

TEACHING PRIMARY MUSIC

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Inspiring teachers are crucial and I was lucky to find many along the way. Music oozed from the pores of Manor Field Primary School where Mr Barker, Miss Harrison, Mr Doughty and Mrs Bell developed my love of music. Revisiting my own education has cemented my views about the fundamental importance of rich and creative experiences for all children from an early age. At secondary school, I was lucky enough to be taught by Roland Bryce. I have immense gratitude for his encouragement and guidance throughout my musical journey. He was then, and continues to be, a truly inspiring musician and teacher.

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This book is dedicated to my amazing husband, Greg. It is no understatement to say that life has thrown us a few curveballs over the past few years and I know that I am lucky to still be here and even luckier to explore the world with you.

1

MUSIC: ITS PLACE IN OUR LIVES AND EDUCATION

- Peering through the school hall door, I noticed the beaming smiles of Mrs Clark's Year
- 3 class stomping around the room to 'Nellie the Elephant', which was blaring from the
- speakers. Most were marching in time with the music and each other. Weaving in
- between their haphazard pattern was Mrs Clark, joining in with evident delight, making
- eye contact with children as she marched around, pumping her arms in time and with
- gusto. With the music in full flow, the room suddenly fell silent. Abruptly, the activity
- stopped and the children and teacher froze mid-move.

Introduction

What did you see and hear in your mind as you read this? Did it portray your pre-conceived image of a music lesson; one filled with sound, energy, movement and enjoyment? Were you the teacher in the middle of the room, joining in, communicating, modelling – integral to this musical community?

Or perhaps it was accompanied by a sigh as you lamented on the thought of teaching music (which, for some, is a probable reason for opening a book such as this)?

This book is a journey into our sound world. It is about musical journeys, in the broadest sense. My belief is that what you bring to, and take from, this musical journey is of fundamental significance and importance to you and to the children you work with. Children need adult role models who are not all 'professional musicians'. They need you, their primary school teacher, to be a part of the musical community in their school and classroom, taking part, leading learning and learning from and with the children.

Perhaps you hope that this book will give you ideas and the confidence to work with your class. I hope it will, but my ambition is that, by the end of it, you will also believe in your power to positively enhance education, learning and life. Music changes lives. As a teacher, you have the power to sprinkle magic through offering a musical education.

Remember though that if you don't teach music, you cannot guarantee that someone else will, and by not teaching music many children will have seriously impoverished experiences. Their lives march on. They will never be 7 years old again. The time and opportunity for lasting and sustained positive impact is right here, right now (as Fat Boy Slim famously stated). You may not feel particularly confident about

teaching music, but I urge you to try. An enthusiastic teacher and a ‘have a go’ attitude will get you a long way and will significantly benefit the children you work with.

I hope that along the way you find what you came looking for in this book: most of all, inherent self-belief in yourself as a musical being and the desire and confidence to nurture and share musical experiences.

Objectives

Through this chapter you will:

- consider the importance of music education
- examine and challenge commonly held assumptions about music
- explore what musical learning is and could be
- understand how music is integral to our fast-changing world
- gain confidence that you already know a great deal.

Why music?

We are in a world where educational powerhouses appear to encourage society to value academic prowess over all else, a world where children are frequently tested against a set of standardised, age-related norms in a very narrow set of ‘high stakes’ subjects (Kneyber, 2016). It is easy to forget that music is something very special and ever-present. Music is always with us – throughout and between every rite of passage from before we are born until after we die.

Following the 1988 Education Reform Act, music has been constantly present as a statutory subject in schools, falling within the National Curriculum, and was present in some form or another in many schools before the National Curriculum came into being. Nevertheless, we need to question its impact and position. Does music’s position in the curriculum cement its importance? Why do we teach music in schools? Why is it that many independent schools, with autonomy over teaching and learning, highly value music education and commit valuable curriculum and co-curricular time to it? Conversely, we hear weekly horror stories of state schools being under inordinate pressure to focus on the core subjects at the expense of the arts, creativity and culture, providing a narrow, constricted and frankly often dull and uninspiring education.

Notwithstanding the importance of music for its own sake, there is also a plethora of research demonstrating how music contributes to our personal, psychological, social, educational and emotional development and wellbeing (Fiske, 1999; Hallam, 2015). This is just the kind of thing we think head teachers want to hear, but it is not in itself a justification for teaching and learning music. Where do you stand on the ‘music is good for your development so it should be in education’ debate? Parents of young children probably don’t sing them songs at bathtime so that they will be better at mathematics. Clearly, then, music’s place in the curriculum is not there primarily because of its transferable learning possibilities.

Sometimes people consider that music is a special gift and you are either musical or you’re not. Some people consider that music can only be taught by ‘special people’ with a high degree of musical training and prowess. These are

both nonsense. Frankly, we don't do ourselves many favours here. In primary schools, we sometimes wheel in 'specialists' to teach music, leaving everyone else to think that they can't do it or don't need to (Hennessy, 2000). We perpetuate ridiculous ideas that we aren't musical if we can't read music, or that the teacher who can play the piano in assembly is the only one who can be labelled as a 'musician' in school. Yet musical experiences and the level of music education of generalist student teachers is often rich and diverse (Henley, 2016), and Ofsted (2009, 2012) notes that the quality of music teaching is often better in primary schools than secondary schools, where music is almost always taught by teachers with a high level of music qualification and subject-specific training.

It is of course the case that a minority of people seem extremely gifted at music and we could all name a few of these who appear on the world stage as virtuoso performers, conductors or composers. But music is for everyone. It can be accessed, enjoyed, learnt and taught by all. We need to put all 'labels' and preconceptions aside and recognise that music is a part of us all. To think otherwise is detrimental, as Howe, Davidson and Sloboda (1998: 407) report from a study entitled 'Innate talents – reality or myth?'

The evidence we have surveyed in this target article does not support the talent account, according to which excelling is a consequence of possessing innate gifts ... categorising some children as innately talented is discriminatory ... Such categorisation is unfair and wasteful, preventing young people from pursuing a goal because of teachers' or parents' unjustified conviction that they would not benefit from the superior opportunities given to those who are deemed to be talented.

Regardless of whether or not it is formally taught, music is a constant presence in our lives (DeNora, 2000). Have you ever watched a 4-year-old spontaneously spinning around and singing along to their favourite Disney track, making sense of it within their own limited language? Babies babbling and smiling as their parents sing or beatbox to them? Teenagers absorbed in the music broadcasting through their headphones on a quiet train, occasionally slipping into the accidental verbalising of the lyrics they are listening to? Children already love music – our job in school (and life) is to nurture and help develop this love. It is no easy task though – music is highly personal, offering endless possibilities and tangents.

The flip side, though, is the fragility and responsibility that comes with this. I am arguing that *you* are the important person, the one who should nurture children's interests, skills, confidence and creativity and develop ownership of their music. Yet there is a tension here too. It is *their* music, *their* soundtrack, not yours. You have your own, which is also constantly evolving as you negotiate your way through life. There are times to scaffold learning, to collaborate or stand back and times to learn from others, times to listen, suggest, sympathise and offer support and guidance, to set up creative landscapes, to share skills and knowledge or signpost others who can. Clearly, music education is multi-layered and complex but your contribution, enthusiasm and guidance are both integral and fundamentally important.

The importance of positive experiences in music education

Reflecting on musical experiences often reveals how important these were in shaping people's attitudes to teaching music and themselves in relation to music (I am hesitant to say 'as a musician' because I think the term itself is value-laden and unhelpful). Mostly, in my experience of working with teachers and trainee teachers, people fall into four distinct groups:

1. People with limited memories of music education as a pupil, where it appears to have been vacuous both within and beyond school at that point in their lives.
2. People with positive memories relating to at least one significant part of their own education (either primary school, secondary school or both). This often relates to playing musical instruments, singing or performing; they may recall fondly either an influential person or group of people – often a teacher, family or friends – and the social aspect of music is also evident.
3. People who had positive musical learning experiences or influences outside of school but failed to see the relevance of music in school; it seems that their musical identity memorably evolved *in spite of* their music education in school.
4. Unfortunately, though, many people fall into the fourth group; education research shows over and over again that: 'people who at a young age were told that they were not musical seldom enjoy a childhood of growing musicianship' (Lehmann, Sloboda and Woody, 2007: 49).

It is sad that many people recall impoverished experiences of music education themselves or were left with the impression that they are not musical. Unsurprisingly, this blights their own self-view in relation to their abilities and confidence to teach music. Pitts (2012) reveals the powerful potential of music education to shape identities – and not always positively.

Lehmann, Sloboda and Woody's hard-hitting statement must be at the forefront of our minds when teaching or interacting with people, regardless of the subject. As teachers, we are extremely powerful when it comes to how we make people feel. What we say and how we act can be misconstrued, misunderstood and taken to heart. A child only needs to hear once that they are 'tone-deaf', cannot play in tune, have no sense of rhythm, should mime instead of sing, or be refused entry to the choir because it will spoil the sound, and they will potentially carry that crushing judgement with them throughout their lives. Music needs to be accessible, engaging, challenging, inclusive and, perhaps most importantly, overwhelmingly positive for all. Otherwise, it may inadvertently send negative messages and contribute to adults spending many years avoiding situations in which they feel musically and socially vulnerable or embarrassed.

TASK 1.1

Reflect on your own musical experiences:

1. What can you remember about music education/musical influences when you were of primary school age?

- How did you feel about yourself in relation to music at that time? Were you influenced (positively or negatively) by anyone or anything in school? How did you engage with music at this age?
 - What about music at home and out of school? Who and what influenced you? What kinds of memories of music do you have from out of school?
 - What three words or phrases would you use to sum up your feelings about music at this age?
2. Think through the same questions above in relation to yourself as a secondary school pupil.
 3. Then move on to consider: At what point in your educational career did you stop studying or participating in music in school? Or did you continue? What about out of school? What influenced these decisions? How did you feel about them at the time? What about now?
 4. Thinking about all of these experiences, what do they tell you about your own music education and the impact of people and events to shape your musical identities and feelings across time?

Building on what children already know

... a music teacher never meets musically ignorant, untutored or uneducated pupils: on the contrary, when pupils come to school they all possess a rich and in some ways sophisticated musical knowledge, acquired from a variety of outside-school musical activities (Folkestad, 2006: 136)

It could be rephrased as ‘a pupil never meets a musically ignorant, untutored or uneducated teacher’, but unless we share our musical identities with children, they probably assume that teachers don’t listen to popular music!

Children and teachers come to school with a wide range of musical experiences – all different – and gathered as they live their everyday lives. Children are not ‘empty musical vessels’ when they start school or indeed at any point in their school career; they have years of experience as consumers of, and partakers in, music. There is always something for us to build on, and helping children to build connections between different parts of their ‘musical’ lives is a very important part of music education; it is fascinating to explore the influences and habits of families and friends as children start school through listening carefully to the eclectic examples they sing, hum, adapt and talk about.

It’s a mistake to think that we have to ‘teach’ young people everything they need to know about music. We also need to be careful that we don’t abuse our power by denying them opportunities and access to knowledge, falling into the trap of thinking that only certain ‘types’ of music, experiences and skills are suitable for certain children. Instead, we should consider the opportunities for ‘co-constructing’ rather than ‘delivering’ musical learning. Offering all children frequent opportunities to engage in music is crucial; to a great extent, musical development is linked to experience, and this is particularly noticeable in pre-school children.

The value, purpose and importance of music in schools

In order to properly consider the value, purpose and importance of music in schools, we need to ponder the wider philosophical underpinning on which our thoughts about education and learning are predicated. This is not about seeking the one ‘right’ answer, but about examining our own thoughts about education and exploring and defining our own values.

TASK 1.2

You may wish to do this activity with others and collate your key ideas.
Think about the following:

1. What do you value in education? Mind map these ideas.
2. Are there any additional things you value in a music education? Add these.
3. Display these to remind you throughout the year and reflect on the extent to which your values are borne out in your teaching.

Here are some frequently mentioned points:

- inclusive; accessible and challenging for all children
- enjoyment
- creative/promoting creativity/inquisitiveness
- engaging/worthwhile
- practical – learning through doing
- exploring ‘feelings’ and ‘self’ through music.

TASK 1.3

Think about and write down your ideas about:

- the *purpose* of music education in primary schools
- what a music education in school should include and be based on
- how music education in school could relate to music in our ‘real lives’.

What is the purpose of music education in school – is it there to provide children with the experiences of playing musical instruments? To sing together? To create their own music? To be part of something amazing with other pupils? To experience different music to what they might find for themselves? To perpetuate or build on what they already know? To make sure children get a dose of high art and culture? And how do

we get past 'edutainment' and make sure that musical learning is underpinned by established and worthwhile pedagogical principles and learning experiences? Musical learning has many purposes, but one thing is for sure – *school is the place where all children must have access to music education*, otherwise it becomes an elitist pastime where only children of families that can afford to pay will have access to it.

Importance is a strange thing. What is important, and who is it important to? There are various answers to these questions and they link, in part, to values: your values, the school's values, the children's values, the parents' values. Unfortunately, though, these sometimes get usurped when higher perceived orders of 'importance' enter the fray. Too often, these are linked to external assessment and judgements, particularly Ofsted inspections and whole-school judgements, including statutory government-enforced tests for children at different ages and the significant impact of these on how the school is viewed and ranked externally.

In the Ofsted report *Good Teaching in Art, Dance, Drama and Music*, Clay et al. (1998: 3) signal strong support for the arts, noting that:

The arts ... are intrinsic components of human culture, heritage and creativity. They mirror the whole repertoire of human experience, and are worthy of study in their own right. It is difficult to imagine the world without arts.

This reminds me of Richard Stilgoe's (no date) *Sonnet on a World Without Music* – well worth a read.

Does your school exemplify the importance of the arts and embody this statement through what happens in and out of the classroom? Do the parents place any importance on the arts? And, most importantly, what about the children themselves? If you gave a class of children free rein to design a day in school, in all likelihood it would be a day filled with joy and collaboration, with music and art holding centre-stage. Another challenge therefore is to capitalise on music and the arts to hook children into learning.

If the arts in school are to mirror real life, we need to be mindful of the diversity of music itself, and of musical practices and experiences. Our musical development transcends paths influenced by our own journeys through the world; children (and teachers) bring a rich and diverse range of skills, knowledge and experiences into the classroom, based on their own 'complex auditory ecosystem' (Campbell, 2010: 77). Marsh (2010: 43) notes the following influences on children's musical games:

parents, siblings, and other relatives; mediated sources found on television, CDs, cassettes, films, DVDs, videos, the radio, and Internet; peers in the playground and classroom; teachers, and the materials which form part of school curricula; and experiences which may be gained in countries of birth, on visits to countries of cultural origin, or on holidays in other localities.

Music in school is multi-faceted and may include music in the curriculum, through the curriculum and beyond the curriculum, for example in assemblies, clubs,

Music is contextualised by its historical, social and cultural roots. The phrases ‘the great composers’ and ‘the best in the musical canon’, both present in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), might be perceived as a nod towards Western Classical traditions, perpetuating the nonsensical idea of a ‘musical hierarchy’ and another reason some teachers feel ill-equipped to teach music. But what is the ‘best’? And who decides? Everyone has an opinion on what should be on the musical menu and how ‘good’ music is. As Mills (2009: 1) states: ‘I do not feel that there is a canon of music that everyone – pupils or teachers – should learn’, a sentiment with which I wholeheartedly agree. A rich musical education is one that, over time, meaningfully introduces many styles, genres, idioms and traditions across times, cultures, communities and places, and which offers access to ‘a range of ... live and recorded music’ (DfE, 2013) and the opportunities to decide for ourselves what we think of it. The important thing is that we build bridges with children between their current sound world and experiences and those with which they are not yet familiar.

‘Culture’ is another very value-bound word. Sometimes, music education seems to block together ‘cultures and traditions’, taking children on what Fautley (2011) describes as a ‘Cook’s Tour’, with a cursory glance at different cultures and the music therein through packaging music into short, often tokenistic, units of work. These don’t get to the heart of the relationships between music, time, places, cultures and people and do not help children to link up their learning. A review of ‘Cultural Education in the UK’ (DfE and DCMS, 2012) includes the following under the umbrella term ‘cultural education’: ‘archaeology, architecture and the built environment, archives, craft, dance, design, digital arts, drama and theatre, film and cinemas, galleries, heritage, libraries, literature, live performance, museums, music, poetry and the visual arts’ (Henley, 2012: 3).

This is a somewhat unsatisfactory and impoverished view of culture and cultural education. It misses the point that our cultural education is personal to us – it is personal and fluid, influenced by lived experiences, people, events, time and places. Such views of culture provide a blanket view that ‘culture is good for children’, without necessarily taking a step back to consider whose values and cultures are being imposed.

Henley’s cultural education report (2012: 8) also states that:

Schools remain the single most important place where children learn about Cultural Education. This takes the form of structured curriculum lessons in subjects such as history, English literature, art and design, design technology, drama, dance, film studies and music, alongside programmes of after school activities for children who wish to pursue a passion for a particular art form.

On-going work in Brighton and Hove aims to ‘improve the lives and life-chances of children and young people in Brighton & Hove through cultural engagement and creative skills’ (Our Future City, 2015a) taking a much more open approach, asking ‘what are the questions we need to ask’ and gathering a wider view of culture, what ‘it’ is to the young people and where ‘it’ takes place. A perhaps unsurprising eclectic view of culture is emerging – young participants consider their ‘cultural education’ to take place with friends, on their own and with family, with ‘in school’ trailing in last place (Our Future City, 2015b: 12). The report also notes that ‘culture’ includes activities such as playing in the park, going to Scouts and scuba diving alongside those we might expect to see such as music, crafts, arts and reading.

As Finney (2009: 31) reminds us:

... young people come to school, come to any educational setting, already with a culture of their own and knowing how to learn. They will have already explored a range of musical identities, reflected on these and be ready to meet new cultural experiences with critical minds.

Perhaps our focus on culture in relation to music education should heed Finney's (2009: 34) advice that:

The challenge for the music teacher is to be resourceful and remain culturally alive, to search out new ways of being musical and to continually ask why music is made, why it is so important to those who make it and in what ways it is related to a way of life that might be similar or very different to their own or their students.

Music in a fast-changing world

Music is everywhere. The way we access and engage with music continues to significantly shift. Even recently, a book such as this would describe laptops, CDs, minidisks and the beginnings of interactive whiteboards as the new classroom revolution. Instead, the digital revolution continues to march forward; downloading and streaming music are the norm and tablets are prevalent throughout our daily lives; even pre-school children access music in this way, making choices about what they listen to, making and creating music, enculturated into a digital world from a very young age (Young, 2007).

This was unimaginable just a few years ago, when children were still in the business of saving up pocket money to go to a shop and buy a much-cherished chart track or album. The convenience of music at our fingertips changes our experiences with music. In the 1980s, my friends and I delighted in recording songs onto a cassette tape from the radio chart show on a Sunday evening and accepted that the DJ might talk over the introduction. Forwarding the tapes to the start of a song was more estimation than perfect science and the inevitable warping left the sound less than perfect, yet this was our form of 'downloading'. Vinyl records and (eventually) compact discs were the norm; through paying for a whole album, we stumbled across unfamiliar music, because the chances were that only one or two songs on the album were previously familiar. The artwork was important and influential, and music videos started to gain prominence.

Fast forward 30 years: if children want music, they don't need to buy it, nor do they have to wait until it is played again on the radio – they just search for it online and stream it. They can instantly access music and videos on mobile phones, iPods, apps, at any time and anywhere, creating playlists to share with friends without the need for a mix-tape. The internet is packed with music tutorials and information. This is another way in which they develop skills, understanding and knowledge – from mending a bicycle puncture to playing a chord on the ukulele or competing at football against strangers through their games console, this is their real world. Bringing this world into formal education is challenging, yet essential.

Communicating through the internet and mobile devices accessed anywhere is mainstream; if it is not the child themselves using social networking, the likelihood is that someone in a child's family will connect with the world from the comfort of their bean bag. There are many social networks and virtual learning environments that schools use internally and sometimes externally too, so this way of communicating is second nature to many. There is much potential to use these technologies in music education, as the following example shows:

Animated discussion emerged from the 'Oak' table as six Year 5 children jostled for position in order to see the tablet. Millie began reading out comments from the school blog; opinions left by total strangers about the recording of Oak's 'football song' which the teacher had uploaded the previous week. As Millie read through the comments, the others half-listened and passed comment on the sentiments. Mr Tickell wandered over and asked the group to 'consider what they would do if they had ten minutes more' and an opportunity to re-record the music. As he walked away, George clicked on the recording and the group spontaneously started to sing along.

Music is a sonic art, taking place in the 'here and now' – what happens 'in the moment' has gone once the time has passed. This example demonstrates the power of technology to help capture and develop music over time and also to create authentic experiences where music is critiqued by strangers.

Music has universally existed across time and place. The 'third environment' (Hargreaves et al., 2003), the informal environment where children function musically outside of formal learning environments in and out of school, is where much musical learning and engagement take place. We should not be surprised about this since children spend a significant amount of time outside of school, and are influenced by their communities, families and friends as well as by the music they choose to engage with. This informal learning is not new; there are many musicians, famous or otherwise, who are self-taught or who have experienced significant parts of their music education through learning informally.

Music education, and education more generally, needs to consider how to capitalise on and promote informal learning within formal educational structures. We should plan and enhance opportunities for learning which are 'co-constructed *with*' pupils rather than those which are 'done *to*' pupils and, ultimately, consider what music education might be, rather than only perpetuating what we see currently.

You, the musical facilitator

Purposeful and 'accidental' exposure to music helps people to develop musically. A Japanese study of people with little or no formal musical training who regularly partook in karaoke in their free time demonstrated the acquisition of specific highly developed musical skills (Mito, 2004). Whilst it may not be through karaoke, you will also have developed a wide range of musical skills over your life span.

Perhaps you are starting to realise that your own musical 'being' is more developed and extensive than you might have originally thought. What about your general confidence as a teacher, and your ability to engage and motivate pupils in

your class? Where, when and how do you feel most comfortable with this and how can music build on this? The following task, which is used to help you think about yourself as a music teacher, is also the basis of a formative assessment strategy used in Chapter 8.

TASK 1.4

This task encourages you to think about:

- (a) your own current perception of the constructs of an excellent teacher of music in the primary school classroom
 - (b) your own self-rating in relation to these constructs.
1. Use a polar graph paper with 8 segments and 10 concentric circles (Figure 1.2). Around the outside of the chart, write down up to 8 constructs you think would make an excellent teacher of music in your primary school setting (one by each segment). It is likely that some of these will be generic aspects of an excellent teacher, whilst some may be more specifically related to music teaching.

For example, you might feel that you want to include:

Flexible

Inclusive

Confident

This 'performance profile exercise' (Butler and Hardy, 1992) is based on the 'theory of personal constructs' (Kelly, 1955); it is not seeking 'right' answers; your own views are centrally important.

2. Next, you will need to consider each of these constructs in turn and think about what the polar opposite would be. In the examples above:
3. inflexible—————flexible
4. exclusive—————inclusive
5. no confidence—————extremely confident
6. With 0 on the centre of each segment and 10 on the outside, you should decide how you would rate yourself against each of the constructs and colour in the appropriate amount of segments. For example, if you rate yourself as 3 out of 10 on the 'flexibility' scale, you should colour in the first three blocks moving out from the centre of the chart. Whilst you may wish to share this chart with someone else, this chart is for you only; there is no point in not being honest with yourself.
7. Once the chart is complete, look at the representation of yourself as a music teacher, celebrate the strengths and then set three targets for development.

These should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Action-based, Realistic and Time-related) – perhaps two goals for the next term and one longer-term goal to be achieved over the rest of the academic year. Write these on the sheet – first, this will help you to remember them, and second, targets that are written down are more likely to be adhered to (Wanlin et al., 1997).

8. Now think about and write down some practical strategies for helping you to achieve these targets. For example, who will you talk to, observe, ask? What will you read? Where and when will you try out instruments? How will you develop your own confidence to sing?
9. Keep this chart and refer to it periodically. At the end of the term/year, update the chart in relation to how you feel about yourself as a teacher of music.

Hopefully, you are starting to realise that there is a lot you already know and can do. The question now is how to capitalise on and develop this in your classroom to bring to life the kinds of engaging, relevant and enjoyable musical experiences that you and your class want to have.

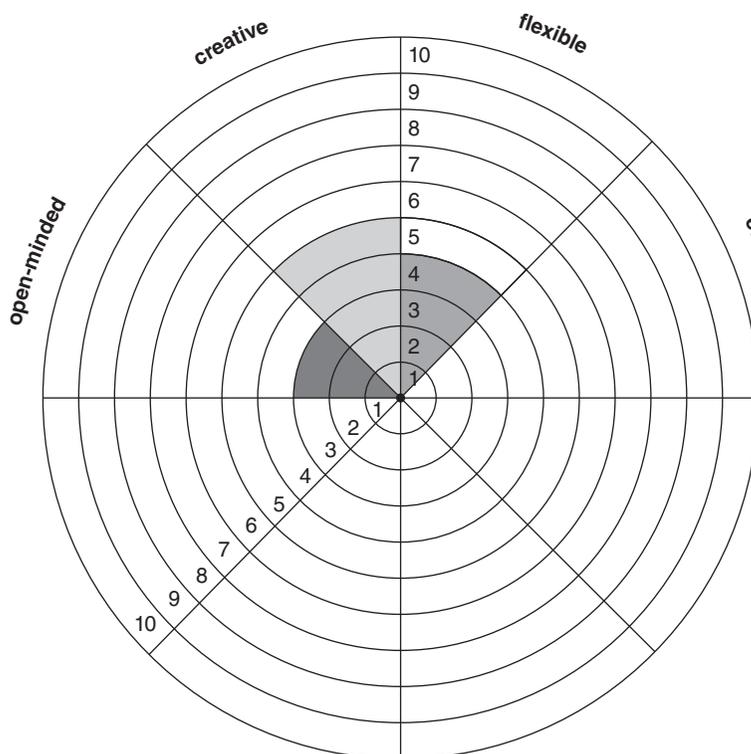


Figure 1.2 Example radar chart – constructs of an excellent music teacher

TASK 1.5

Write down on individual pieces of paper any personal hang-ups about teaching music. What is it that really bothers you? What are the stumbling blocks?

On paper of a different colour, write down all the things you are good at, things that you know and can build on. Think about what inspires you musically and write this down too.

Over the course of the book, keep this list in mind and revisit it frequently as your teaching develops.

Chapter summary

From reading this chapter, hopefully you now recognise the value you bring to children's already rich and constantly developing musical lives and can begin to understand the myriad of ways in which music and learning evolve. This chapter shines a lens on you, encouraging you to explore your thoughts and feelings about music education in a fast-changing world, to think about the things which you are good at and to acknowledge anything that may make you nervous about teaching music. Examining these aspects hopefully provides opportunities for you to consider your views on the purpose, value and importance of education more broadly, and to begin to consider where music education fits into this. Bass player Victor Wooten (2013) describes some important ideas about musical learning and encourages us to let children 'jam' with others, rather than treat musical learning as special or different. Wooten's point is that we wouldn't tell children they can only hold conversations with other children with a similar level of vocabulary and command of language, so why do we often try to impose this within a music education environment?

Your influence on children's musical learning is your indelible footprint – the content, order and way in which it is presented and experienced, the assessment and the evaluation of success, what is in, what is out – are all decided by you. Taking ownership and responsibility for your ideas helps develop understanding and value. Shying away from teaching music will leave no footprint whatsoever, which is a disaster.

Further reading

Pitts, S. (2012) *Chances and Choices: Exploring the Impact of Music Education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Resources

Expert Subject Advisory Group (2013–14) New Music Curriculum Guidance. Available at: <https://sites.google.com/site/newmusiccurriculumguidance/>

Wooten, V. (2013) Music as a Language. Ted talk, 29 May. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zvjW9arAZ0