I needed to check their understanding of elemental composition. Understanding what Orff meant by elemental music was one thing but relating that information to what was meant by elemental composition was a challenge not just for the students but for me as well.

Many of the children had a very traditional view of what composition was and, on most of the early days, they would come rushing into class with a composition they had written at home and wanted to perform for us. Because it was important that these efforts were acknowledged and valued, I always gave them a chance to demonstrate what they had created, but I was aware that I needed to articulate what is meant by elemental composition and explain this to the children in a way that didn't provide an obstacle to their creativity.

Having considered all the various definitions of elemental composition it was time to formulate my own:

Journal entry 26 September 2011

Writing a definition of elemental composition is much harder than I thought! Here's my attempt: "Elemental composition is an artistic process that begins with a source of motivation and uses simple compositional processes such as imitation, repetition and variation and the media of speech, movement, song, playing and improvisation along with the building blocks of rhythm and melody to create music that all can play with success and enjoyment."

At the beginning of the next session I shared my definition with the children and we went back over the key features of an elemental composition. I explained how important it was that their composition could be played by anyone and that the beauty of an elemental composition was in its simplicity. The children went away after this session much clearer about what was expected of them.

The importance of modelling was a theme across many of my journal entries. By observing the models provided by their peers or me, the children had a starting point and/or a framework on which to build their own ideas.

Journal entry 27 June 2011

Today I introduced the so-me interval by modelling a simple question, "Whose name is Celia" (so me me so me) and singing back the answer: "My name is Celia" (so me me so me). The children haven't worked with sol-fa names and hand-signs before so it's valuable new learning for them. Once I'd modelled a

possibility, I suggested to the children that they could vary it e.g. me so so so me. Some were braver than others but they all had a go.

Along with modelling specific ideas and processes I wanted to show the children that I was a composer too - I wanted to model the act of rejecting, accepting and developing ideas along the way.

Journal entry 11 July 2011

...we discussed what an ostinato was (to the children who had participated in Junior SMP, it was not a new term). I wanted to move them on from just using some lines from the poem as their ostinati but I also wanted to model the composition process of rejecting and developing ideas so I began with a couple of less interesting ostinati-“potions” repeated and “frog’s legs, rat’s tails” and shared with the children that they seemed a bit boring and I needed to come up with something more engaging, more interesting. My next idea was “smelly socks” and we decided that was going to provide more interest to our piece. It was interesting to note on the video that, after I had given them the idea, there was no holding them back! After lots of ideas we chose “sniff sniff yuk yuk” and “witches home for dinner”

In this same session we had lots of laughter as the children came up with zany ideas and I recorded in my diary, the benefits of including humour in the children’s learning.

Journal entry 11 July 2011

It was great to see the fun the children had with words today and it made me aware of how valuable humour can be in enhancing learning and strengthening relationships.

The importance of humour had been noted in an earlier entry:

Journal entry 20 June 2011

The children enjoyed the chant – it was a good opportunity for them to be expressive, have a good laugh at themselves (and me!) and for me to set out clearly the fundamental elements they will be using in their compositions.

A change I made to my planned strategy was a decision to allow a range of groupings to cater for the different social needs of the students. I had initially thought they should all be creating their own composition so I could evaluate them individually and monitor their individual needs better. However it was clear from my recorded observations that there were children who really needed the impetus of a friend to spark ideas and share the load.

Journal entry 3 October 2011

I was observing the children carefully today to try and determine the strategies they were using to work on this composition task. Five of the children were working independently, very focused on the task and spending the time exploring sound possibilities. Ten of the children were, however, talking to their friends, focused on the task, but clearly needing someone to bounce ideas off. I think perhaps I need to allow the children to collaborate if they want to – there are clearly some children who need the impetus and support of a classmate.

Interestingly, most children still chose to work on their own.

Journal entry 31 October 2011

As a matter of interest I queried the children as to why they had made the choice of whether to work alone or in pairs and there was quite a range of answers from, “I find it hard to work with other people and feel more satisfied when I have done something on my own” to “I have lots of ideas and I don’t want to share them!”

Once the composition task had begun, an important theme began to emerge in my journal. Instead of the class-based teaching I had been doing, my interventions became individually tailored to each individual or group. Sometimes it came about as the result of a request, other times from a perceived need determined from my observations.

Journal entry 26 September

Watching the video today I was a lot more aware of what was happening in the room that I had been during the lesson. Jane (who took the video for me) focused in on all the groups and the individuals and it was intriguing to see how they

were working. I realised that there was a lot I could do to support each of them in the next few weeks as their compositions progressed. Karuna, for example, was trying to work out how to play the vibra-slap and Susan was writing down some rhythms she was working out on the guiro and will need some support with that.

Journal entry 7 November 2011

...Dylan, who is working alone, really wanted to write down his melody in conventional notation so “other people can play it.” I drew up some large staves and sat with him to explain how the melody could be written. He already had a basic knowledge but I was able to support him with some extra tips and guidelines...

...Susan and April, who are working together, were having trouble remembering their melody so I have recorded it on my phone and emailed it to them so they can learn it before the next session...

...Abigail asked for ideas about which instrument might sound best for the traffic chaos in her earthquake composition....

...Ben just asked me to come and have a listen to what he had made up so far...

An important pedagogical strategy that emerged from my journal entries was the provision of opportunities for the students to reflect on their own and others' work, and refine their ideas as a result of the reflection. I found this a really useful process, which often resulted in the children borrowing ideas from each other to adapt to their compositions.

Early on in the programme I encouraged the children to reflect on the process we had been through as a class:

Journal entry 11 July

Today we had a useful reflection session at the end of the lesson, which was on the video so I have been looking back over it. I asked the children to tell me what they thought they had learned today and we talked about learning a new poem understanding what an ostinato is, learning about the element of texture for the first time and the importance of beat when we are working together collaboratively. We then went over our “composition” and I asked them to think about whether there was anything we could do to improve it... It was good to see

on the video how engaged they were in the reflection-they had lots of things they wanted to talk about and share with each other

On some occasions they would reflect individually or in their small groups:

Journal entry 9 November 2011

It was interesting to hear April and Susan talk about their process today. They have used a poem they had made up as their beginning point and were putting their ostinati to body percussion. They expressed a concern that it was “too dense”; that they felt it was hard to distinguish the different ostinati. Next session I’ll sit with them and share the idea of complementary ostinati where one ostinato fills a space left by another.

In this example above, I was able to tailor an intervention to meet the needs of this particular group

At the end of each session I gave the children a chance to share their processes with the rest of the class. This encouraged them to articulate clearly what they were trying to achieve and also suggested to me some possible individual interventions that might support them.

Journal entry 14 November 2011

Ethan seems to be lacking a real sense of direction-he has a guitar piece he has learnt and really wants to include it in his composition. I asked him to talk to the group about his process because I was interested in how he might articulate it. Brendon, his partner was obviously a bit frustrated because Ethan was so determined to use his guitar tune.... then Ben came up with the great idea that Ethan’s tune could be the A section of a rondo. Awesome idea Ben!! Next week I will sit with Ethan and Brendon and see if that is a possibility that appeals to them.

At other times, the children were able to reflect on their own work and make refinements, or get ideas from their classmates that they could adapt:

Journal entry 21 November 2011

Dylan got some great feedback from the others in the group today. The group who were performing his piece played it through as best they could. Some of them were a little bit uncertain about exactly what they were supposed to do and when they were supposed to do it! When asked to reflect, Dylan admitted he needed to clarify with his group exactly what he wanted and that he would go away and write some instructions down for himself and his group. Debbie suggested to him that because the first bit was “so cool” why didn’t he make his composition in ternary form then “they could do the cool bit again.” There were lots of assenting nods.

At the next session, it was affirming to hear that another student had liked the idea of ternary form so much he decided to do the same with his composition! The following entry was an example of the way the children gave some really constructive feedback to each other.

Journal entry 24 November 2011

Katherine’s group performed her composition this afternoon. The musicians complimented her on her excellent organisation, that instructions were clear and they all knew what they had to do. Pippa loved the use of the rain-stick to create the effect of water and thought it would be good to have more of that. April made the suggestion that there could be “more louds and softs to make a contrast and make it more dramatic” Katherine really liked that idea and said she would try that next week and see if it worked.

The “tool-box” I had created for the children acted as a useful reflective strategy. After each individual or pair had presented their composition, I sat with them and encouraged them to reflect on their work, what they felt was working well and how they could improve it. I would draw their attention to the “tool-box” and wrote down the ideas they had about how to move forward with their composition.

Journal entry 14 November 2011

I spent some time with Abigail and Helen today. They presented their composition to the class and I could see they were a bit frustrated about how it had sounded – it wasn’t what they had imagined it was going to be. I asked them what they thought was missing and neither of them was really sure. I pulled out

the “toolbox” handout and we looked through it to see if there was something on there that sparked an idea. Helen thought perhaps a space for some improvisation would extend the piece and provide some contrast and interest.

Journal entry 24 November 2011

Karuna commented today that she was showing her parents the “toolbox” and, in response to some questions they asked her, she suddenly had the idea to add in a simple movement sequence in the middle of her piece. She rounded up her performers and gave them some ideas for movement – some of them were a little self-conscious but, with a bit of a boost from me and some suggestions from the group itself, it all came together quite quickly.

In summary, there were a number of prominent themes that emerged from my journal entries: the importance of creating a supportive learning environment; making connections to children’s previous learning; integrating the knowledge and skill learning with creative learning; the importance of sound classroom management techniques; allowing sufficient time and opportunity for exploration; facilitating collaborative learning; exploiting the teachable moment to enhance learning; clearly established expectations; the importance of modelling; including humour in the children’s learning; allowing a range of groupings; individually tailored interventions; and the provision of opportunities for the students to reflect on their own and others’ work, and refine their ideas as a result of the reflection.

5.1.2 Activity design factors

It was important to me that I got to know the children quickly and that I engaged them right from the beginning in practical music making. In analysing my data, a re-occurring theme was the success of activities that were personalised and kept the children energised and task-focused.

Journal entry 20 June 2011

The name game was an excellent tool for me to familiarize myself with the children’s names in a fun way. It also energized them and warmed them up for the learning ahead. I found this activity a great tool for enabling children to focus in the present as the sequencing takes a lot of concentration and keeps them focused.

Journal entry 11 July 2011

The children loved the sound around game-it was a good way to start the lesson-they had to be 100% focused waiting for their turn and there was always great excitement when someone got distracted and we had to wait for them. As we sped up they got even more focused because they were determined to get the sound around without a break. A great way to energise them for the rest of the session!

It was also evident in my analysis that, because I was working to a deadline, I designed activities that were relevant to both short and long-term goals. While my long-term goal was for each of the students to compose in an elemental style, my short-term goals were around equipping them with the skills, knowledge and motivation they needed to compose.

Journal entry 20 June 2011

...good opportunity...for me to set out clearly the fundamental elements they will be using in their compositions. We took time to summarise the six elements of beat, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, pitch and tone colour on the board, explore other examples and talk about degrees of the element, such as soft and getting gradually louder or fast and getting gradually slower.

Journal entry 11 July 2011

Understanding the concept of ostinato is absolutely fundamental to the Orff approach so it was an important focus of today's lesson. We had fun saying the word in our best Italian accents and explored lots of possibilities of ostinati for the poem. I emphasised the fact that ostinati can be rhythmic or melodic and we played with both.

Journal entry 8 August 2011

Correct technique on tuned instruments is a skill I am really fussy about - using alternative mallets, striking the bar in the middle and bouncing off the bar are skills I constantly reinforce. Although the children find it hard to understand as, at this level, one mallet seems so much easier, I continually remind them that they need to get into good habits so they have the skills to play more complex tuned percussion pieces. I also tell them how good the bilateral movement is for their brains!

The value of activities that made links to their everyday lives was evident throughout the journal: For example, when I introduced the so-me interval in Week 2...

Journal entry 27 June 2011

After we had sung it a few times, using our names, I explained to the children that it was the notes used in the “I’m the king of the castle” and “na na na na na”(so me me so me) and suddenly they clicked on. After I explained that it was a natural playground chant, I encouraged them to come up with some so-me chants of their own. We got “My dad’s a policeman!” “Muuuuu---uum!” “ Go away-it’s my turn!”

...and choosing a poem that I thought they would relate to:

Journal entry 11 July 2011

To introduce the concept of starting with a poem and building a composition around it, I chose a poem that I thought would appeal to the children...and I was right! Nothing like a smelly sock to get them engaged! Observing myself on video tonight, I noticed that the children really engaged with this nonsense poem, perhaps because I presented it with humour and exaggeration. They all helped me say it in a scary voice and I could see that they were 100% focused on the task.

I was surprised at how much they enjoyed the Jon Madin (1998) song, “If You’re Happy and You Know It” but realised quickly that, because they knew the song well and it was a humorous version, they engaged with it immediately and had fun with it.

Journal entry 8 August 2011

They loved the Jon Madin songs we did today. I wasn’t sure how they would react to singing a song they had sung in pre-school but the appeal was immediate. They knew this song, they could relate to it and it was fun and easy to accomplish. It was a really fun session!

Another important theme to emerge from my journal entries was the importance of providing activities that enabled the practical application of new skills and knowledge to facilitate the children's learning.

Journal entry 27 June 2011

Once we had practised our so-me chants, I brought out the chime bars and gave each of them two bars a minor-3rd apart. It was getting very noisy so I sent them off around the playgrounds and challenged them to come back with a so-me melody for the phrase I gave them...when we reflected on our learning at the end of the session there were lots of positive comments about how much they had enjoyed the chance to practise on their own without any distractions.

We came back to this activity later on before I introduced the pentatonic and it was clear that this revision process needed to be ongoing.

Journal entry 15 August 2011

After introducing the pentatonic scale I asked the children if they remembered the so-me interval. It was disappointing to me that about five of them looked at me blankly - I'm not sure if they didn't remember or they hadn't focused on the question! However, there were six hands up and the clearest memory was of the playground chants they had come up with. We were able to link the new learning about the pentatonic scale back to the so-me interval and I discussed how every pentatonic scale had a so-me interval in it.

It was evident across a number of journal entries that the children enjoyed and benefitted from using a range of different resources to consolidate skills and understandings.

Journal entry 27 June 2011

Rhythm chairs worked well – because it was such a kinaesthetic activity the boys particularly enjoyed it and they had fun seeing if they could fit four people on a chair to make semiquavers.

Journal entry 11 July 2011

The children loved playing with the cups creating rhythms - they were fascinated at how they could use something so ordinary to create rhythms. On the video I

was able to see one group who set themselves a challenge to decide how they could depict minims and semibreves using the cups (I had only introduced crotchets and quavers at this stage) and they had a lot of fun trying out various options.

In analysing my journal entries, an important theme to emerge in relation to activity design was how well the students in this group responded when a new concept was taught in small, sequential steps. In this way their learning was carefully scaffolded to ensure maximum understanding.

Journal entry 4 July 2011

The use of echo imitation is a really important tool in Orff Schulwerk so I spent some time scaffolding children through the steps. I started very simply with clapping a four-beat pattern, extended it to an eight-beat pattern, included other body percussion and voice sounds and then encouraged them to make up some of their own for their classmates to echo. Finally we tried it walking to the beat while echoing an eight-beat pattern...

Journal entry 15 August 2011

...we took some time to explore with it (the pentatonic scale), building from echoing one note to two then three. I then gave some children a turn at playing a four beat rhythm on their instrument using one note and the class echoed the same rhythm on a note of their choice. This was a safe and accessible activity for them all while they became familiar with the sound of the pentatonic scale.

The importance of careful scaffolding was confirmed in a less successful session, where I introduced children to graphic notation and didn't pace the lesson well.

Journal entry 12 September 2011

Introducing graphic notation to the children wasn't very successful today. I handed out the cards and sent them away immediately into groups to interpret the card through sound and movement. They were very unfocussed and it was soon clear that only one of the groups really understood what to do. I brought them all back together, apologised for rushing the lesson, and took a step back, guiding them more slowly through the task with smaller steps...the children's second attempt at the activity was certainly more successful.

The value of activities that enabled the children to be active in their learning, sleeves rolled up, having a go and trying things out for themselves, was evident throughout the journal. Through hands-on, practical activities, they were able to construct their own knowledge linking what they knew with what they were finding out and, equally as important, sharing and discussing with others in order to solve the problems inherent in the activities.

Journal entry 27 June 2011

It was great to see the children today working away on their own in the playground exploring and experimenting with the so-me interval using the chime bars. They were so engaged-I didn't see one child who wasn't focused on the task!

Journal entry 22 August 2011

I really enjoyed observing the children in their groups inventing melodies for the poem. They all spent some time alone trying things out, working out a melody, discarding it when it didn't fit and finally reaching a result that they could share with the others. In one particular group I was astounded at the problem solving that was going on as they pieced together the melodies they had created. Their discussion was animated and purposeful and I realised how valuable a creative, small group exercise like this is for children's learning.

Journal entry 19 September 2011

...Having been active performers in the composition we had written together, they were already aware of some of the pitfalls to avoid and had some fresh ideas they wanted to try out.

It was interesting to note from several journal entries the importance of the activity being designed in such a way that the students had choices on the level at which they could enter. In order to start from something known where they felt safe to explore and take some risks, it was important that, for some activities, there were choices they could make about where they slotted in.

Journal entry 27 June 2011

It was interesting to note the students who found singing a so-me phrase on their own a little bit threatening. I realised that there was quite a range of confidence so, in my modelling, I stressed that the phrase could be as simple as they liked- for example the question all on “so” and the answer all on “me”. This seemed to ease the worry some of the children were experiencing.

Journal entry 15 August 2011

...in their first improvisation task I could see instantly that some of the children felt very insecure and afraid of making a fool of themselves...I talked to them before we started and told them how wonderful a simple improvisation was! I demonstrated how they could take the rhythm of the first line of ‘Potions in the Pot’ and play that rhythm on one note of the pentatonic scale and that would be awesome!! “We need balance in our improvisations, otherwise the overall effect will be boring.” So, I stressed that I wanted some of them to do a simple improvisation and others, if they wanted could do something a little more complex. The relief on their faces was palpable! Now they all had a place they could start at and feel that their contribution was worthwhile.

In summary, the themes that emerged from my reflections on the important features of successful activity design were that children learnt best when the activity: was personalised, energising and task-focused; was relevant to both the short and the long term goal; ensured learning was practised and revised; made links to their daily lives; consolidated learning using different resources; was active, enabling them to construct knowledge; was clearly sequenced with scaffolded steps; and allowed choices of entry level.

5.2 Critical friend observations

My two critical friends were selected for their particular strengths: Observer A (Megan) was a trained teacher and lecturer at a College of Education, who had completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Education specialising in Orff Schulwerk and Level 3 Orff training; Observer B (Sarah) was the Deputy Principal of a full primary school who was regularly appraising teachers on the staff of her school

and had experience in, and knowledge of, using the criteria set out by the New Zealand Teachers' Council for teacher appraisal.

For the observation I asked Megan to focus on aspects of the Orff pedagogy evident in the session and to critique the activities facilitated and their relevance and links to the Orff approach.

Sarah was asked to focus particularly on the teaching pedagogy she observed. Independently she chose to take anecdotal notes and to focus on three of the criteria under Professional Knowledge in Practice from the NZ Teachers' Council criteria for Teacher Registration: Conceptualise, plan and implement an appropriate learning programme; Promote a collaborative, inclusive and supportive learning environment; Demonstrate in practice their knowledge and understanding of how ākongā learn.

5.2.1 Pedagogical strategies

Because this programme was based on the Orff Schulwerk approach to music and dance education, the feedback I got in relation to my adherence to Orff pedagogy was an important theme that emerged from my critical friend observations.

Megan made the following observations about Orff pedagogy in the lesson she observed:

Observation 3 October 2011

Orff media had been introduced and reviewed, with most students confidently using the vocabulary. (Beat, rhythm, improvisation, pentatonic, bordun, soundscape, binary and rondo form were discussed during this time)

In addition to fundamental Orff approaches, with an emphasis on processes rather than product initially, and transfer from text to instrument; the opportunity to experiment and play around with ideas was provided in an accepting positive environment.

To observe a confident young boy organise individuals in a small room to unpack his ideas, then direct a musical performance in front of the class was a perfect

example of Orff-Schulwerk in action. This creative, playful, child-centred approach was clearly evident in the session.

Although Sarah was not as familiar with Orff pedagogy she felt she had discussed it with me often enough to be able to make the following observation:

Observation 21 November 2011

Celia has a clear understanding of the aims of Orff Schulwerk. She has a realistic idea of the steps needed to achieve these aims with children who are new to the practices.

Another common theme across both observations was the importance of establishing a safe and supportive environment.:

Observation 3 October 2011

Celia encouraged students to stretch their brains and they were keen to share ideas and volunteer their compositions without fear of judgment from teacher or peers.

...the opportunity to experiment and play around with ideas was provided in an accepting positive environment

Observation 21 November 2011

The children were all working cooperatively...Their interactions were respectful

The importance of allowing time for reflection and feedback was evident in each of the observations:

Observation 21 November 2011

You questioned each child about their composition progress. Others offered advice... They gave feedback to each other and received feedback to improve their work...They thought critically about their compositions and identified areas for development...

An excellent suggestion for a possible change to the reflection process was made by Megan:

Observation 3 October 2011

The establishment of music buddies could provide the opportunity to share ideas with peers first and encourage responses from a wider group, and those less confident to speak up during the mat teaching time.

The “Tool Box” was also referred to by Megan as a useful reflection tool for children to encourage them to extend their ideas and remind them of the language associated with elemental composition.

Observation 3 October 2011

The handout for students provided entitled “The tools we have for elemental composition” is a superb visual support/template for individuals and was also utilised to focus a class discussion in preparation for composition fine-tuning.

As well as feedback, Sarah noted that I had used feed-forward on one occasion:

Observation 21 November 2011

You praised the middle section and gave advice (a next step) about rethinking the use of the chimes. Kerri responded positively and went back to rework this section

Facilitating group learning was mentioned by both Megan and Sarah as an important strategy to promote learning:

Observation 3 October 2011 Megan

The final ten minutes of this session were very encouraging, as students worked with others to perform their compositions. To observe a confident young boy organise individuals in a small room to unpack his ideas, then direct a musical performance in front of the class was a perfect example of Orff-Schulwerk in action.

Observation 21 November 2011 Sarah

The children were all working cooperatively...Their interactions were respectful. Children were able to take on leadership roles when required and step back into being led at other times.

The group in the side room had incorporated movements into their performance. They were assisting each other to get these coordinated. In each team observed the children were working cooperatively and with a clear sense of purpose.

Closely related to facilitating collaborative learning is the building of leadership skills within a group situation. With each composer needing to organise group members to play his or her composition, it was important that they show leadership and take control of the process. Sarah noted the following...

Observation 3 October 2012

To observe a confident young boy organise individuals in a small room to unpack his ideas, then direct a musical performance in front of the class was a perfect example of Orff-Schulwerk in action

...and Megan was impressed with the leadership skills of one of the young composers...

Observation 21 November 2011

An independent group I observed were well organised by the composer who conducted and corrected as needed in a positive manner. She was very specific about the dynamics of what she wanted (how to shake the tambourine)

Children were able to take on leadership roles when required and step back into being led at other times.

In analysing the data from my critical friend observations it was interesting to note the emphasis on classroom management from Sarah. She observed that I had taken some time to talk to Brendon to re-focus him on the task. In general both observers commented on the way the children were engaged and focused on the task at hand without allowing others to distract them...

Observation 21 November 2011

You reminded Brendon to sit properly “so you can concentrate”. Brendon had some challenging behaviours that you managed calmly with firm but gentle reminders...

You roved around redirecting Brendon’s off-task behaviour.

There was a lot of focused activity with many instruments being used. The atmosphere however was calm, quiet and very well managed. Each group was able to work without distraction from the others...

...and, although not specifically mentioned by Megan was implied in one of her observations:

Observation 3 October 2011

The specially selected class of Year 5 students was enthusiastic and motivated throughout the hour-long session

Both observers touched on the need to set goals and challenge the children to extend their learning:

Observation 3 October 2011

...showing evidence that teacher modelling and extension of musical skills have been a strong component during the series.

Celia encouraged students to stretch their brains

Observation 21 November 2011

Challenge was established for Katherine and her teammates to have her work ready to perform as ‘a work in progress’.

You asked some questions about the form of the piece and challenged the girls to use precise technical vocabulary.

Teacher modelling was mentioned by Megan as a pedagogical strategy that had been used successfully....

Observation 3 October 2011

Celia calmly facilitated the composition lesson, showing evidence that teacher modelling and extension of musical skills have been a strong component during the series...

...and the value of using humour and fun was noted by Sarah:

Observation 21 November 2011

There was a relaxed sense of humour and enjoyment of the group activity.

To summarise, the pedagogical strategies that the observers noted me using successfully were: adherence to Orff pedagogy; creating a safe and trusting environment that enabled children to take risks; allowing time for reflection, feedback and feed-forward; facilitating group learning; the importance of sound classroom management; setting goals and challenging the children to extend their learning; teacher modelling; and the importance of using humour as a tool to facilitate learning.

The suggestion that the children have “music buddies” where they can first share and feedback with a friend as an excellent one for ensuring those children who are less confident to share with the whole group have an opportunity to reflect in a safe environment.

5.2.2 Activity design factors

The feedback I received from the critical friends about activity design was limited. This reflects the lack of guidance I gave them; in hindsight I should have been much clearer about what specific aspects I wanted them to focus on. However, there were a few themes that emerged from the data.

The use of Orff media was emphasised by both observers:

Observation 3 October 2011 Megan

The Orff elements of music and rhythm; singing and playing were successfully integrated throughout the session. A range of Orff instruments were in use, as well as students using woodwind and piano to trial melodic ideas.

Orff media had been introduced and reviewed, with most students confidently using the vocabulary. (Beat, rhythm, improvisation, pentatonic, bordun, soundscape, binary and rondo form were discussed during this time).

Observation 21 November 2011 Sarah

Extra instruments were offered, “to enrich your composition”. This was taken up by a number of children who explored the sounds and selected a few. The children quickly set up their workspace and instruments and collected their scores.

Sarah noted the value of the warm-up game in energizing and focusing the children:

Observation 3 October 2011

They quickly responded to the call to warm up (Bella, Parta Zum) singing patterns. The relationships and expectations were well established. Children were attentive, focused and striving.

They participated as a whole class in a very useful and challenging warm up exercise.

Purposeful teaching, where the activities presented are related clearly to the goals of the programme, was referred to by Sarah:

Observer 21 November 2011

“What’s that supposed to teach us?” asked one child. This question was opened to the group and they were able to come up with answers about brains being ready for composition and percussion.

Celia has a clear understanding of the aims of Orff Schulwerk. She has a realistic idea of the steps needed to achieve these aims with children who are new to the practices. The children knew the expected learning outcomes and these were voiced at relevant times in the lesson.

Two other aspects of activity design that were noted by Sarah were:

...activities that encouraged thinking skills...

Celia involved the children in a range of thinking and learning activities during the session

...and activities that increased in complexity:

The activity developed in complexity with various movements and pace

A valid observation, both written and verbal, was made by Megan who offered some feedback about the limited amount of movement evident. We discussed this together, and I explained about the movement activities we had done, but knew this was an area I needed to work on. The integration of music and movement didn't always happen naturally for me. Megan gave me some advice about how I might include some movement in the programme:

Observation 3 October 2011

This aspect can be a challenge in terms of your time frame; maybe group choreography to selected student compositions with use of scarves, ribbons etc to support movement might be a solution.

In summary, aspects of activity design which my critical friend observers noted as contributing towards successful outcomes were: activities using Orff media; games that energised and focused the children; activities which are clearly related to the goals of the programme; activities that promote thinking skills and activities that increase in complexity.

An area that needed further development was the facilitation of activities with a strong movement focus.

5.3 Focus group interviews

5.3.1 Mid-point interviews

Halfway through the programme, I randomly selected five of the children to be part of a focus group. The five children were Brendon, Dylan, Susan, Jemima and Katherine. These children met with me at the mid-point and end of the programme to share their learning, to discuss the impact the programme has had on their learning and what aspects of my teaching had been a catalyst or obstacle to their learning.

The questions asked were around their enjoyment of the programme, any aspects which had been frustrating or disappointing, what aspects of my teaching had supported or hindered their music learning, what they learned from each other and how they felt about their composition at both the mid- and the end-point of the programme.

Although I had a well-defined set of questions, I would often take one of the points a student made and ask some supplementary questions around that topic. The conversation would regularly take off on tangents as they shared their thoughts with me and bounced off each other, resulting in some rich data.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed before being analysed for re-occurring themes.

5.3.1.1 Pedagogical strategies

The theme that was the most prevalent in all the children's responses in relation to pedagogical strategies was the importance of facilitating group learning opportunities.

Working with my friends to make up a movement thing and always feeling what I suggested was good. (Katherine)

And it's good being able to work with my friends and try out our ideas and do the movement and dance things. (Susan)

Working in groups and having a chance to be with my friends...I like discussing things and sharing our ideas and making up stuff together. (Dylan)

In particular, two of the children commented on the value of learning to offer and accept ideas in the group situation:

It's good to work in groups and learning how important it is to offer ideas and listen to others ideas, yes offer and accept's a sort of motto. (Jemima)

Yeah we're doing relating to others in our class and one time we talked about music and making up stuff together and how we had to value our friend's ideas and our other teacher said that was good. (Brendon)

The importance of establishing a safe and supportive environment emerged consistently from the children's responses:

Well at first it was pretty scary and I felt really nervous and I didn't want to improvise but now it feels OK...we all have a go and sometimes it sounds good and sometimes it sucks. (Brendon)

It's cool that everyone's nice...most of the time - it was good that you told us that it was OK to make a mistake and that we should never laugh at a person... but only with them, like if they're laughing too... (Susan)

I felt really upset when Karuna laughed when I suggested that ostinato last time – it was embarrassing and I didn't want to do it again or make suggestions. (Katherine)

Another reoccurring theme was the importance of ensuring the aims and expectations were clear:

At first I was kinda disappointed that I couldn't use any of the things I've made up before - songs and stuff... cos Celia kept saying this had to be able to be taught to young kids and to remember what we meant by elemental music. That's taken a while to understand. (Susan)

Yeah I thought we would be doing music on the piano and instruments like that like violin and stuff and making up tunes and songs. At first I didn't get what we had to do and that's been a bit frustrating. I like all the things we're doing but I don't get the composing stuff all the time. (Brendon)

According to some of the children teacher modelling was an important strategy to support their learning:

Sometimes when I'm a bit unsure what to do Celia shows us how we could play... different ideas... and then encourages us to work with that example and improve it or build on it and that's great. (Katherine)

Today I just liked how you showed me how to play the thunder tube-I couldn't work it out! (Brendon)

I always feel more confident if Celia shows us something...like how to make an ostinato...so we do some examples ...and then she sends us away to try things ourselves-it kinda gives me an idea of where to start. (Susan)

When the other teacher came in, she showed me how to play the xylophone with two hands at once and that was really cool because I hadn't thought of doing that. (Dylan)

Along with teacher modelling, another important theme to emerge was the value of teacher listening and giving feedback.

Sometimes I'm not sure what to do next and I know there's more I could do and when I ask Celia she has some good ideas for me to try. (Susan)

It's good when you come round and talk to us and ask us how we're going and we can ask you questions and you sometimes give us good ideas about how to make it better...like more interesting. Sometimes I don't like your idea though!! (Brendon)

I mean you listen to us and help us with ideas. (Dylan)

Yes listening to our ideas and giving us good ideas about how we can make it better and do improvements to our compositions. (Katherine)

Interestingly, one of the children commented on how she appreciated constructive critique.

It's good...I appreciate it that you don't go yay, yay, yay, fantastic all the time but you told me that there were some good ideas but how about trying this... perhaps I could try this...and showed me. That was really helpful. (Katherine)

Use of humour in the teaching process was emphasised by all of the children as a key factor in their enjoyment of the programme and their enthusiasm for the composition task.

I think it's good that you tease us and make it funny sometimes. (Brendon)

It's always good fun...you're nice and not grumpy and make us laugh so it's always good to look forward to. (Katherine)

A theme that became apparent as I analysed the mid-programme interview transcript was the importance of having sufficient time to explore and experiment. The students felt frustrated that they weren't getting enough time and opportunity to investigate all the possibilities for their compositions such as exploring different sound sources, and playing around with the instruments.

I feel really frustrated because I don't have enough time to get finished and then it's another whole week (Dylan)

Yeah I had some stuff I really wanted to try and was just getting into it and you made us come back together and I felt mad! (Jemima)

It would be good to have more time just to try different stuff-play around with the instruments and body sounds and stuff. (Katherine)

Another theme that surfaced was encouragement to use their knowledge in new and different contexts.

Yes I asked Celia why the pentatonic sounds good and she said that the semitones aren't there and I decided to try another pentatonic, like F. (Dylan)

I suddenly had an idea today that I could use an ostinato...like a repeated pattern.... in my body percussion ...like one person just doing their pattern over and over and the others joining in. (Jemima)

Fostering reciprocal learning, where the children learned from each other, was noted by three of the five students as an aspect they felt they benefitted from:

I really like doing movement with Kerri - she has lots of good ideas-she's bossy but it's good fun to make up dances with her. (Jemima)

Ben-he's good at writing the notes and he helped me with some of the rhythms. (Dylan)

I thought Melanie was really good at improvising and that was helpful – I tried to see how she did it and got ideas. (Susan)

Ensuring sound classroom management (or lack of it!) was an aspect that three of the five students shared as an issue. In particular, working in a noisy environment made it sometimes for some of the children to stay focused.

Sometimes it's too noisy and some people aren't on task and it's annoying because I can't concentrate. (Susan)

It's hard to work when everyone's noisy so it's good when you tell us to work pianissimo or mezzo forte and those cos everyone understands-it gets fortissimo quickly though!! (Dylan)

It's hard when everyone's playing instruments...it gets noisy and messy... but it's good we know how to get them out and put them away if we need something extra or we're not using something. (Jemima)

In summarising the pedagogical strategies that supported them in meeting the programme's learning objectives, the children's voice was very important. The themes that emerged from the mid-point interviews were: facilitating group learning opportunities; establishing a safe and supportive environment; ensuring the aims and expectations were clear; teacher modelling; teacher listening and giving feedback; constructive critiquing; the use of humour in the teaching process; providing sufficient time to explore and experiment; encouraging the children to use knowledge in different contexts; fostering reciprocal learning; and ensuring sound classroom management.

5.3.1.2 Activity design factors

In reflecting on the activity design, a number of themes emerged from the mid-point focus group interviews.

All of the children made reference to their enjoyment of activities which engage and energise:

I like starting with a game or a warm up that get our brains going. It gets me into the mood. (Katherine)

I've enjoyed doing fun stuff like Apple Tree and games like that and learning to say poems in lots of different voices. (Jemima)

Even when we are having fun there's music things we're learning like beat and rhythm and stuff (Katherine)

It's good starting off with a game – it helps take your mind off other stuff and gets me concentrating on music. (Dylan)

The boys had a definite preference for activities that were kinaesthetic and engaged their whole bodies or were just plain noisy!

Playing the borduns-whacking them really hard-that was fun (Dylan)

Playing the cool instruments like the thunder-tube. I played it up by Karuna's ear and she jumped out of her skin-it was funny! (Brendon)

Activities that encouraged a creative response, where they had the opportunity to invent something new or improvise on the spot, appeared to build confidence in the children, and this was seen as an important factor in their meeting the learning outcomes of the programme.

I really enjoyed doing the activities where we had to make up things, experiment around with the instruments and sounds... playing around with ideas...I didn't feel very confident at first but it definitely got easier. (Dylan)

Improvising - that's fun. Scary sometimes having to improvise in front of your friends but everyone's in the same position so it's usually OK. (Susan)

I feel really surprised sometimes when we're in our groups-sometimes I get lots of ideas and it's good to "throw things around"- except we all get excited and can't hear any of the ideas! (Jemima)

Another prominent theme across the journal entries in relation to activity design was the children's appreciation of activities that extended and challenged them.

Sometimes we do the same thing and it's a bit easy and I want to learn something new. (Katherine)

Yes, it's good to do something that stretches your brain - you kinda feel like you've really worked hard - thought of new things and ways to do stuff - sometimes I get a headache cos my brain's so full! (Dylan)

Linked closely with the importance of activities that extend and challenge, was the appreciation of new activities, where they could apply previous knowledge.

It was good when we went away with the new poem and had to think about ways to perform it. We remembered ostinato and bordun and those things and tried out a few. (Susan)

Yes, I just remembered those different borduns - I like the one where you cross over your hands so I put that in my composition. (Jemima)

Within this focus group there was a range of ability, so I was interested to know whether they all felt their individual needs had been met and whether they all had confidence to participate. The opportunity to enter into, or participate in, an activity at a level that was comfortable emerged as a theme from the children's responses.

I was a bit nervous when we had to improvise a body percussion pattern in the percussion rondo but then I remembered that it could be something simple so I did just one beat and three rests and then another beat and three rests and everyone laughed and Celia told me it was excellent. (Brendon)

Yes and some people did some really complicated ones to show off!...Dylan!!! (Katherine)

Writing the compositions was good because we could do lots of interesting things and make it as simple or as hard as we liked... I liked that. (Susan)

Once again, it was important to hear the children's voice and their opinions about what made an activity successful in promoting learning.

5.3.2 End-point interviews

I was interested to see if there were any additional pedagogical strategies and activity design factors that emerged from the interviews held with the same group of children at the completion of the programme.

5.3.2.1 Pedagogical strategies

Many of the comments were in a similar vein as in the mid-point interview, although there were some different emphases. For example, there were several comments about the importance of having sufficient time, not to explore at this point, but to add the finishing touches.

Not having the right amount of time to practice and teach the performers how to play my composition [was frustrating] (Katherine)

I felt a bit rushed at the end but I think it wouldn't have mattered how much more time I had-there's always more you can do. (Dylan)

It was good that we had the extra session because it gave me a chance to tidy up some bits-sort of put the finishing touches. (Jemima)

When asked what aspect of my teaching they found helpful, the value of feedback and advice was even more prominent than at the mid-programme interviews:

...giving me some suggestions for making my composition longer and more interesting, not short and boring. (Susan)

...how you helped us and gave advice. (Brendon)

Sometimes when I got stuck it was good to talk to you and you would give me suggestions or just encourage me to...you know... think about something different-that was helpful. (Dylan)

Another aspect, which the children emphasised at this point of the programme, was how valuable they found the support of their peers and my role in facilitating peer and group collaboration.

Being with other people who are also writing compositions was cool because you can see the progress of others and comment on them (Katherine)

That we were learning in a group...not as individuals. (Brendon)

The best part was working with Pippa and trying things out and sharing...like good ideas and sounds and helping each other. (Jemima)

Susan, though, had some frustrations around trying to communicate her ideas to others:

It was hard to get people to listen to what you wanted them to do. (Susan)

5.3.2.2 Activity design factors

In reference to activity design, the focus group students were specific about the activities they had found most enjoyable and useful. Once again games featured highly.

You played lots of games to help us understand. (Jemima)

I always looked forward to the games – they got my brain working! (Katherine)

Learning about the pentatonic scale and its use as an improvisation tool emerged as a prevalent theme, when the children were asked what activities they felt helped with the composition process.

The most useful thing I learned was how to play with the pentatonic scale – you could use it for the bordun and the ostinato and the melody and know it...that it would...that it sounded good and all fitted together. (Dylan)

Taking off the F and B for pentatonic playing...that was useful, especially for improvising. (Katherine)

Improvising is hard but I got better - I need lots of practice... yeah it was a good thing to learn about. (Susan)

Some children didn't enjoy every aspect of the learning. In one example the pressure to include too many aspects was difficult...

I haven't really liked how we had to add speech, body percussion and movement to our compositions. (Susan)

...and in another, some of the activities took him out of his comfort zone.

I didn't like the dancing or the body percussion-I didn't want to use them... they made me feel a bit silly. (Brendon)

Finally, the children all commented that they enjoyed both the composition process and the performance aspect of the programme.

I loved the compositions most as we got to make up whatever we liked. (Dylan)

I liked that we could experiment with instruments and choose the theme we wanted and putting all our ideas together. (Brendon)

It was great fun and I learnt a lot about composition and was surprised how good it was - it felt really good to have my composition performed. (Katherine)

It was really cool-different from what I expected-better than I expected-I thought it was going to be hard to compose but it sort of all came together-all the bits came together (Susan)

The main difference in the themes that emerged in the final focus group was the extra emphasis on the need for sufficient time to revise and refine. The value of teacher feedback and advice was again a prominent theme of teacher pedagogy.

When asked if there were any aspects of my teaching that acted as an obstacle or were unhelpful they all said they couldn't think of anything. As mentioned in the limitations of this study, it is likely that the close relationship we developed during the programme may have made it difficult for them to be critical or negative.

Games once more emerged as a favourite activity along with activities using the pentatonic scale and those that encouraged and developed improvisation skills. For two of the children the movement and body percussion activities weren't considered useful or enjoyable.

5.4 Activity questionnaire

At the end of the programme I wanted to find out how helpful the children found the specific activities I facilitated. They each filled out an activity questionnaire which asked them to fill in a chart identifying whether they found the listed activity extremely helpful, moderately helpful, made no difference, somewhat unhelpful or very unhelpful. The results of this questionnaire appear below in Table 5.1.

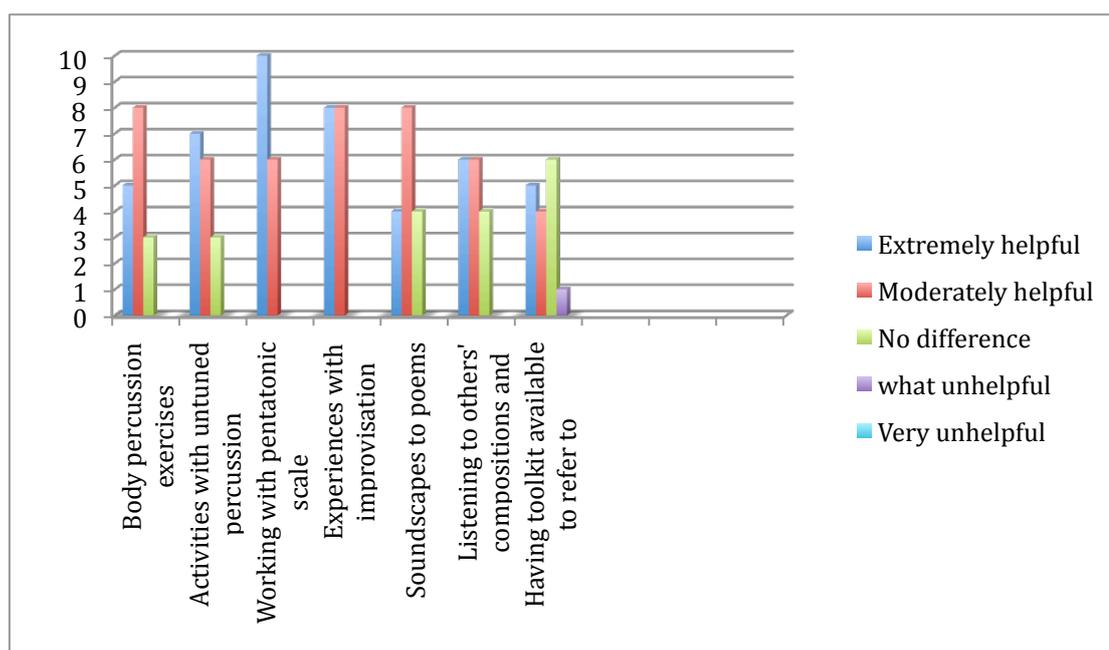


Table 5.1 Activity design

In analysing the information provided by the graph, all of the students (100%) found both the activities, working with the pentatonic scale and the experiences with improvisation, either moderately helpful or extremely helpful.

The most helpful activities were those exploring the pentatonic scale with a large majority (62.5%) of all the students who found these activities extremely helpful.

A significant majority (81.25%) found the percussion exercises, both body percussion and untuned percussion, either extremely or moderately helpful.

A slightly smaller majority (75%) found creating soundscapes to poems and the opportunity to listen to others' compositions and provide feedback to be either extremely or moderately helpful.

In analysing the activities that made no difference, a small minority (25%) felt that both the soundscapes and listening and feedback opportunities hadn't impacted on their learning at all.

An even less significant minority (18.75%) felt that the body and untuned percussion exercises had made no difference.

The least popular activity in meeting learning outcomes was the tool kit made available for the children to refer to, with only 56.25% finding it extremely or moderately helpful, 37.5% finding it made no difference and 6.25% finding it somewhat unhelpful.

There were no activities that the children found unhelpful.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

This self-study sought to gain an understanding of the role a teacher plays in the facilitation of elemental composition. Through a process of personal reflection, critical friend observation and focus group interviews with a group of participating children, I identified a range of pedagogical strategies and activity design factors, which appeared to be successful in supporting the group of children to meet the prescribed learning outcomes of the music programme.

In the effective pedagogy section of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), ‘teaching as inquiry’ is considered essential to the success of the teaching/ learning process. “Since any teaching strategy works differently in different contexts for different students, effective pedagogy requires that teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on their students” (p. 35). By selecting a self-study research methodology, I made a firm commitment to reflect honestly and openly on my own teaching and to use the evidence gathered to determine what changes I need to make in my teaching approach or to confirm strategies and activities that were successful.

In discussing my findings, I return to the questions I set myself at the beginning of this project:

1. What pedagogical decision-making facilitated student achievement of the music programme learning objectives?
2. What activity design factors facilitated student achievement of the music programme learning objectives?

6.1.1 Pedagogical strategies

The data gathered have shown that there were a number of clearly defined pedagogical strategies that facilitated student achievement of the learning outcomes.

The importance of creating a safe, supportive and trusting environment in which the children felt valued and supported in the creative process emerged across all data sources. After the first session, I recorded in my reflective journal that I wanted children to feel safe to experiment and explore, and we spent some time discussing the importance of supporting each other and that one of the important roles of a learning community is to share ideas and inspire each other.

In a learning community focussed on elemental composition, it was essential that the children felt safe to take some risks, experiment with new ideas and sounds and for them to know that they would be supported by their peers and their work would be valued. It was clear from the beginning that I needed to reinforce the importance of positive relationships and constructive feedback. Susan, one of the students in the focus group, referred positively to my insistence that they must not laugh at others if they made mistakes and she commented that she found this very reassuring. This finding is consistent with Elliott (1995), Amabile (1989) and Wiggins (2005) who all identify the importance of a trusting and safe environment, where risk-taking is encouraged and positive relationships between the students, and the students and the teacher are paramount. In their report on student learning in the arts, Holland and O'Connor (2004) found that students felt confident when they knew they could take risks and experiment with the art form and when they were willing to get things wrong in the process.

Another prevalent theme noted as successful across all three main data sources was the facilitation of collaborative learning. All the students in the focus group commented that this was a highlight of the composition process. They enjoyed working with their friends, sharing problems and bouncing ideas off each other. For example, Dylan reported that he loved working with his friend, sharing ideas, and for them to be able to make up “stuff” together. Both of the critical friends noted the excellent way the children were working together. Megan suggested the way one child organised his group and received constructive feedback from the others was a perfect example of Orff pedagogy. The way the children interacted respectfully and were able to step into a leadership role when appropriate and step back at other times was a feature noted by Sarah. This ability for the children to step in and out of the leadership role was important to

the process, as they needed to lead for their own compositions and take instructions for the compositions of others.

The importance of collaborative learning is reinforced in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) where facilitating shared learning and building a learning community is emphasised as a crucial pedagogical strategy. Holland & O'Connor's (2004) research showed that teachers found that developing "mutually respectful, negotiated, co-constructive learning relationships" (p. 3) was particularly successful in arts teaching and that students were more comfortable to share ideas and interact with each other than in other curriculum areas.

It was evident in my findings that encouraging and empowering the children to make connections to, and draw on, their previous learning was an important role for me as their teacher. My early journal entries indicated that I became aware, after the first few sessions, that these children already had a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw on and it was important that I didn't waste time building knowledge and skills they already had. In the focus group interviews some of the children expressed surprise that they could transfer their knowledge to a new situation. For example, Dylan was delighted when he realised he could use the knowledge of how a pentatonic scale is created to transpose to another key he wanted to work in, and Jemima was pleased when she realised she could use an ostinato in a rhythmic body percussion as well as in a melodic context. This finding is consistent with the literature on composition by Burnard (1995), Kaschub & Smith (2009) and Mills (1991), who all identify the importance of children making connections to previous learning. *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) considers teachers making connections to prior learning to be a fundamental pedagogical strategy for teachers in order to maximise learning time, anticipate students' needs, and avoid unnecessary duplication of content.

Another important strategy that was prevalent across all my findings was the role of the teacher in facilitating opportunities for in-depth reflection by the peer group and the students themselves. In her critical friend observation, Sarah noted the

effectiveness of the children giving and accepting feedback from their peers and how the students thought critically about their compositions and were able to target areas that needed development. In my journal there were multiple examples of the reflective process in action, where children were encouraged to give constructive feedback to each other and where they reflected honestly and openly about their own composition and how they planned to move forward. This finding links closely with the writing of Amabile (1989), who identifies the importance of children learning to self-evaluate and Erion (1996), who draws attention to the valuable discussion that can take place as students generate, select and re-frame their ideas.

In *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000), the action and reflection cycle was considered fundamental to arts learning: “Reflection is both a result of action and a prompt for further action. As they work in and across the strands, students will increasingly evaluate their progress and make informed choices for future learning” (p. 89). It is pertinent to note that in Holland & O’Connor’s (2004) research on learning in the arts, they found that the students relied on the input of their peers as much as that from their teacher. This was definitely my experience as well; the children were happy to listen to suggestions from their peers and would often go away and develop the ideas offered to them from their classmates.

Linked with opportunities for reflection was the importance of providing constructive feedback and feed-forward to the students. Sarah, in her observation, noted the positive response from Kerri when I gave her some advice about how she might incorporate the chimes into her composition. A finding that surprised me was the comment from Katherine identifying the issue of over-praise. She was adamant that receiving positive comments all the time didn’t support her to improve her work; she much preferred useful and constructive comments with ideas about how to enhance her composition. This finding was confirmed by Holland & O’Connor (2004) in their research, where they noted that over-praise can undermine deep learning and that it is important to strike a balance between encouragement, support and critical reflection.

Another pedagogical strategy that featured highly across my findings was the provision of sufficient time and opportunity for creativity to flourish. For example, I recorded in my journal, early in the exploration phase, that the children had a limited idea of how to play each of the untuned percussion instruments. Consequently, I put my planning aside and offered them an opportunity to really explore the instruments and come up with some new and creative ways of playing them. It was also clear from the focus group children that they would have liked much more time to explore and experiment and that, at times, they had felt rushed and pressured to complete tasks. This finding is consistent with Amabile (1989), Jones and Robson (2008), Mills (2005) and Paynter (2000), who all identify the importance of allowing sustained periods of time for students to explore, experiment and refine their compositions. In *The New Zealand Curriculum*, (Ministry of Education, 2007) providing sufficient opportunities to learn is identified as an important teacher action: “Students learn most effectively when they have time and opportunity to engage with, practise and transfer new learning” (p. 34).

Interestingly, the use of humour, which was identified across all of my data sources as a successful strategy, is rarely mentioned in the literature on teacher pedagogy that I have read. In my journal, I noted how humour appeared to enhance the children’s learning, simply by encouraging them to be creative and have fun with the material being used. Sarah, in her observation, noted the relaxed atmosphere and the importance of humour in establishing a rapport with the students. All of the children in the focus group noted that the sense of fun made the class enjoyable and relaxing and contributed towards their positive anticipation of the sessions. Confirming this finding, Powell and Andresen (1985) have this to say:

Justifications for the use of humour include the promotion of understanding, holding the attention of students, managing disruptive behaviour, creating a positive attitude to the subject matter, and reducing anxiety. (p. 79)

It was surprising to note in my findings, the importance of teacher modelling. In the past, teachers providing models in a creative process was considered

inappropriate and an obstacle to quality creative learning. In my reflective journal, I noted regularly that, by providing models for the children to observe and participate in, they had a starting point and a framework that they could use to build their own ideas from. All of the children in the focus group commented that teacher modelling gave them confidence and ideas to try out new things. Sometimes, it can be as simple as showing them another way to play an instrument or choosing an appropriate ostinato to a poem. However, more important than modelling specific processes, I wanted the children to observe me playing with musical ideas myself, modelling how I might reject a particular sound or develop an idea. This finding is consistent with Holland & O'Connor's (2004) research, where they found that co-construction and co-artistry, where both students and teachers felt they had permission to take risks and experiment, were valuable learning dimensions in arts teaching.

Another pedagogical strategy that emerged in my findings as promoting student learning was ensuring that children were very clear about the aims and expectations of both individual sessions and the whole programme. Early in the programme, I made a few assumptions about the children's understanding, which turned out to be misguided. It was important that I took time to clarify the aims, not just for the children, but for myself as well. In the focus group interviews, both Susan and Brendon shared their frustration at not being quite clear in the beginning what was expected. At this early stage, I needed to rethink how the ideas were presented to ensure the aims and expectations were evident to the students. This finding is reinforced in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), where it is emphasised in the effective pedagogy section that "students learn most effectively when they understand what they are learning, why they are learning it and how they will be able to use their new learning" (p. 34).

Classroom management featured as an important strategy in both my own reflections and in the observation of my critical friends. Both of the critical friends noted the emphasis on positive reinforcement to ensure students were constantly engaged and focused on the task. In my own journal, I emphasised the importance of establishing clear boundaries and reinforcing them regularly while

allowing for flexibility and spontaneity. The children in the focus group were aware when there was too much noise and too many distractions and the impact this had on their focus. In general, my findings identified the importance of positive teacher and student interaction, which is consistent with the writing of authors such as Burnard (2009) and Erion (1996). Alton-Lee (2003) found, in her research on quality teaching, that management practices should facilitate learning rather than emphasise compliant behaviour or control.

It was evident across all of my data sources that the children valued the warm and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. Holland & O'Connor (2004), in their analysis of effective teacher strategies, found that relationships between teachers and students tended to be different in the arts than in other curriculum areas. Students in their research commented frequently on the different relationship they had with a teacher of the arts, and that the arts were more enjoyable because of a better relationship with the teacher. This was true in my situation as well; the children were able to converse freely as long as the talk was purposeful, they were free to engage me in any aspect of their process, they were comfortable calling me by my first name, and there was a general air of flexibility and shared control.

The findings discussed above indicate the pedagogical strategies that appeared to make the *most* difference in facilitating student achievement of the learning objectives. There were, of course, many other strategies that emerged from the data and these all had an important role to play.

6.1.2 Activity design factors

Findings indicated that there were a number of clearly defined activity design factors that facilitated students' achievement of the learning outcomes.

Because Orff principles were fundamental to the planned programme, activities that explored Orff media and utilised Orff pedagogy were crucial to the success of the children in meeting the learning outcomes. Throughout my journal I chronicled the daily exposure to the Orff media of speech, song, movement, instrumental playing, and the utilisation of Orff activities such as imitation,

exploration, literacy, improvisation and creation. The tools of elemental composition, ostinati, melody, bordun and the simple forms, binary, ternary, canon, rondo were introduced and practised regularly throughout the programme.

An experienced Orff practitioner herself, Megan, in her critical friend observation, noted the effective use of activities that utilised Orff principles such as beat and rhythm, improvisation, the pentatonic scale, the bordun, soundscapes and binary and rondo form. During her observation, she observed the children singing and playing a range of Orff instruments. The use of the instrumentarium was also noted by Sarah, who observed children being offered ideas to enrich their compositions using the instruments.

Games that energised and focussed the children emerged across all data sources as purposeful and effective in promoting learning. I noted in my journal how much the children enjoyed the introductory games and that they were energised and focused, ready to move onto the skills and knowledge learning part of the lesson. They developed great favourites and looked forward with excited anticipation to the game or warm-up activity. Sarah, in her observation, noted that the children were attentive, focused and striving in the warm-up activity and that, in bringing the class together for this introductory activity, there was an immediate sense of warm and cohesive relationships. In the focus group interviews, the students commented on how the games “got their brains going” and helped them to focus on the tasks ahead. Katherine was aware of the important learning that took place as they were having fun. This finding is consistent with the writing of Cole (1999), Goodkin (2002) and López-Ibor (2005), who all talk about the value of games in introducing and reinforcing important music learning. Ramsay (1999) reinforces the value of games in developing essential perceptual motor skills needed for playing instruments.

Activities that involved the children in practical music-making, where they were using their whole bodies to sing, move and play, featured across all data sources. My journal reflections indicated that the students were fully engaged when the activity demanded kinaesthetic involvement. The conversations were animated and purposeful, as children worked together to solve problems and implement

their collaborative ideas. As can probably be expected at this age, the boys were particularly positive about activities that were physical, such as playing the bass bars, or very noisy, such as playing the thunder tube. This finding is not unexpected as, in an Orff classroom, the active involvement of all children in the creation and performance of music is a fundamental tenet of the approach. Children in an Orff classroom are never passive observers, and this is confirmed by much of the literature on Orff Schulwerk such as that of Goodkin (2001), Jorgenson (2011) and Orff himself (1963b).

Activities that were scaffolded and allowed children to enter at a level that was comfortable for them ensured children's needs were met and they could all achieve success. Entries in my reflective journal emphasised the value of small sequential steps in introducing a new concept; there were examples of the students choosing to enter an activity at different levels depending on their confidence and ability. One of my critical friends, Sarah, observed an activity that developed in complexity and discussed with me how valuable the sequential steps were in ensuring positive outcomes for all of the students. The children made note of this too, articulating, for example, that when it came to their first improvisations it was quite acceptable to improvise on two notes but, if they felt confident, they could use a much wider range of notes. The importance of scaffolding was confirmed in a session where I *didn't* sequence the learning carefully enough and the children weren't clear about what was expected of them. The importance of providing activities that scaffold children's learning is reinforced by writers such as Maubach (2006), Goodkin (2001) and Steen (1992), who all emphasise the principle of simple to complex with small, carefully planned steps towards a music-making goal. In her report on quality teaching for diverse learners, Alton-Lee (2003) reinforced the importance of scaffolding student learning: "Tasks and classroom interactions provide scaffolds to facilitate student learning" (p. ix).

In both my reflective journal and my critical friend observations, the importance of facilitating activities that had clear links to both the short and long-term goals of the programme was emphasised. Because it was a specialised programme with a time limit and a deadline, it was important for the students to understand the value of each of the activities facilitated and to be cognisant of the expected

learning outcome. In my journal I reflected on this regularly: Had the activity achieved its purpose? What were the activities that demanded more attention? Were the children getting the skills, knowledge and understandings they required? In her critical friend observation, Sarah noted an example of a student who queried the purpose of a particular activity and was answered by the other children in the group, who were able to reflect on the purpose and validity of the activity. She also commented that it was clear that the children were aware of the learning outcomes of the session she was observing and that these goals were constantly reiterated throughout the session. This finding resonates with Burgess (2012), who discussed the importance of sequential and explicit facilitation of purposeful activities to ensure positive outcomes.

Encouraging and facilitating activities that made links to children's lives and experiences emerged as a finding only in my journal reflections but is a feature that I believe deserves some attention. It was clear from my journal entries that, when I made an activity personal, either using a child's name in a chant or making reference to something the children had experienced or were particularly interested in, the children were immediately engaged and their understanding increased. Explaining the use of the so-me interval in "I'm the king of the castle" and providing an opportunity for the children to play with this chant was a good example of relating new learning to something familiar. This important principle ties in with Carl Orff's insistence that the Schulwerk be adapted to the social and cultural context of the learner – using poems, rhymes and experiences that the learner can relate to. The children in the group I was working with all chose themes, poems and ideas that engaged them and were relevant to their experiences. The poem about the earthquake was an excellent example of this. As the programme took place in the same years as the devastating earthquakes in Canterbury in 2010 and 2011, it was still very much a part of the daily lives of these students. Banks (1982), Frazee (1987) and Kugler (2011) are authors who confirm this finding, referring to the way Orff used and adapted rhymes from the German culture and, if he couldn't find what he wanted, write something himself.

Here in Aotearoa, New Zealand, this is a challenge for all of us who are passionate about Orff Schulwerk. We need to source and write material that our

students can relate to, that is relevant and engaging for them. Rhymes and songs about our landscape, our native birds and trees, our Maoritanga and our “kiwiness” need to become important resources in our teaching kete.

In investigating the more specific activities that the children found helpful, the questionnaire they all answered and the resulting graph has provided some insight. It was interesting to note that the most helpful activities were those that explored the pentatonic scale and provided opportunities for improvisation. I had no information about why they found these activities the most helpful, but I would speculate that they were the activities that took them out of their comfort zone and consequently resulted in the most new learning. This was confirmed by the children in the focus group who, when asked at the end of the programme which activities they found most useful, admitted it was the pentatonic exploration and the improvisation that enhanced their learning the most. The next most useful activities were the playing activities, with both body and untuned percussion. I would suggest that the practical nature of these activities ensured their popularity as learning activities. Creating soundscapes and providing feedback to others were considered reasonably helpful by most of the children. Others (a small minority) found the soundscapes and the activities with instruments unhelpful. The least popular activity was the use of the tool-kit, not surprising as it was not a practical task; rather, it was provided as a prompt for their creative work and didn't have any activity associated with it.

6.2 Conclusion

In this project, a group of Year 5 and 6 children participated in a programme of work with the goal of composing in an elemental style. The focus of the study was on my practice: What did I do that made a difference and what aspects of my teaching were most successful in supporting the children to meet the learning outcomes? On the completion of the project, the children performed their compositions to their parents and teachers and were all very proud of what they had achieved. The compositions varied in quality but they all indicated that the students had grasped the concept of elemental composition and had utilised Orff media and principles effectively. The pedagogical strategies I employed were

mainly successful, although there were times when I made misguided assumptions and hadn't prepared well enough to cater for the range and variety of needs.

The programme I planned was thorough, with carefully scaffolded processes to ensure the children had the skills and knowledge they needed to bring to the composition process. It is my hope that other teachers, familiar with and passionate about Orff Schulwerk, will be able to pick up the programme and adapt it to the social and cultural context of their own students. Along the way I had to make many adjustments as I reflected on the success of each session. There were times when I needed to go over a concept more thoroughly and there were times when I realised that the children already had the skills and knowledge required and my task was to challenge and extend their learning. This was a group of children who came to the programme with a strong background in music which meant that the resulting compositions were not necessarily typical of this age-group. However, the strength of the Orff approach is in its adaptability to all ages and all social groupings so I would hope that the programme will be of value to all teachers.

A project of this nature inevitably has constraints and limitations. The very nature of elemental music immediately constrained the students, as this was not the composition they had expected to be doing. Most of them had dabbled in some kind of compositional experiences and their understanding of composition was quite traditional. They had assumed they would be writing songs, making up tunes on the piano or on an orchestral instrument of their choice. Incorporating speech, song, movement, barred and untuned percussion was something quite new to them and, initially, proved a block to their creativity. However, once we had spent time trying out all the possibilities, working with the tools of Orff Schulwerk, practising the skills required and sharing ideas with each other, they approached the composition task with enthusiasm and commitment.

By way of conclusion, I refer back to the Five Foci framework of Samaras (2011), where they refer to self study as personal situated inquiry; critical collaborative inquiry; improved learning; a transparent and systematic research process; and knowledge generation and presentation.

In this study, I examined my practice on a daily basis, constantly reflecting on what had gone well and the reasons for that success. My belief in the power of Orff Schulwerk to provide simple steps towards composition that are possible for children of all ages and musical ability, was confirmed and has helped strengthen my understanding of the principles of elemental music and its application to composition (*personal situated inquiry*). The collaboration with two critical friends was vital to the research and provided a perspective that helped to elaborate and confirm my beliefs about effective pedagogy and activity design while offering me some challenges for further development (*critical collaborative enquiry*). In each session I was able to reflect on and learn about pedagogical approaches and how effective they were or were not in my context. It was illuminating for me to have to focus on pedagogy and activity design, so much of which I had taken for granted prior to this project (*improved learning*). The opportunity to receive open and honest feedback from both my critical friends and the students themselves was very challenging but also very valuable, and writing regularly in my journal ensured the focus on my practice was always to the forefront of my thinking (*a transparent and systematic research process*). It is my hope that others involved in similar research will find the process and the outcomes of this project informative and useful (*knowledge generation and presentation*).

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Appendix 1

Initial interview questions

- Why did you agree to be part of this programme? What do you expect to get out of it?
- Do you enjoy learning music in the classroom? Why or why not?
- What music activities are you involved in?
- Have you ever done any composing? If so, tell me about it.
- What skills do you think you need to be a composer?
- What knowledge do you think you need to have to be a composer?
- Can you explain what each of these words mean?

Beat

Rhythm

Pitch

Tempo

Dynamics

Tone Colour

Ostinato

Melody

Appendix 2

Focus group questions (mid- and end-point)

- If you consider the reason why you agreed to be involved in this programme, has it met your expectations?
- What has been your favourite aspect of the programme?
- Have you found any aspect of the programme frustrating, disappointing?
- What was the one most important thing you have learned in this programme?
- Have you gained any new skills? If so, what are they?
- What aspects of my teaching helped you with your composition?
- What aspects of my teaching hindered your composition?
- Was there anything important you learnt from each other?
- How are you feeling about your composition?

Appendix 3
Activity questionnaire

For each of the following activities, mark on the grid whether they were very unhelpful, somewhat unhelpful, no difference, moderately helpful or extremely helpful in supporting you to be a better composer of music in an elemental style.

Activity	Very unhelpful	Somewhat unhelpful	No difference	Moderately helpful	Extremely helpful
Body percussion exercises					
Activities with untuned percussion					
Working with pentatonic scale					
Experiences with improvisation					
Soundscapes to poems					
Listening to others compositions and providing feedback					
Having tool kit available to refer to					

Appendix 4

Learning Programme

	Session aims	Introductory activity	Revision of previous learning	Main learning activities
1	<p><i>Students will gain experience in, and an understanding of, the main elements of music; beat, rhythm, pitch, dynamics, tempo, tone colour.</i></p> <p><i>Students will demonstrate an understanding of simple rhythmic building bricks.</i></p>	Name Game (Appendix 5A)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The elements of music: Boom Chicka Boom (Appendix 5B) • Introduce rhythmic building bricks (Keetman, 1970, p. 17) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Which two am I clapping” (recognition) ○ “Who can find the rhythm of their name?” ○ Children each have a turn at combining two of the building bricks and the others have to guess which two they have chosen. ○ Work with a partner and use cups (Appendix 5C) to create rhythms. Work together to come up with a word pattern describing weather that matches the rhythms.
2	<p><i>Students will demonstrate an understanding of the so-me (minor 3rd) interval and echo simple melodic patterns tunefully.</i></p>	Nga Rakau chant with elements (Appendix 5D)	<p>Rhythm chairs (Appendix 5E)</p> <p>Use building block rhythms introduced previous week</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the so-me interval. Explain that it is the natural playground chant of young children and is used in the rhyme “I’m the king of the castle”. Demonstrate the hand-signs for so-me. • Practise using the children’s names: “Whose name is Zoe?” (so me me so me) “My name is Zoe” (so me me so me) using hand signs. Mix up the notes, for example, “Whose name is Michael” (so so so me me) • Give each child two chime bars, a minor 3rd apart. For example, G and E, F and D, A and C. Send them away to experiment with different combinations of the notes. Encourage them to work out a melody for “My name is (Amy) and I like (apples)” (filling in the spaces as appropriate) • Give each child the opportunity to perform his/her melody. They play it first and then we can all join in singing.

3	<p><i>Students will gain an understanding of the technique of echo play and question and answer and their use as an improvisation tool</i></p>	<p>Let's Play a Game (Appendix 5F)</p>	<p>Sing simple so-me patterns for students to echo. Use NZ native trees: e.g. Kowhai (so, me); Totara (so, so, me) Add la: e.g. Kahikatea (so, la, la, so, me), Horopito (so, la, so, me)</p> <p>Use hand-signs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce echo patterns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clap a four beat pattern for the children to imitate ○ Extend it to an eight beat pattern ○ Include different body percussion actions and voice sounds. ○ Students to make up their own for the group to echo ○ Walk to the beat while echoing pattern in four beats, then eight beats. • Introduce question and answer. Explain to the students that you will clap a pattern, which is the question, and they can reply with a different answering pattern. Use the following analogy to explain how they can take something from the question to use in the answer: "<i>If I asked you "Where does your cat sleep?" and you answered "Broccoli and cauliflower" it wouldn't make sense. You need to refer to the question in your answer"</i>" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage the children to feel the eight beats of the question and answer with a pattern of the same length ○ Students work in pairs to devise body and voice percussion question and answer phrases • Introduce the concept of phrasing-stand up-sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, walk in one direction for first phrase, change direction for second phrase and so on. Explore with some other well-known songs or nursery rhymes. Relate back to the question and answer exercise-the question is one phrase, the answer is another.
4	<p><i>Students will explore a poem demonstrating an understanding of the elements and the use of ostinati.</i></p> <p><i>Students will collaborate effectively to create body percussion patterns to</i></p>	<p>Apple Tree (Appendix 5G)</p>	<p>Question and answer patterns with body percussion and voice sounds.</p> <p>Use question and answer for a movement sequence-in pairs one</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the poem, Potions in the Pot, using the echo method <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Potions in the Pot Add a dirty sock Frogs' legs, rats' tails Potions in the pot</i></p> • Explore poem using a variety of voices and playing with the elements. (e.g. loud/soft,

	<i>match a spoken rhythm.</i>		child “asks the question” by creating a body shape and the other “answers” with a body shape that complements the first one in some way (discuss body parts, levels)	<p>high/low, rough/smooth...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the concept of texture by having a single child chant one line and the whole group chanting the next-discuss layers of sound. • Clap the beat, then the rhythm, half the group patsch the beat, the other half clap the rhythm. • Choose children to show the rhythm of each line using the cups and/ or the rhythm cards (Appendix 5H) • Model the use of an idea, word or phrase from the poem to create an ostinato “smelly potion” Have the children chant it while you say the poem. • Find rhythm on rhythm cards • Divide the class in two-have half chant the ostinato while the other half chant the poem. Try in different dynamic levels. • Encourage suggestions from the children for two more ostinati, practise in four groups. Use layering to create texture. Encourage the children to be very expressive. • In groups children work together to make up a body percussion pattern that matches the rhythm of their ostinato or the poem.
5	<p><i>Students will demonstrate a range of techniques for playing untuned percussion instruments to create different effects</i></p> <p><i>Students will explore the concept of ostinati through the use of untuned percussion.</i></p>	Movement activity-Body Sculpture Threes (Appendix 5I)	Repeat Potions in the Pot poem using speech ostinati, change groups around so the children can try each one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Sound Around (Appendix 5J) to listen to the sound of each instrument-speed up to ensure children are focused. • Give children 1 minute to see how many different sounds they can make with their instruments. Choose the favourite to share with the group. • Divide instruments into four categories-wood, metal, skin, shaker-children to sit with others in the same category. Play a piece of music with a strong beat while the children play along keeping the beat. Point to various groups to come in and out so they can hear the sounds that each category of instruments

				<p>makes. Demonstrate texture by pointing to individuals, a single group or several groups at once.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign one of the ostinati patterns from the poem to an instrument category, practise and then join together, layering instruments in.
6	<p><i>Students will demonstrate an understanding of the so-me-la-do patterns and echo simple melodic patterns tunefully.</i></p> <p><i>Students will demonstrate good tuned percussion playing technique.</i></p>	<p>Waiata-Tena tena koe (Appendix 5K)</p>	<p>Movement activity- Body Sculpture Threes-refine</p> <p>Revise so-me-la – echo patterns, include hand-signs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing Potions Poem using so, me, la and do for children to echo line by line. Include hand-signs. Encourage children to make up their own patterns for rest of the group to echo. <p>Tuned percussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mallet exercises-climb up and down mallets (use Incy Wincy Spider)-make letters and numbers using mallets, Practise mallet technique (alternate mallets) in the air, on the floor, on the knee. Introduce all the instruments by name-xylophones, metallophones, chime bars, glockenspiels, marimbas. Use fingers on single keys to echo rhythms. Use mallets on a specified key to echo rhythms. Use If You're Happy and You Know it and Pudding on the Hill by Jon Madin (1998) to practise mallet technique.
7	<p><i>Students will explore the use of the pentatonic scale using tuned percussion instruments.</i></p>	<p>Sing Apple Tree with hand-signs (introduce doh)</p>	<p>Hand each child two mallets-do echo rhythms using mallets as strikers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the pentatonic scale-5 tones, without semitones. For C pentatonic, remove Fs and Bs bars from the instruments that you can and mark the notes they can play with a star on the others. Play with the pentatonic scale using echo rhythms on each of the notes, single notes at first, then two notes, then three etc. Encourage individual children to play a four beat rhythm for the class to echo. Move onto question and answer to encourage improvisation reinforcing mallet technique continually. Whole class respond then individual children respond. Give each instrument type a

				<p>simple ostinato to learn and play using notes of the pentatonic scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain a bordun as being notes 1 and 5 of the scale (C and G) and demonstrate a chord bordun. (Appendix 5L) Choose two children to play bass bars to provide bordun accompaniment • Layer in beginning with the bass bars and bringing in each ostinato one after the other.
8	<p><i>Students will create a simple melody to the rhythm of the poem</i></p> <p><i>Students will explore the concept of improvisation using the pentatonic scale on tuned percussion instruments</i></p> <p><i>Students will demonstrate an understanding of binary and ternary form through music and movement.</i></p>	<p>Passing Game-Son Macaron (Appendix 5M)</p>	<p>Mallet exercises Revise pentatonic. Echo rhythms, question and answer on tuned percussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echo rhythms using the pattern of the poem • Repeat saying words to assist recognition. • Put children into groups of four and encourage them to make up a group melody for the whole poem using the pentatonic scale. E.g. Child one makes up a tune to the first line rhythm, Child 2 makes up a tune to second line rhythm etc. Share with the class. • Choose two groups-explain binary form AB playing one melody then the other. • Give third and fourth group untuned percussion in four categories-one category for each line • Demonstrate binary-melody through once, untuned percussion on rhythm once • Explain ternary form ABA-demonstrate using melody on untuned percussion, rhythm on untuned percussion, same melody again
9	<p><i>Students will collaborate to create a group composition using all the elemental tools available to them</i></p>	<p>Passing Game-Son Macaron</p>	<p>Echo so-me-la patterns using hand-signs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise binary, ternary. • Divide children into groups of four and introduce task: <i>Create a group composition of Potions in the Pot using four of the following: Speech, So-me-la, Body percussion, Untuned percussion, Tuned percussion, Movement, Ostinato, Bordun, Melody, Rhythm, Binary, Ternary</i> • Share compositions, provide peer and self-evaluation. (Discuss positives and advice)

10	<i>Students will demonstrate an understanding of rondo and canon form through music and movement.</i>	Beat canons-in 4, in 2 (Appendix 5N)	Question and answer-body percussion, vocal sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body percussion rondo-teach children a simple 8-beat pattern which becomes the A section. Go round the circle encouraging the children to provide the B, C, D etc pattern –an improvised 8-beat pattern. • Transfer to tuned percussion-use Potions in the Pot melody as A pattern and encourage an 8-beat improvisation for the B, C, D etc patterns. • Movement Activity-action words (Appendix 5O). Groups of four explore the concept of canon in movement.
11	<i>Students will explore the use of graphic notation in recording sound ideas.</i>	Song-First you make your fingers click (Appendix 5P)	Body percussion rondo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic notation cards (Appendix 5Q) Children to work in groups – each group has a graphic notation card which they have to interpret through movement and sound • Newspaper Music (Appendix 5R) - exploring sound ideas and devising notation to express ideas.
12	<p><i>Students will explore ideas for their compositions, drawing on their personal experiences, interests and imagination and using the tools of elemental composition.</i></p> <p><i>Students will show increasing confidence in enhancing their compositions with new and original ideas</i></p>	Song-First you make your fingers click	Hand out “Tools we have for elemental composition” (Appendix 6) Go through it with the children and share understandings with each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about possible sources of motivation • Explain that their compositions need to use the techniques we have been exploring over the last term and that these compositions should be able to be played by children and adults of all ages and abilities-that’s what makes elemental composition so special. • Share ideas, suggestions, possibilities • Send children away to work with a partner sharing ideas they have and discussing strategies for getting started
13-20		Begin each session with a waiata and/or favourite game		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to work independently on compositions with support and advice from me and their peers • 10 minutes before the end of each session one or two children will share their compositions as a work in progress and receive feedback. • If there is a need for extra

				<p>teaching or revision this will be integrated through the working sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the children finish their composition they organise the musicians they need and rehearse with them.
21	Presentation to parents and teachers			

Appendix 5

Teaching resources

Because so many of these songs and activities have come to me from workshops and colleagues, the original source is not always known. If I am not able to supply the written music I have tried, instead, to provide you-tube or vimeo links that will assist in learning the song or chant.

A. Name Game

Begin with patsch-clap pattern

Teacher chant: My name is Celia and I like chocolate

Group chant: Her name is Celia and she likes chocolate

Celia likes chocolate

Child chant: My name is Susan and I like apricots

Group chant: Her name is Susan and she likes apricots,

Susan likes apricots, Celia likes chocolate

Child chant: My name is Dylan and I like fish and chips

Group chant: His name is Dylan and he likes fish and chips

Dylan likes fish and chips, Susan likes apricots and Celia likes chocolate

And so on...

B. Chant: Boom Chicka Boom

Begin with patsch clap pattern or patsch clap click clap

Leader: I said a boom-chick-a-boom (group echo)

Leader: I said a boom-chick-a-boom (group echo)

Leader: I said a boom-chicka rocka-chicka

rocka-chicka boom (group echo)

Leader: Ah ha! (group echo)

Leader: Oh yeah! (group echo)

Leader: One more time (group echo)

Repeat using different voices:

Loudly, softly, quickly, slowly, high, low, roughly, smoothly etc

Discuss the elements in relation to the rhyme-how did we use our voices and our bodies?

- We kept the **beat** in our hands
- The words made the **rhythm**-“let’s clap the rhythm of the words now.”
- Loud and soft-**dynamics**
- Fast and slow-**tempo**
- High and low-**pitch**
- Rough and smooth-**tone colour**

Discuss tone colour in some more depth:

- Play a triangle and a wood block behind a screen: “Can you tell the difference?”
- Using a biro hit it against two different surfaces, for example, the carpet and the chair leg: “Can you tell the difference?”
- “This is what we refer to as colour in music-the quality of the sound”

C. Activity: Cup rhythms

Explore the use of cups to support rhythmic learning. Coloured cups are crotchet beats (quarter notes); shot glass cups are quaver beats (eighth notes); transparent cups are rests; coloured cups on their side are minims (half notes).

- Eight coloured cups in a row-children clap
- Exchange one cup for two shot glass cups, children clap
- Always keeping to eight beats make up combinations of cups for children to clap.
- Give children the opportunity to create some patterns.

D. Chant: Nga Rakau o te ngahere

Echo each line and use the words below to play with the elements.

Koromiko, Ngaio

Kowhai, Totara

Ti Kouka, Tarata

Titiro ki nga rakau

Tangi nui! (Loud) Tangi ngawari! (Soft)

Tere! (Fast) Poturi! (Slow)

Tangi runga! (High) Tangi raro! (Low)

E. Activity: Rhythm chairs

Put four empty chairs at the front of the class. Put one child on each and clap it as four crotchets (quarter notes). Squeeze two onto one of the chairs and add in a quaver (eighth note) pattern. Lay one child across two chairs to create a minim (half note) or across 4 chairs to become a semibreve (whole note). Leave a chair empty for a crotchet rest.

F. Song: Let's Play a Game

Tune is Canon exercise No. 1 on Pg 91 of Music for Children Vol 1 by Orff and Keetman

Chorus: (whole group)

Let's play a game (so me re do)

Sing and clap your name (so so me re do)

Everybody copies you (so so la la do do la)

And sounds just the same (la so me re do)

Verse: (individuals)

My name is (Susan) (so me me so me)

Her name is (Susan) (so me me so me)

Do four names at a time and then repeat the chorus

G: Song/ Game: Apple Tree

Children sit in a circle and pass a plastic apple around their circle on the beat as in this example. (Apple passed on bold syllables)

Apple tree apple tree (so so me so so me)

Will your apples fall on me? (so so la la so so me)

I won't scream, I won't shout (so so me so so me)

If your apple knocks me out (so so la la so so DO)

The child who is holding the apple on the word “out” moves out of the circle and chooses an instrument to play on the beat.

(Another option is for the person who goes out to start another circle)

Here's an alternative

<http://abbottmusic.blogspot.co.nz/2012/04/apple-tree.html>

H: Resource Rhythm Cards

There are lots of sites where you can download these for free.

For example:

<http://laytonmusic.wordpress.com/2007/12/19/rhythm-flashcards/>

I: Movement activity: Body sculptures three

The participants stand in a circle. Go round the group and number them one two three. Play drum beats in groups of four. On Beat 1 of the first four beats, the first person in each group makes a shape with their body, on Beat 1 of the second four beats, the second person has to move instantly into a shape that complements the first shape and then, on the first beat of the third four beats, the third person completes the sculpture. Encourage the students to look around and see what others have done. Slow it down by having just one child move at a time using some music with a strong beat.

J: Activity Sound Around

Hand out a variety of untuned percussion instruments to each participant. Then go round the circle encouraging the children, one at a time, to make just one sound on their instruments. Speed up to increase complexity.

K. Waiata: Tena tena koe

Tena tena koe

CS

Vo. ⁷

Te - na te - na koe Te - na te - na ko - ru - a Te - na te - na kou - tou

Hae - re hae - re mai

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation for the waiata 'Tena tena koe'. The first staff is labeled 'Vo. 7' and is in 4/4 time. It contains three phrases of lyrics: 'Te - na te - na koe', 'Te - na te - na ko - ru - a', and 'Te - na te - na kou - tou'. The second staff is also in 4/4 time and contains the lyrics 'Hae - re', 'hae - re', and 'mai'. The notes are simple quarter and eighth notes.

Learn using echo method-include hand-signs. Once it is well known, try it in canon-two parts then four parts.

L: Resource: Bordun

To find an explanation of the different kinds of bordun check out these sites:

<http://herdingcatsgeorge.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/bordun.html>

<http://beatinpathpublications.com/documents/Basic5.08.pdf> (about halfway down this pdf)

http://classroom-music.wikispaces.com/file/view/Bordun_variety.pdf

M: Song/game: Son Macaron

Son Macaron

Traditional

Vo. ⁵

Son mac-a-ron son fair-e-o Ma-ri-on Ma-ri-on Ley-a ley-a tip tip tip

Ley - a ley - a tap tap tap One beat, two beat, three beat SQUASH!

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'Son Macaron'. The first staff is labeled 'Vo. 5' and is in 4/4 time. It contains three phrases of lyrics: 'Son mac-a-ron son', 'fair-e-o', and 'Ma-ri-on Ma-ri-on'. The second staff is also in 4/4 time and contains the lyrics 'Ley - a ley - a tap tap tap', 'One beat, two beat, three beat', and 'SQUASH!'. The notes are simple quarter and eighth notes.

Everyone sits in a circle with knees almost touching and holds their left hand out palm facing up on left knee. Place right hand palm facing up on top of left hand of neighbour. Pass the clap around the circle on the beat. On SQUASH, whoever has the beat has to catch the hand of the next person. If he/she misses, he/she goes out and joins the band with an untuned percussion instrument. If he/she catches the hand, the caught person is out.

Here's an alternative version:

<http://abbottmusic.blogspot.co.nz/2012/03/son-macaron.html>

N. Activity: Beat canons

Leader uses body percussion and begins a four beat pattern. Immediately the first four beats are finished the group echoes. In the meantime the leader has played a second pattern, which the group echoes. i.e. the group is always four beats behind the leader. Try it just two beats behind.

O: Movement activity: Action words

Brainstorm for a long list of interesting actions words e.g. sliding, gliding, twisting, twirling, rolling, jumping. Children to work individually to create a movement sequence out of three of their favourite words giving some thought to transitions between the movements. Teach their sequence to a partner. Add in some challenges e.g. slow one movement down, one movement should be jerky, one movement should have sound attached etc. Work in pairs to present their movement sequence.

P. Song: First you make your fingers click

First you make your fingers **click**

Then you **stamp** your feet

Both hands **pat** your knees

Then **clap** on the beat

Listen to the tune here:

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/music/firstyou.htm>

See it taught as a chant here:

<http://vimeo.com/32571333>

Q: Activity: Graphic notation cards.

Have a collection of A4 sized cards with simple patterns. Begin by “singing” the cards with voices then send them away in groups of 3 or 4 to create a sound and movement sequence based on one card. For graphic notation ideas, have a look here:

<http://www.mtrs.co.uk/graphic.htm>

R. Activity: Newspaper Music

Give each child a sheet of newspaper and some time to see how many different sounds they can make e.g., flicking, tearing, waving, scrunching. They could create the sound of a rainstorm using only newspaper sounds or develop a graphic score by inventing symbols for each of the sounds.