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1 Chapter 16
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3 Towards Pedagogies of Creative Collaboration:
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5 Guiding Secondary School Students'
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7 Music Compositions
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9 Oscar Odena
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14 I sit next to Emma¹ in one of her school's music practice rooms. She is a music teacher in an inner-city
15 school for girls in London, UK, and today is my last visit. The students have gone home for the day
16 and the mood is relaxed. Over the last two months I videoed Emma's pop-song composition project
17 with her 13–14-year-old students (Year 9) as part of a larger study of music teachers' perceptions
18 of creativity. It is a couple of weeks after the project's final concert and we have met to watch a
19 selection of recorded extracts from the project. Emma is excited to watch the resulting selection. In
20 the first extract, from the second lesson, we see clips of a voice warm up and singing followed by
21 work for the pop-song composition. Four groups of students sit in circles in a spacious music room
22 writing the lyrics of their songs. Then two groups read their choruses to everybody before going to
23 separate practice rooms. Next, we see Emma working with one of the groups. She helps them find the
24 tempo for the drum pattern and start shaping their melody. I stop the viewing and ask her to describe
25 what she was doing: 'I was trying to give them a way into the melody without writing it myself,
26 starting from the words they already had, giving them some opportunities to see different ways
27 they could take that tune for a walk. I was saying, "Oh, you could go up, you could go down ..."
28 giving them one example, and it just seemed the right example of how they might get into the next
29 step. It is not the only way of getting into a melody but it felt instinctively the way to go for them.'
30 She explains that having spent many years working with bands she tends to do things instinctively
31 rather than by having a plan, because every group will have different knowledge and expectations.

32 We continue watching. In the next extract she moves onto another room and works with a group
33 that seems to be at a different stage. Their first draft of the lyrics is almost finished and the melody
34 and harmony begins to appear predominantly from the singing of two students. The time spent with
35 this group is shorter and her interaction with them different. I ask about her impression of the extract
36 and she says she is pleased with it because it felt like she just pulled all the things together and then
37 left, so students could get on with it: 'I did feel a bit like the doctor going, "Ok, what have you got
38 for me? Oh, you've got tune, you've got words, lovely! You've got beat as well, ok. Let me just
39 dadadada [singing]. I'll fix this.'" There was a bit of a feeling of those TV programmes when they
40 go in and fix peoples' houses, they just put a lick of paint on the walls and then the whole house is
41 renewed but is [sic] the same things they had in the house.' In both examples of working with the two
42 groups, Emma seemed to pause, listen, and offer feedback and suggestions intuitively, depending
43 on the stage the students were at. She appears to be at ease with this type of loosely defined activity
44 and not afraid of asking the students questions and offering examples of how they may get into the
45 next stage. Her enjoyment of the job is evident from talking with her about the extracts and I have a
46 sudden realization of how much I have learned from watching her lessons over the last two months.

47
48 ¹ Pseudonyms are used throughout the chapter.

1 Introduction

2
3 The pedagogy of creative collaboration in music classrooms is hardly clear from the
4 literature. There are plenty of tips and strategies for setting up composition activities and
5 even some useful models for peer and self-assessment of composition processes. But what
6 about the nature of the interaction between the teacher and the students, and amongst the
7 students themselves, as the composition is unfolding? How can these interactions facilitate
8 the development of the students' independent musical thinking? And what is the influence of
9 the teacher's background and musical experience on their approach to facilitating creative
10 collaborations in the classroom? This chapter will explore these matters by first reviewing
11 some literature on this topic and then profiling the case of Emma and her students in a case
12 study of an English secondary class that has composition as part of the music curriculum.
13 For this purpose, I observed Emma's lessons at key points in the music project to see the
14 different stages of the students' composition processes and what collaboration can bring to
15 it. Transcripts of student and teacher observations were studied and then summarized for
16 illustration, in the form of vignettes.² In the discussion, I will suggest approaches that can be
17 used to develop effective creative collaborations between students working in groups, and
18 between the students and the teacher, while preserving the independent musical thinking of
19 the students. In a further section, Emma's educational and musical background is considered,
20 charting relevant, self-reported, critical incidents in her education and professional path.
21 Links between her pedagogy of creative collaboration and her background are drawn. The
22 chapter closes with some suggestions for building blocks for the design of pedagogies of
23 creative collaboration.

24

25

26 Outlining Recent Literature on Creativity

27

28 Creativity is a controversial concept that has been defined and re-defined in several disciplines,
29 including psychology, education, musicology and aesthetics, since the beginning of the
30 twentieth century.³ The term 'musical creativity' seems to have different interpretations
31 depending on whether it is being applied to school-aged students or professional artists.
32 Some authors have suggested that, due to the loss of its meaning by overuse, it would be
33 better to stop employing the term musical creativity and to use instead *musical imagination*
34 (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2012). Arguments for doing this would include issues of
35 overgeneralization – unitary definitions cannot work because creativity exists in different
36 contexts – and issues of mistaken ideas still to be found in the psychological study of
37 creativity, including that creativity:

38

39

40

41 ² Transcripts and notes are extracted from the unpublished dataset of my doctoral study,
42 parts of which have been discussed elsewhere (Odena, 2005, 2006, 2013a; Odena, Plummeridge &
43 Welch, 2005). The section on 'The teacher's background' draws on and reworks some ideas included
44 in Odena and Welch (2007, 2009). The vignettes and related discussion have not been published before.

45 ³ For a literature review on the concept of creativity and its meaning relevant to the secondary
46 music classroom please see Odena (2012b). Other reviews on creativity are available with a particular
47 focus on arts education (Burnard, 2007), music psychology (Webster, 2009), music education
48 (Welch, 2012), performing arts and sports science (Nordin-Bates, 2012) and psychological science
(Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010).

- 1 • is divergent thinking, when it also involves convergent thinking; 1
- 2 • is located in the right brain, when left-right hemispheric specialization has been 2
- 3 proven too simplistic by contemporary neuroscience; 3
- 4 • only occurs in a state of defocused attention, when different forms of creativity may 4
- 5 occur in defocused and focused states; 5
- 6 • is facilitated by altered states of consciousness, when creativity often occurs in the 6
- 7 normal waking state. (adapted from Hargreaves, 2012, pp. 545–6). 7

8
 9 I would argue, however, that the above misconceptions emerged from the accepted 9
 10 practices for studying and generating knowledge (epistemology) in particular disciplines; 10
 11 for example, by gathering together instances of evidence in order to predict behaviours 11
 12 or by measuring the individual traits of people deemed to be creative. An illustrative 12
 13 example of the epistemological shift that took place in the second half of the twentieth 13
 14 century⁴ is Csikszentmihalyi's (1994) realization, after spending 20 years studying the 14
 15 personalities of creative people, that to begin to figure out what creativity was, the context 15
 16 in which individuals operate is of paramount importance. He relates, in a frank statement, 16
 17 how he came to the conclusion that 'the more [he] tried to say that "creative people are 17
 18 such and such" or "creative people do this and that", the less sure [he] became about 18
 19 what creativity itself consisted of and how we could even begin to figure out what it was' 19
 20 (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994, p. 135). 20

21 While research into creativity during the 1950s and early 1960s was characterized by 21
 22 studies about the cognitive processes of creation and personality traits of creative people – 22
 23 following the path of Guilford (1950, 1967) and other psychologists – the environment 23
 24 necessary for developing creativity was considered more deeply during the latter part 24
 25 of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. Recent music education 25
 26 research has focused on a variety of contexts in which creativity occurs, discussing 26
 27 multiple definitions such as 'individual', 'collaborative' and 'intercultural' creativities 27
 28 (Burnard, 2012a) and considering how these operate in practice (e.g. Burnard, 2012b; 28
 29 Deliège & Wiggins, 2006; Díaz-Gómez & Riaño-Galán, 2007; Kaschub & Smith, 2013; 29
 30 Odena, 2012a). In this chapter, embracing a pragmatic view aimed at being relevant for 30
 31 practitioners, musical creativity refers to *the development of a musical output that is novel* 31
 32 *for the individual(s) and useful for their situated musical practice*. The following may be a 32
 33 good illustration of this definition: 33

34
 35 A professional musician routinely repeating a scale during a jazz concert would not be 35
 36 developing his or her creativity, whereas a student in a school jam session trying hard and 36
 37 consciously arriving for the first time at some of the same musical ideas would be doing 37
 38 something novel at an individual level and useful for the situated practice. Clearly, s/he 38
 39 would be developing his or her creativity, even if the resulting product was of a different 39
 40 standard compared to commercial recordings (adapted from Odena, in press). 40

41
 42 Some authors have proposed a re-focussing of this area of study, emphasizing the importance 42
 43 of the creative aspects of music listening, which may 'lead to a more fundamental view 43
 44 of imagination as the cognitive basis of musical activity' (Hargreaves, 2012, p. 539). 44
 45 Listening skills appear to be closely linked with, and necessary for, the development of 45

46
 47 _____ 47
 48 ⁴ Elsewhere I have discussed aspects of this epistemological shift, such as the growth in 47
 48 interpretive inquires, and I presented a generative model of knowledge development (Odena, 2013b). 48

1 the students' musical imagination during composition, improvisation and performance 1
2 activities. Music educators have also looked not just at the cognitive processes and skills 2
3 but at the musical practices more likely to motivate students, advocating for an increased 3
4 recognition of the students' musicianship from their communities of practice (Allsup, 4
5 Westerlund & Shieh, 2012; Barrett, 2005). Barrett (2012) has recently applied ecological 5
6 thinking to discuss the complex cultural and relational web that shapes the environment 6
7 which holds creative activity, outlining the need for 'recursive and reflexive study of 7
8 the pattern, context and meaning of our creative engagement as learners, teachers and 8
9 musicians' (p. 216). Examples of developing the creative aspects of listening and of using 9
10 the students' musicianship as part of a composition project are discussed in the next section, 10
11 which considers Emma's work in developing effective creative collaborations. 11

12

13

14 **An Illustrative Case from an English Secondary School** 14

15

16 To maintain the anonymity agreed with Emma, her school description would need to be 16
17 brief. It is sufficient to say that the school is located somewhere in London, UK. It is a 17
18 comprehensive inner-city school for girls with a well-resourced music department that 18
19 includes an orchestra, choirs and bands. It is a state school, which means that (a) the 19
20 school follows the English statutory National Curriculum for Music (Qualifications and 20
21 Curriculum Authority (QCA), 2007), and (b) the school intake is comprised of students of 21
22 mixed socioeconomic family backgrounds characteristic of the school's catchment area. 22
23 Whereas the commitment of Emma to her students' musical creativity development may 23
24 not be representative of all teachers, composition activities are to be found across most 24
25 schools in England due to a number of factors. These include the tradition for music in 25
26 generalist schools coupled with the inclusion of composition and improvisation in the 26
27 National Curriculum. 27

28 In England, musical creativity practices have a relatively long tradition – reviews of 28
29 which can be found in Mills and Paynter (2008) and Pitts (2000). For example, the National 29
30 Curriculum states that students should be able to 'improvise, explore and develop musical 30
31 ideas when performing' and to 'create, develop and extend musical ideas by selecting and 31
32 combining resources, within musical structures, styles, genres and traditions' (QCA, 2007, 32
33 p. 182). Music is taught by specialist teachers at secondary level, and classroom music 33
34 education is compulsory until age 14 years. Between the ages of 16 to 18 years, secondary 34
35 school students can study towards their A level, the requirements of which include 35
36 developing a portfolio of composition exercises and an original piece. In many other EU 36
37 countries, the equivalent level of musicianship would only be taught in specialist music 37
38 schools or conservatories, with selective entrance examinations or high fees (or both). 38
39 Musical creativity practices in English state-funded schools go back to the 1970s and 1980s 39
40 with the work of teacher educators such as Paynter and Vulliamy, who advocated for musical 40
41 experimentation and contemporary and popular music languages (Paynter, 1972; Vulliamy 41
42 & Lee, 1982). A characteristic of current musical creativity practices is the introduction of 42
43 a rich variety of music traditions, including the music of the people who settled in the UK 43
44 in the last century. The debate in recent years has been on whether the students' preferences 44
45 should have more presence in the classroom in order to diminish the perceived gap between 45
46 music in and out of school (Green, 2008; Welch, 2001). The expectation is that composition 46
47 activities are integrated with musical understanding, performance and aural skills, with a 47
48 focus on the learning process. This involves a reconsideration of the student as the source of 48

1 knowledge and an increase in the use of music technology, as this allows access to sounds 1
 2 and an array of new possibilities that were previously not available to students and teachers 2
 3 (Finney & Burnard, 2007). Most teacher education courses in the UK feature musical 3
 4 creativity and creative teaching, and creativity is discussed in teacher education handbooks 4
 5 (e.g. Evans & Philpott, 2009). In a popular volume for secondary student teachers, Philpott 5
 6 (2007) prefaces some points for consideration when facilitating creativity in the classroom 6
 7 with the following explanation: 7

8
 9 It is possible for you to create the conditions in which creativity can flourish, although 9
 10 like any flower you cannot guarantee that it will grow. Despite producing a suitable 10
 11 environment for creativity we have to accept that sometimes little creative activity 11
 12 emerges and there are failures for pupils and teacher alike. However, despite the necessary 12
 13 risks, it is only by allowing pupils to make music in many different ways that opportunities 13
 14 for creativity appear, in other words a pupil's entitlement to music is also an entitlement 14
 15 to be creative. (p. 124) 15
 16

17 Well said. 17

18
 19 After viewing another recorded extract of the students working in groups Emma explains that in 19
 20 this type of composition work there is a lot of group dynamic: 'It is about them working off each 20
 21 other and hopefully catching that moment when it just sort of sets fire. It happens at different times 21
 22 with every group. And there was one group today who just got to that point, six weeks later they 22
 23 suddenly came together, they were completely fired up.' 23

24 The practice rooms are used so she can 'get out of their way; I just come in and, hopefully, 24
 25 push it up one level when they're getting stuck, rather than giving them too many ideas'. 'The 25
 26 project has two outcomes. One is that students learn some songs to perform in public. The other is 26
 27 to have a group song they have written that has the qualities of a pop song, and that each member of 27
 28 the group is involved in some way.' This gives an opportunity for some students to be doing other 28
 29 things apart from singing and still be involved: 'They may be good on words, they may be good 29
 30 on arranging, but it doesn't mean they have to be singing; in some groups I have found that the 30
 31 song-writer wasn't the performer.' She observes that around this age the students make their minds 31
 32 up about whether they like music or not and some of them have already 'switched off' from music. 32
 33 Her aim is to engage everybody in creating 'their own song', which they can videotape or perform 33
 34 at the final concert, which is open to family and friends. 34

35 When asked about lesson plans, Emma explains that apart from the two outcomes above, it 35
 36 is difficult to go into a lot of detail about how they are achieved because every group goes into 36
 37 different stages. This is one of the challenges, as 'not every group is working at the same stage. 37
 38 Some groups get it straight away and for some groups it takes a few weeks of struggling and then 38
 39 it comes through.' 39
 40

43 Guiding Secondary School Students' Music Compositions 43

44
 45 In our conversations, Emma observes that there are many different ways to song-write: one 45
 46 may start working on the chords first, or the tune, the rhythm, the words, or a combination 46
 47 of the above. Different groups need different instructions and 'different ways of getting 47
 48 into it'. In this type of project she keeps the process open from the outset. The only 48

1 pre-established activities are the warming up and song rehearsing at the start of each lesson, 1
2 and some listening and analysis of selected chart songs (for example, a song by Macy 2
3 Gray). She explained the advantages of working with well-known examples: 3
4 4

5 The aim is to get them excited about the project, to take some good examples and say: 5
6 ‘Well, how did they do this?’ ‘How did they put together their choruses?’ ‘How much 6
7 repetition was there?’ ‘Did they use a very traditional way of putting a chorus together 7
8 where it’s just four lines and the lines rhyme or ...?’ There were some unconventional 8
9 choruses so it was just opening up their eyes to the things they could use. If it’s in the 9
10 charts they’ve heard it a million times. Subconsciously they know it so well. 10
11 11

12 Before joining the students in the practice rooms she would let them work for a few minutes 12
13 on their own. Then, when going into the different rooms she would try and see which was 13
14 the best way to get into each particular group. She explained that a few students – around 14
15 10 per cent in each class – would find it harder to engage in this type of project and that 15
16 she was always looking to engage everybody. There was an element of empowering the 16
17 students and of demystifying the composing process: 17
18 18

19 I think it’s demystifying the whole thing of ‘Oh those people on the television can do 19
20 it, they are so special, we can’t do it.’ When in fact, we’re seeing that all of them are 20
21 capable of producing a fine pop song. Lots of them are absolutely very fine, if they were 21
22 produced properly, they would be in the charts. 22
23 23

24 Giving students some time to work on their own increased their time management and 24
25 agency through opportunities to work like professional musicians. This carried with it a 25
26 degree of unpredictability regarding how and when each group would reach the expected 26
27 objectives. There was always a fine balance between what students came up with and 27
28 Emma’s feedback and musical examples, which she had to constantly re-assess during each 28
29 interaction with the students. In addition to her communication with them, opportunities 29
30 for interaction amongst the students emerged while in practice rooms, and students 30
31 who were more articulate at querying the work of others in the group often facilitated 31
32 these interactions: 32
33 33

34 Some students are very good at questioning other kids. That is a very important skill, 34
35 asking each other, talking to each other ... there’s still a lot of work to be done with how 35
36 they question each other and how they get each other going. There were some groups who 36
37 were better at encouraging each other, saying ‘that was really good what you did’, or ‘what 37
38 about this idea?’ 38
39 39

40 Discussing their assessment with the whole class provided students with opportunity to 40
41 develop constructive questioning skills and an understanding of the assessment criteria: 41
42 42

43 The evaluation that is important is when they watch it back on video and *they* talk about 43
44 it. We have really good discussions about ‘What worked?’, ‘What didn’t work?’, ‘If you 44
45 had more time what would you do?’, ‘How did the mood come over?’, ‘What was the 45
46 hook?’, ‘Where were the successful moments?’, ‘If you had three pounds and you had to 46
47 buy one of those on single which one would you buy?’, ‘Why?’ ... I usually ask them to 47
48 48

1 grade it first and why they gave themselves that grade. Then I tell them why I've given 1
2 them a grade. It's very important they are involved in that process, because there's no point 2
3 in giving them the grade if they don't understand why. 3
4 4

5
6 The final extract includes clips of one of the groups arranged to give a sense of continuity. First 6
7 we see the students, unsupervised, finishing the song arrangements in a practice room. One student 7
8 writes on the board and others try different things out on the accompanying percussion instruments. 8
9 They play the song and two of them talk as the music goes on about decisions that are made while 9
10 others nod. Then they sing on stage during the last rehearsal. We finally view the end of their 10
11 performance during the concert. Emma is fascinated to see the students working on their own in 11
12 the practice room 'just like I would expect to see a group of adults working together; the way that 12
13 they were reacting to each other, whether they were just nodding, the body language was there'. 13
14 She feels excitement from viewing the students' original song being finalized and then watching 14
15 the performance at the final concert. I ask her about her definition of creativity and she explains 15
16 that it is more to do with 'a type of awareness that you do it with, rather than what you are doing'. 16
17 She thinks it is about being in the moment that makes something creative, rather than doing it 17
18 unconsciously. She observes that the students in this last extract were 'totally engaged with the 18
19 now'. For those moments 'they were not thinking about the makeup, or the boy or the hair, or the 19
20 whatever. They were totally in that process, doing it, and that for me is what creativity is all about.' 20
21 I query her about how she keeps her students engaged and motivated and she explains that she tends 21
22 to be enthusiastic, but not too over-enthusiastic, and she gives students time: 'If one is relaxed, 22
23 and excited about something, which again comes back to being absolutely there with it, then the 23
24 motivation will come.' She says her job is 'to start the spark going, get their attention to now'. Often 24
25 she will see students mentally drifting off and will get them back to engage with the class: 'I will 25
26 pick them out, one at a time, I'd just go, "Right Becky, come back, I want you here now." Because 26
27 if they are "here now", it'll all happen.' 27

28 We finally talk about the school's curricular and extracurricular musical activities. Emma 28
29 explains that they keep developing, as 'every year I am unsatisfied'. She has some reservations 29
30 about this year's final concert and wonders if next time they could organize 'a big workshop' such 30
31 as African drumming or dancing rather than 'standing on a hot stage for an hour and a quarter'. 31
32 Her main aim is that students have a musical experience, and she explains that the school's Head of 32
33 Music is in agreement with this: 'It's about the fact that everybody in the community feels as if they 33
34 are a musician, involved in a musical experience and not excluded.' 'We are always rethinking how 34
35 to organize things so that the kids are in the experience, rather than feeling like outsiders.' Because 35
36 of her own experiences as an adolescent, not being 'involved in anything musical at school, apart 36
37 from the choir', Emma feels quite strongly about the fact that she does not want any students left 37
38 out of activities because they are not formal instrumentalists: 'They are interested in music; they 38
39 are just not interested in sitting in a room with one person, learning an instrument. They want to be 39
40 doing music that's doing music You can't play in the wind band until you are grade 2, which 40
41 means you have to sit in a room playing on your own for three years.' She wants students to be able 41
42 to participate in a musical experience from day one, but acknowledges that 'to put it into practice 42
43 it's another thing all together'. She explains that they have 'a very creative relationship within the 43
44 department' and are 'very open about trying different things'. 44

1	The Influence of the Teacher's Background on the Approach to Facilitating	1
2	Creative Collaborations	2
3		3
4	As part of data collection Emma was asked to complete a Musical-Career-Path response	4
5	sheet derived from methods developed by Denicolo and Pope (1990) and Burnard (2005).	5
6	Using an undulating snake-path drawn on a single sheet, she was asked to think back over	6
7	her life experiences and was invited to write down specific instances that had influenced the	7
8	direction of her musical and educational outlook. The open-ended nature of this technique	8
9	had the added advantage of letting her choose the experiences she wanted to highlight. By	9
10	using this technique instead of asking a battery of questions, the thread was maintained for	10
11	both of the prime intentions of this type of exploratory enquiry, namely the researchers'	11
12	posture of 'not knowing what is not known' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 235) and the	12
13	intention to offer illustrative examples rather than generalizing theories (Eisner, 1991).	13
14	Emma's first musical experiences were singing 'with parents from the age of six'. She	14
15	learned the piano and sang in church, but stopped her formal music training at the age of 13,	15
16	choosing art instead of music at secondary school. Emma was involved with rock bands	16
17	at college and wrote songs there, joining a rock band and touring Europe in her 20s. She	17
18	worked with several pop and rock bands as singer and composer, and has worked in studios,	18
19	recording and engineering. After returning to England, she studied a university Jazz course	19
20	and then trained to be a music teacher. She taught full-time for some years, but then 'burned	20
21	out' and now teaches part-time, as well as leading vocal workshops as a freelancer. She also	21
22	started conducting choirs and became involved in a practitioners' network of world music.	22
23	Emma's experience of stopping formal music education at school seems to have had	23
24	an impact on her ability to see music potential in disengaged students. For instance, she	24
25	acknowledges different 'ways' in which pupils may develop their creativity. She observes	25
26	that some pupils are 'very extrovert' and 'tend to get into trouble in lots of places within the	26
27	curriculum'. A lot of these students 'are very creative and what happens in a very formal'	27
28	education is that their 'creativity doesn't really get a place to flourish'. She describes herself	28
29	as being extrovert and a bit problematic when she was an adolescent, and feels that she can	29
30	recognize this type of pupil because of her own schooling:	30
31		31
32	Those are the kids that I have my eye on because I was a bit like that myself ... but then	32
33	I am not having anything against the kids who are very creative and introvert as well ...	33
34	Both [types] have to be nurtured.	34
35		35
36	Having had experiences with a variety of music styles and activities, including composition,	36
37	seems to have informed her description of the features of an appropriate environment for	37
38	creativity. She keenly puts forward comments regarding the factors that might hinder this	38
39	environment. For instance, she explains that 'anxiety' due to preparation for concerts	39
40	and 'lack of time' may distort or even break the appropriate 'emotional environment' for	40
41	creativity. She also comments on factors that facilitate such an environment (e.g. motivation	41
42	and engagement) and is able to acknowledge all of these conditions and act upon them.	42
43	Perhaps due to her own composing experience, Emma outlines the process of creativity	43
44	as having no prescribed or rigid steps. She is sceptical of outlining a universal staging in the	44
45	creative process ('every group goes into different stages'). The examples considered above	45
46	are in keeping with suggestions by Green (1990, 2001) that young people engage with a	46
47	variety of processes depending on their experience and the music style of the piece. In	47
48	facilitating the musical development of her students Emma describes herself as a 'nurturer':	48

1 Creativity is about ‘feeling’. You can set up the right sort of feeling and mood and *that* can 1
 2 be taught. But I think ... I’m a facilitator and I’m also a nurturer and, hopefully, someone 2
 3 that people want to spend time with. I’m creating an environment where creativity can 3
 4 happen. It’s bit like that old analogy with the soil, you can’t have lovely flowers if you 4
 5 don’t water the soil, and I think I’m more like the gardener looking after the beds, just 5
 6 making sure that they are watered regularly and that I put the seeds in at the right times. 6
 7 And then I don’t just leave them, I do come back and water them regularly and talk to the 7
 8 flowers as well. Humour is incredibly important, and being relaxed. 8
 9
 10
 11 **Pulling Things Together** 11
 12
 13 Teachers who, like Emma, have years of experience working with young composers hold 13
 14 important insights into meeting the needs of students working collaboratively. Reese (2003) 14
 15 and Webster (2012), in their papers on responding to student compositions and developing 15
 16 pedagogies for revision, examined the views of several such practitioners. In doing 16
 17 so, they summarized a few lessons that may serve as foundations to pedagogies of creative 17
 18 collaboration, suggesting that educators should: 18
 19
 20 • *Respond first to the overall intent* and expressive nature of the composition and try 20
 21 not to focus too quickly on technical aspects. 21
 22 • *Be receptive of the readiness of students to accept feedback*; to determine this, 22
 23 asking ‘How can I help you best?’ is a good start. 23
 24 • *Encourage improvisational thinking* (or imaginative thinking in sound) when 24
 25 preparing original pieces. 25
 26 • *Listen, perform and discuss music*; the more we extend our sonic experiences and 26
 27 understand what a composer is doing to create what we hear, the better. 27
 28 • *Establish a climate for revision* earlier rather than later in the compositional journey. 28
 29 • *Ask students about their process of composition* to figure out how to help improve 29
 30 the work. 30
 31 • *Have students discover on their own*, making sure through questioning that as many 31
 32 sonic possibilities have been considered as makes sense. 32
 33 • *Build over time*; a variety of compositional experiences over years of music learning 33
 34 will result in best creative collaborations, as well as knowing what each student has 34
 35 experienced and trying to build on what has come before. 35
 36 • *Give themselves agency*, to lead compositional activities and to offer students 36
 37 guidance with enthusiasm and understanding. Educators may prepare for this by 37
 38 engaging in composition themselves. (adapted from Reese, 2003, pp. 217–19, and 38
 39 Webster, 2012, pp. 109–10) 39
 40
 41 Intrinsic motivation appears to be a driver for successful students and this could be 41
 42 facilitated rather than inhibited by offering students increased choice in musical materials 42
 43 and activities: ‘the role of the educator should be to fire up the individuals’ curiosity to 43
 44 learn, developing rather than inhibiting their interests’ (Odena, 2012a, p. 208). Indeed, the 44
 45 motivation afforded by an increased degree of ownership in musical activities would be 45
 46 an important part of the environment that holds creative activity (Barrett, 2012). Allsup, 46
 47 Westerlund and Shieh (2012) have advocated for student agency as the starting point in 47
 48 music lessons, so that schools are ‘laboratories of experiment and imagination, spaces 48

1 where students and teachers work together towards negotiated and personally meaningful 1
 2 ends' (p. 470). Educators may also explore the music practices of their schools' catchment 2
 3 area so as to develop 'place-conscious' music education opportunities (Stauffer, 2009). 3
 4 Combining teacher and students' agency, such as in Emma's self-directed group activities, 4
 5 and developing place-conscious education opportunities would assist in diminishing 5
 6 disengaged students' feelings of being 'outsiders'.⁵ 6

7 In closing, I propose below a few other building blocks for the design of pedagogies 7
 8 of creative collaboration, which could be used across a number of settings and age groups. 8
 9 These suggestions refer to composition activities but they could be adapted for all types of 9
 10 musical activity, for instance when exploring the use of musical elements to give different 10
 11 emotional qualities to the performance of a song or when appraising the qualities of 11
 12 a recording: 12

- 13 13
- 14 • *Plan suitable stimulating challenges* in relation to the students' developmental 14
 15 stage, setting them a problem that they have a realistic chance of solving. Students 15
 16 do better when the activity fits how they think – for instance, offering alternative 16
 17 open-ended and challenging tasks (more instruments, different musical materials, 17
 18 extended structures). 18
- 19 • *Build up rich and stimulating resources*, which can be used to both initiate and 19
 20 support the creative process. These resources can be musical and extra-musical: a 20
 21 variety of recordings, instruments, films and music software. 21
- 22 • *Be sensitive to the students' time needs* during their composing process and flexibly 22
 23 adapt the expectations as a unit of work progresses. 23
- 24 • *Build a positive emotional environment*: students need to feel capable of taking 24
 25 risks and sense that their contributions are respected. This positive environment 25
 26 can be built and sustained through dialogue between students and teacher with 26
 27 constructive positive feedback. 27
- 28 • *Include various levels of structure when promoting creativity*, depending on 28
 29 the students, the task, and the desired learning. For example, teachers might set 29
 30 students a free choice about which problems to solve and how to do this. To increase 30
 31 efficiency, work needs to be preserved. 31
- 32 • *Facilitate the students' technical development, by questioning, prompting, and 32
 33 modelling*. Educators need to set up opportunities for models to be heard (e.g. older 33
 34 students, external musicians or themselves). They need to encourage further 34
 35 development of musical ideas, as novice musicians may be satisfied with their work 35
 36 after an initial exploratory phase. 36
- 37 • *Share the assessment of work and develop the assessment criteria with students* to 37
 38 develop their self-assessment skills and facilitate the emergence of further ideas – 38
 39 for instance, students may be asked to come up with musical examples that match 39
 40 each of the assessment criteria. (adapted from Odena, 2012b, pp. 520–21) 40
 41

42 Composing experience and practical knowledge of different music styles seem to have 42
 43 enriched Emma's descriptions of the facilitating environment for creativity and its 43
 44 assessment. It would appear that educators need opportunities to work creatively in different 44
 45 musical styles during their formative years and beyond. Further enquiries may benefit from 45

46 _____ 46
 47 ⁵ Diminishing 'outsider' feelings and promoting inclusion through music education is a related 47
 48 area I discussed in Odena (2010, 2014). 48

1 exploring the value of collaborative work between beginner teachers and professional
2 composers. The above discussion corroborates suggestions that point to a need for teachers
3 to have appropriate composing experience if they are to be more able to assess musical
4 compositions from a wide range of styles (Odena, 2012a). This is necessary not only for the
5 assessment of the final music products but also for the teachers to engage with the pupils'
6 composing processes. I think Emma and her students would agree with all of this.

7
8

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10
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