LYING ON THE FLOOR – YOUNG PEOPLES’ APPROACHES TO CREATIVITY IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

Rosemary Boyle
BA (Melb) Dip.Ed

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Declaration:

This thesis does not contain material which has been accepted for any other degree in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is given in the text.

Signature: ..........................................................
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Abstract
In recent times, the importance of fostering creativity in music education has been at the forefront of discussion and writing about music curricula. By asking students to explore their creativity in the music classroom we allow them to investigate their originality and help them to become more expressive, self-assured, and independent individuals. However, adolescents are often inhibited in their quest for self-expression.

Although there are studies looking at the processes involved in creative music activities for kindergarten, primary and tertiary students, less attention has been paid to fostering creativity in secondary students. And because the notion of creativity has many interpretations, this study includes a review of literature exploring perceptions of this concept. As my pedagogy is situated in student centered music education, it also traces the growth of this movement.

The aim of the study is to explore the inhibiting factors that impinge on adolescents who are asked to produce creative musical responses. The setting is a unique rural school, with a mixed population of Australian and international students, that offers education leading to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. This action research involves semi-structured interviews, students’ reflections on these music activities as well as my participant observations. The analysis of the data is used to review current classroom practices and inform new teaching directions.
Chapter 1: Introduction

“Why are you lying on the floor? You’re supposed to be doing some work!”
“But Miss, look at what we’ve been doing while we’ve been lying here.”

This study arose from my own teaching practice and was motivated by my observations of students over a long period of time. I wished to understand what was happening “behind the scenes” in my music classroom and to develop a greater awareness of the conditions that enable students to feel comfortable about producing creative musical responses. I am a Year 7 to 10 classroom music teacher, in a unique rural school catering to a mixed population of Australian and international students and offering education leading to the IB Diploma. I wanted to find a way to facilitate the process of exploring and expressing musical ideas in the hope that this would make it easier for my students to access their creative responses. This was important for a number of reasons. Pragmatically, these relate to curriculum design and the development of skills in those students who wish to take music as an IB Diploma subject at Higher Level, or as an option at Standard Level, where they are required to compose original music. I had also observed that some students in all year levels face considerable difficulty in expressing their thoughts, moods and emotions in a tangible musical way and I wished to explore the anatomy of these inhibitions. I wanted to assist all students to develop a sense of their innate capacity to create, while providing them with a stock of techniques to help them realize this potential.

I believe that education should promote creativity more actively because as Sir Ken Robinson asserts, “creativity now is as important in education as literacy and we should treat it with the same status” (2006:n.p.). In its Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) (2009) states that one of the two dimensions in the Standards in the Arts domain is “creating and making” (2009:n.p.), emphasizing their belief that “creating” is a significant part of the curriculum. This is a philosophy that informs my own understanding of the purpose of education and my interest in new music, specifically
the avant-garde in Western Art Music. For several years, a colleague and I managed a contemporary classical music company that aimed to provide a forum for new artistic ideas and a platform for new works and innovative summary programs. In this role I had the opportunity to speak to and observe composers at the cutting-edge of contemporary music and I became intrigued by the possibility of promoting more adventurous responses in my music classroom. Before I could understand what was needed to assist my students I had to develop a deeper appreciation of the inhibiting factors that affect them in the process of accessing their creativity in music classes. I was interested in not only cultural and educational influences but also the effect of musical skill and personality type on a student’s ability to respond.

To investigate these factors I undertook a Pilot Study, using a Year 10 elective music class, which represents Cycle One of this action research. The cohort consisted of eleven students, five females and six males. Four of these students were Australian and seven were from Thailand, China and Hong Kong. The students were asked to work in groups, engaging in three tasks to create musical responses. At the end of each task, they were asked to write reflections about their involvement. The data from my participant observations and the students’ reflections revealed that they found the process of creating musical responses difficult but not impossibly challenging and ultimately very rewarding. It also indicated that they needed more time to complete the tasks to a standard with which they were satisfied.

There was a difference in the skill with which students managed to work comfortably in group situations; the Australian students managed more easily than the international students, suggesting that previous educational experiences and cultural differences might be influencing their competence in dealing with the dynamics of groups. The data also suggested that personality type does not have a determining influence on how students respond to the challenge of creating and indicated that musical skill can work either as an advantage or a hindrance to creative expression. Students who have considerable training in an instrument might imagine that the knowledge and understanding they have acquired through many years of tuition

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1 The IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma is an educational program for students aged 15 to 19 years and is an internationally recognized qualification for entry to university.
should make the act of creating music less daunting. However, in this context, the Cycle One data revealed that some students with an extensive background in instrumental tuition in fact felt anxious and inhibited when they were faced with the task of creating their own music.

In line with this observation, Sommervelle (2009) suggests that while rapid advances in the understanding of the workings of the brain have occurred, traditional instrumental training has failed to keep pace, tending to neglect the “joyful adventure” (33) of creating music. In part, at least, this may be due to the emphasis instrumental tuition places on reproducing something that is “perfect” and this quest for excellence can in fact inhibit the full and free exploration of creative potential.

1.1 The Research question
Taking account of the data emerging from Cycle One, I extended the parameters of Cycle Two as widely as possible to allow unexpected and hidden influences to surface. However, the findings emerging from the research are nonetheless qualified by its Year 10 setting.
The research question is:
What are the inhibiting factors that impede creative music responses in secondary students?
Sub-questions are:
What changes can I make to my teaching strategies to reduce these inhibitions?
Do cultural differences have an influence on inhibitions?

1.2 Definition of “creative music response”
Although the term “creative music response” provides scope for an almost limitless range of interpretation, for the purposes of this study some descriptions include: an imaginative response, responding to a task creatively, presenting a response that is original to the respondent or “having original ideas that have value” (Robinson, 2006:n.p.). Craft defines creativity as “possibility thinking” (1997:7), which she describes as involving play, being able to ask questions and not letting problems or circumstances block action. Therefore a creative response would focus on “what if” or “perhaps if” and allow an individual to express the otherwise inaccessible workings of their imagination through this process. In contrast, Amabile presents a consensual definition of creativity where the value of its expression is considered, rather than the process or the person. “Thus, creativity can be regarded as the
quality of products or responses judged to be creative by appropriate observers and it can also be regarded as the process by which something so judged is produced” (1983:31).

In more specifically musical terms, improvisation is often used to denote creativity but to my way of thinking it has two quite separate and different meanings. Firstly, it suggests the ability to react immediately in framing a solution to an unexpected problem. Secondly, it describes the creation of original ideas situated in and contextually justified by a system of rules and protocols. The most obvious example of this is Jazz, where improvisations are organized according to prescribed chordal patterns, but the structure of many other musical cultures also provide for improvisation. Another term used synonymously with creativity is composition, an activity seen as integral to the production of Western Art Music and one which also assumes an understanding of a particular set of rules and protocols embedded in this form of music making. However, for this study the terms improvisation and, to a lesser extent, composition do not satisfactorily explain what my students are doing in the activities provided for them. In my estimation they are doing something quite different but what they create may incorporate both improvisation and composition.

Two explanations align more comprehensively with my own perceptions. Macdonald, Byrne & Carlton use the term “inventing” which they explain as:

the creation of music that is new to the originator and that has come about through a process of experimentation, trial and error, sharing of musical ideas, collaborative work and that may or may not be written down in some form or other (2006:293).

Finally, the NSW Department of Education describes the process simply as “organizing sound” (1984:14). My own definition of creative music responses is the process of combining sounds and rhythms to produce music that is original in content, although it may appropriate other sources, with or without notation and may be the culmination of individual or group efforts to produce this result.

1.3 Study design
As a participant researcher wishing to use my classroom as the setting for change and improvement in my teaching practice, action research surfaced as the logical methodology to employ. My students and I would be engaged in a collaborative arrangement to research and develop understanding about the difficulties in creative music making and so effect appropriate changes (Somekh, 2006). This study
represents Cycle Two in the process and was shaped by the findings of Cycle One. The reflexive nature of this study means that this thesis is written in the “first-person, active voice” (Patton, 2002:65) and acknowledges that the interpretations that follow are influenced by my personal beliefs.

Chapter Two presents a literature review focusing on the construct of creativity, the rise of student-centred music education and finally, studies relevant to this research. Chapter Three describes the methodology and methods employed for the study and Chapter Four details and discusses the data analysis. Chapter Five considers the ramifications of the study and the implications for my classroom.
Chapter 2: The Review of Literature

This literature review is organised thematically into three sections: defining creativity, the rise of student-centred music education, and an overview of research about secondary students and their musical creativity.

Given the vague, subjective and contentious nature of the concept, the search for a definition of creativity is fraught with difficulties. But the process of exploring this notion, both historically and socio-culturally, provides valuable insights into the subtleties of the term, without necessarily arriving at a generally accepted definition. And while most of the literature investigating creativity is situated in a Western context, the nationalities of the participants in this study make it imperative to examine this concept from an Asian perspective as well. In this research, the pedagogy is located in the movement towards student-centred music education, where creativity is seen as an important aspect of developing an individual musical voice (McMillan, 2003). The evolution of this movement provides impetus for experimentation and a philosophical framework for this study.

Finally, the review considers studies involving secondary students and music making with a view to understanding the optimum environment for achieving the most creative outcome. Although much has been researched and written about creative music making in kindergarten, primary and tertiary contexts, it has been difficult to find material pertaining to the secondary school-aged cohort engaging in music activities. Looking to other arts practices may provide valuable insights that could be transferred to a musical environment but it is also possible that the processes involved in these artistic domains do not necessarily match those required musically (Reimer, 2003; Starko, 2010). Therefore, this review has only sought studies that focus on the musical domain.
2.1 Defining Creativity

2.1.1 From God to Man

Historically, attempting to define creativity has proved highly problematic, not the least because this intellectually and culturally contentious notion seems to defy a universally acceptable definition (Amabile, 1996; Fautley, 2004; Hennessey & Amabile, 1988; Humphrey, 2006; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Torrance, 1988; Walberg, 1988). But the attempt has at least encouraged a refinement of thought about the concept, and focused attention on gaining a deeper understanding of its educational possibilities. In this sense, investigating the influences that have molded our thinking about the meaning and place of creativity in evolving models of education, while exploring the processes and circumstances sympathetic to the emergence of creativity, can help to develop a philosophical and practical framework that informs and supports educators in harnessing the pedagogical potential of creativity (Humphrey, 2006).

Early references to the notion of creativity are located in the bible’s Book of Genesis (Albert & Runco, 1999; Weiner, 2000), where the idea of “creating something from nothing” emerges (Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004). But with God as both the architect and executor of creation, man and woman found themselves as they were, made whole, complete and in God’s image, with no need for autonomous action (Genesis, Douay Version).

By the coming of the Middle Ages, man had assumed a more independent role. But those engaged in artistic activities were seen as channeling the inspirations of the divine being, rather than as creators of their own works (Dacey & Lennon, 1998). During the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, great advances in science, literature and art influenced subtle but significant changes in the way that the act of creativity was perceived (Weiner, 2000). By the early Renaissance, resistance to claiming personal credit was evaporating and “the divine attribute of great artists and artisans was recognized and often emphasized as manifestly their own and not of divine origin” (Albert & Runco, 1999:18).
Modern concepts of creativity were not to emerge until the latter part of the nineteenth century (Albert & Runco, 1999). This was an age of new “sciences” such as psychology, economics and evolutionary theory, whose frameworks contributed to the evolving ascendancy of the individual in creative endeavor and the distribution of that creative potential throughout society.

2.1.2 A contemporary perspective
A more contemporary view offered by the Oxford Dictionary defines creativity as “the use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness” (“Creativity”, 2011). The Cambridge Dictionary describes it as “producing or using original and unusual ideas” (“Creativity”, 2011). In the literature, creativity has often been described in similar terms; as something novel, unexpected or unique that provides a solution to a problem (Amabile, 1983; Hickey, 2002; Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004; Humphreys, 2006; Runco, 2004; Sawyer, 2003; Starko, 2010; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Torrance, 1998; Weiner, 2000). This emphasis on originality or novelty poses a problem in the classroom where students may conceive an idea that is new to them but which already exists (Craft, 2001). Therefore, one can ask the question; does this experience also qualify for the label “creative”? A further complication is posed by Lubart & Georgsdottir who assert that “a child may produce a creative idea without even realising its novelty” (2004:42). As Taylor suggests, even more difficulties arise when making comparisons between cultures, as “that which is regarded as creative in one culture at one point in time may not be in another” (2008:3). It can be argued that linking creativity to the production of a novel outcome gives too much prominence to the product without considering the processes involved and an understanding of those processes may yield more relevant insights into the pedagogical approach needed to provide a creative environment within the music classroom.

2.1.3 Product versus process?
Another path to developing a richer understanding of this concept is to examine the ways in which creativity has been investigated. It would appear there is a divide between those who look to explore the products of creative endeavor and those who
place primacy on the processes that generate and further creativity (Hennessey & Amabile, 1988).

Both Gardner (1983) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996) examined the lives of outstandingly creative individuals, based on their output, to gain valuable insights into the characteristics they embodied. To develop his cognitive theory of “multiple intelligences”, Gardner’s study of exemplary creators initially identified seven intellectual potentials that are “capable of being realized to a greater or lesser extent as a consequence of the experiential, cultural and motivational factors that affect a person” (Gardner, 2006:55). These intelligences are categorized as language, music, logic and mathematics, visual-spatial conceptualization, bodily-kinesthetic skills, knowledge of other persons, and knowledge of ourselves. By including these last two, Gardner combined accepted views of intelligence with intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness, proposing that all individuals have natural abilities in each of these seven intelligences (Feldman, 2003). An eighth, added later, described as “naturalist intelligence” refers to knowledge of flora, fauna and the natural world (Gardner, 2006).

Gardner did not, however, equate intelligence with creativity but suggested that they were connected (Reimer, 2003). As Wu elucidates “every student has a different potential and his/her own level of competent intelligence and so exhibits his/her outstanding creative behavior in different domains” (2004:186). Gardner’s theory has significant implications for educators because it proposes that people have varying capabilities in these intelligences which all need to be addressed in order to maximize the potential of every student. According to Craft (1997), educators, too, need to adopt a wider view of what constitutes creativity because it can occur in all these intelligences or a combination of them.

Csikszentmihalyi also examined highly creative people who had effected change in a major cultural domain. He presented ten dimensions to the creative personality involving “pairs of apparently antithetical traits” (1996:57). His subsequent theory of “flow” is described by Amabile as “the experience of being totally involved in the activity, where one action flows smoothly into the next and extrinsic concerns disappear” (1990:64). In 1976 Getzels and Csikzentmihalyi observed visual artists, noting they had a propensity for discovering problems that they could solve (Walberg,
1988). Interestingly, Getzels & Csikzentmihalyi (2008) wrote another chapter which confirmed their view that, rather than man striving for stability, he sought “pleasure through encountering problems, raising his level of stimulation, asserting his individuality, (and) acting upon the environment rather than merely reacting to it” (93). They suggested creativity involves not only problem solving, but more significantly, problem finding (Craft, 1997).

Drawing these observations and conclusions together, Gardner (1983) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996) both maintained that achieving a successful, creative outcome depends on the relationship between the individual, the domain and the field. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi defined domain as “the set of rules and procedures that constitute the realm in question” and field as that “which consists of the gatekeepers to the domain and either encourages or rejects the person’s innovation to the domain” (2003:187). By including the components of domain and field, social and cultural influences, and the historical context, Hickey (2002) concluded that Csikszentmihalyi, Gardner and Amabile, among others, provide a confluence approach that offers the potential for significant advance in the study of creativity.

While Gardner’s theory was not specifically about creativity it has implications for developing an understanding of how creativity occurs and has offered a valuable framework for structuring pedagogical practices (Craft, 1997; Feldman, 2003; Maker, 2004; Wu, 2004). Both Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi maintained that we can all achieve some level of creativity in particular domains but Csikszentmihalyi seemed to be making a distinction between the capabilities of the general population and these exceptional persons (Reimer, 2003). Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) findings may help to explain the behavior of those rare individuals who produce significant works in the classroom, but this study is focused on the issues that arise for the whole of the classroom population. And although he does not suggest that the aim is to adopt a set personality style, based on the characteristics of these highly creative individuals he does provide a template for developing a more creative approach to our daily lives.

In constructing her social psychology of creativity, Amabile (1990) responded to Csiksentmihalyi’s theory of “flow”. Her interest centred on the ability of creators to remain oblivious to extrinsic motivation when in this state of “flow”; she contended
that most research pays little attention to the influence of motivation in studying creativity. Her consensual definition of creativity is based on the product rather than the process because the “identification of a thought process or sub-process as creative must finally depend upon the fruit of that process – a product or response” (Amabile, 1996:33). She also observed that intrinsic motivation, where the impetus for involvement in an activity is the satisfaction and interest arising from it, provides a favorable environment for creativity and conversely, extrinsic motivation is found to be a disadvantage (Amabile, 1996). This applies to heuristic tasks where the solution to a problem is not straightforward and there is no clear goal. With algorithmic tasks or tasks where there is a clear-cut solution, the opposite occurs. And like Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (2008), Amabile affirmed that “problem discovery is an important part of much creative activity” (1996:36). The subjects in Amabile’s (1990) study were asked to produce products in response to a specific task. These were judged by experts in the domain, using the consensual assessment technique. She found that these products could be assessed with great consistency and although the judgments were based on nebulous criteria, they demonstrated a high degree of consistency (Amabile, 1996). This method of evaluating creative works is encouraging for teachers who are often required to make assessments of this sort in the classroom. But Amabile does concede its limitations when applied to products “at the frontiers of a particular domain” (1996:65). In these situations, those who judge may not have the knowledge necessary to assess something that is changing the domain so radically. Problems also relate to judges reaching a consensus about the creativity of a product (Runco, 2004) although Amabile (1996) found in her studies there was a high level of reliability among judges.

An all-encompassing view of creativity was presented by Reimer (2003), who believes all people are capable of being creative and that educational experiences can work positively to increase this capacity. He suggested creativity occurs on a continuum and therefore exists in all students, to a greater or lesser degree, no matter what their age or capacity. This perspective led him to a greater interest in how people are creative rather than who is creative or where they are creative. By focusing on this process he asserted it may be possible to better understand what is involved and be able to adjust teaching pedagogies to foster this type of learning more effectively. In
so doing, he moved the discussion from defining creativity to considering what actually happens, in terms of thinking and doing, when people are being creative.

In searching for a precise definition of creativity, Craft echoed Reimer’s universalist approach, postulating the humanist view that “all individuals are creative, in that creativity is a ‘natural’ part of life” (1997:20). She presented the term “possibility thinking” as a meaning of creativity, seeing this as involving play, being able to ask questions and not letting problems interfere with actions. Craft also equated “possibility thinking” with “posing lots of questions” (1997:7) and this resonates strongly with the concept of problem solving presented by Getzels and Csikzentmihalyi (2008). Like Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi, Craft (1997) acknowledged the importance of domain and field as well as intelligence but she added a further element - that of processes.

Craft contended that the population divides into two cohorts: those exceptional individuals who display high creativity and those exhibiting “little c” creativity. High creativity people “change domains of knowledge, or create new ones” (Craft, 2001:46). Unlike Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi, Craft’s interest is directed to the “little c” group. Seeing everyone as intrinsically creative, the ultimate goal of both Craft (1997) and Reimer (2003) is providing an inclusive educational framework that maximizes creativity.

Although the studies cited in this review do seem to divide into two camps - those observing products and those interested in process - the findings from both add to the richness of our understanding of the concept of creativity. And perhaps this distinction is not of great import. As Barron contended “[m]any products are processes and many processes are products. And a person is both a product and a process. Each is in a sense ‘a field within a field’ - a field that never closes, for we are talking about open systems, mutually interdependent, with no hard and fast line dividing product from process from person” (1988:80).
Cultural considerations play a significant role in how creativity is perceived and nurtured (Runco, 2004). Families, teachers and schools provide guidelines and parameters for behaviour that reflect societal norms and transmit cultural values (Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004). In the West, the emphasis has largely centred on products or the production of something unique. This differs markedly from the Asian perspective where the process is considered more important or, as Lubart explained, where creativity is viewed as “a phenomenon of expressing an inner truth in a new way or of self-growth” (1999:346). The process is centred on refreshing or reorganizing that which traditionally exists rather than the Western focus of producing something unique and original (Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004). So, while novel and original thinking is present in both Western and Asian cultures, there is a difference in emphasis and the interpretation of “novel” is different (Hennessey, 2004; Weiner, 2000). For Western cultures, “novel” tends to include the dismissal of tradition, a focus on the future, a desire for developing one’s own potential and praise for personal achievements. Asian cultures have been influenced by the teachings of Confucian, Taoist, Hindu and Buddhist philosophies and this has meant these attributes are not always considered appropriate (Rudowicz, 2004).

In Kyung’s (2007) view, Confucianism has had a profound impact on the interpretation of creativity in a broad spectrum of Asian cultures including those of China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. Confucian teachings promote the belief that tradition must be respected, while the past holds the necessary foundations for creative activity (Rudowicz, 2004; Weiner, 2000). In demanding respect for one’s parents and ancestors, filial piety is a central virtue of Confucian philosophy (Kyung, 2007; Ng, 2001). Children must show complete obedience and inherent in this code of behavior is an expectation that authority figures, including teachers, are above criticism. In fact, for children, any criticism is to be directed at themselves through the identification of unacceptable characteristics. This develops a concomitant tendency of self-criticism and assessment of oneself in terms of failure rather than success. Such a code reinforces a system of collectivism and interdependence where support for, and promotion of, the family and society is more important than the realization of individual attainment and ambitions (Puccio &
González, 2004). Creative endeavors are made for the benefit of the whole community and individual attainment is not considered important (Weiner, 2000).

In Asia, education is highly prized as it is viewed as a means to mold children into ideal citizens, inculcated with self-control, respectful behavior and a dependence on the family (Gardner, 2006; Kyung, 2007; Ng, 2001). From an early age, knowledge is acquired by rote learning, memorization and examination, to achieve high levels of attainment (Cheng, 2004; Wu, 2004). Children are imbued with a strong work ethic, basic skills are mandatory and play is not considered valuable (Kyung, 2007). Instead of allowing an exploratory trial and error approach to learning, where play is used as a means of discovery, even complicated tasks are deconstructed into their smallest parts and painstakingly taught until success has been accomplished (Gardner, 2006). The teacher's role in the classroom is to transmit knowledge and according to Kyung (2007) classes are often conducted in silence because to question the teacher would be disrespectful and could cause loss of face for both the teacher and student (Ng, 2001).

In the case of artistic practices, proficiency is acquired by replication of the great masters. When expertise in imitating these masterpieces has been developed, then modification and augmentation allow artists to infuse their works with their own interpretation and individual stamp (Leung, Au & Leung, 2004). To some extent, this element of reinterpretation also occurs in Western cultures when music, plays and ballets of earlier periods are reproduced but with a contemporary overlay (Weiner, 2000). However, in the sense of producing works that are acknowledged as authentically original, ‘creativity’ remains a distinguishing characteristic of Western artistic output. Gardner (2006) observed that artistic endeavors in China are expected to express beauty and being involved in the arts is considered favorably. By producing beautiful works, the artist is reflecting his or her own good character, in keeping with Confucian thinking.

Tradition and a respect for nature contrast starkly with the pursuit of thought provoking and boundary breaking works in the Western tradition. Ng (2001) contended that an emphasis on collectivism, self-criticism and interdependence leaves Asian students psychologically unable to produce performances that Western interpretations would regard as creative. The influences of their culture promote
conforming behavior, inhibiting them from thinking in an individualistic and non-traditional manner.

Clearly emerging from this discussion of divergence in Asian and Western cultures is the need to more closely examine how we might define creativity. Following the work of Sternberg, Kaufman & Pretz, 2002, cited in Lubart & Georgsdottir (2004), Lubart & Georgsdottir postulated four ways in which creative input can be viewed:

- presenting a new interpretation of an established idea;
- promoting a field further along its already existing path;
- moving a field ahead to a new path; and
- incorporating many different views in a field.

It would seem that characteristics of both Asian and Western views of creativity are recognized in this grouping. And as the globalization of economic and cultural interactions continues to dissolve what were once viewed as immutable cultural barriers, it is possible that more inclusive, cross-cultural conceptions of creativity will emerge. (Weiner, 2000; Gardner, 2006).

2.2 Student-Centred Music Education

The philosophical underpinnings of the music program in this study are situated in the movement towards student-centred music education that evolved in the second half of the 20th Century. This movement grew out of a desire to see creativity incorporated into the music curricula. At the time, creativity was described as “perhaps the most neglected subject in Western musical education” (Schafer, 1976:ix). The Canadian composer, Murray Schafer introduced the notion of “soundscapes”, promoting his view that in developing a good understanding of the expressive nature of music it was necessary for students to experience and investigate sound and silence. The most effective way to do this was for students to make their own music. He presents a series of musical activities especially suitable for the secondary school cohort, providing stimulating ideas that would encourage a more adventurous approach to music pedagogy (McMillan, 2003; Schafer, 1986).
In a seminal text, Swanwick (1979) proposed that music education should be regarded as aesthetic education, and like Schafer, suggested that experiencing music as an art-form enables students to explore their feelings rather than simply explaining them. He considers the activities of composition, literature studies, audiation, skill acquisition and performance as essential components of a successful music education. These help to “promote fluency, flexibility (or divergence), originality, sensitivity to problems and the redefinition of the familiar” (94), all of which he classifies as attributes of creativity. Although Swanwick (1979) sees terms like “improvisation” and “composition” as preferable to “creativity” - because they are neutral, not value-laden and refer specifically to music - the emphasis he places on “the positive pleasure we experience when we understand something…when we master some element of skill or find real enjoyment in an activity” (65) echoes the importance Craft (1997), Csikzentmihalyi (1996) and Reimer (2003) ascribed to personal fulfillment in the act of creating.

In his 2008 collection of earlier writings, Paynter made another significant contribution to the direction of music education in the 1970s. He perceived the role of education as realizing children’s innate capacity for creative actions, rather than transmitting ideas that need to be consumed. With a move to student-centred education, children can learn rather than being instructed. And in music education, together with art, drama, dance and creative writing, there is the opportunity for expressing emotions, ideas and feelings that arises from the excitement of discovering the world around us. Like Swanwick (1979) who stressed the importance of including a wide range of styles, including contemporary music, Paynter (2008a) makes a comparison with contemporary visual art, asking why music educators are so reluctant to promote creative music making by exploring the techniques of contemporary composers. It is not sufficient, he asserts, for music education to just teach students about music through theory knowledge, aural training, music appreciation and music history. Rather, he suggests that:

The teacher’s task is to help students to discover, in every piece they encounter, features which make that particular “world” whole: the complementariness of elements, revealing their peculiar potential for the developments and transformations which make the music go on in time to create a satisfying form; satisfying because it manifestly fulfils the ideas from which it springs (2008b:98).
According to Paynter (2008b), the best way for students to understand music is for them to produce their own. Schafer, Swanwick and Paynter all emphasize the importance of students producing their own music in order to understand the workings of music.

These pedagogical directions have laid the foundations for innovations in music education of the 21st Century. Green (2008a) cites many similarities between her view of music education and that of the education innovators of the second half of the 20th Century. Like Swanwick (1979) and Paynter (2008), Green promotes the value of student-centred learning and the practice of having students work in small groups to create music, where goals are open-ended and the students take responsibility for the learning outcomes. At the same time, she sees the need to incorporate the development of listening and appreciation skills. But the fundamental difference in her approach is the use of music that students are familiar with and enjoy; this approach, she claims, is truly student-centred.

Green (2002, 2008a) argues for the adoption of the informal learning practices of the popular musician, suggesting this enables students to relate their music to the world outside school. It also facilitates the more effective introduction of other musical styles. By informally using what students enjoy, it is easier to maintain interest while acquiring a wide range of skills. This approach includes learning by ear and a haphazard but holistic style in which learning progresses from the simple to the more complex, while incorporating listening, composing, improvising and performing.

The British program, Musical Futures, is based on Green’s informal learning practices (Jeanneret, 2010). It too asks students to reproduce music using the learning techniques adopted by popular musicians. Students employ their aural skills, access information on the internet and seek help from each other and their teacher to develop their version of the replicated music (Stefanakis, 2009). David Price, the British presenter of this music learning and teaching model emphasizes “music is about connection and cooperation” (Stefanakis, 2009:8). Musical Futures resonates strongly with the musical philosophies of Schafer, Swanwick and Paynter and presents a successful strategy for engaging secondary students on their own terms, while providing a point of departure for forays into highly creative activities.
2.3 Research studies in music creativity

The decision to focus only on the domain of music, rather than seeking out research in other domains and extrapolating from their findings, is based on the view that although music shares certain characteristics of the other arts, it also has issues that pertain only to itself. Swanwick asserted music “is very abstract with practically no possibilities for representing obvious ‘subjects’” (1979:40). In the context of a Master’s thesis it was also deemed expedient to only explore musical creativity. Locating research about creativity in secondary students proved to be difficult, as most seems to focus on kindergarten, primary school or university students. Seeking research that included students from both Asian and Western backgrounds added another level of complexity.

2.3.1 Student focused observations

Conducted by Burnard (2000), a study that did relate to this age group observed a group of twelve-year-old children as they improvised and composed over a period of six months. She found they based their compositions on what is familiar: what parts of the musical culture they had been exposed to - such as songs, riffs and rhythms - and what their musical strengths were, depending on their previous experience with instruments. Burnard suggests that teachers “need to remain open-minded concerning orthodoxies about composing; acknowledge the limitations of their own conceptions; and question ‘taken for granted’ knowledge of what constitutes composing” (2000:37).

While Burnard’s study provides pedagogical advice for teachers focusing their attention on specific ways of thinking about creative learning, Kennedy’s (2002) study notes the lack of compositional activities in curricula for adolescents in Canada and the USA, concluding that their use of time - having sufficient thinking time and working at their preferred time, usually at night when it was quiet - were significant factors in their compositional processes. Since teachers committed to exploring the creative responses of their students must, of necessity, do so largely during daytime classroom hours, this seems to suggest an impediment to their creative output. Perhaps Kennedy’s observation that listening activities and effective feedback are also
very important in supporting creative activity for this age group suggests that part of the creating process can, indeed, be accomplished in the classroom.

Focusing on Singaporean pre-service student-teachers, a study by Dairianathan (2006) explored their responses to creating music in an improvisation course. Many of these students had very little background in music. Through the use of journal writings and reflections, this research found that these students were able to transfer the imaginative flexibility they acquired in their improvisations into other aspects of their lives. Implicitly, Dairianathan’s article also points to the conclusion that the more someone is engaged in using their imagination the more readily they are able to access it, an enhancement of obvious interest to the classroom music teacher intent on developing facility in creative music making. Working in groups, the students reported marked improvements in a range of individual and cooperative skills such as “organizational strategy, interpersonal skills, group dynamics, social cohesion, social bonding, ensemble management and leadership” (Dairianathan, 2006:4). They unanimously saw the creative experience as very positive and enjoyable but this response should be assessed in the context of the Asian desire to show due respect to the lecturer and the goals of his research. Interestingly though, for students immersed in an educational culture that regards any artistic endeavor as consequent on the mastery of basic skills, they were prepared to engage in risk-taking and experimentation to achieve uncertain results. In collecting this data, Dairianathan’s use of journal writing and personal reflections provided a richness of data and this presented a exemplar for the methodology used in this study.

A pilot trial of Musical Futures, run in Victorian schools, was examined by Jeanneret to determine the effect of this program on both music teachers and students. The program, involving some primary-aged but mainly secondary students, had been operating for two terms and included over 1000 students. Teachers participated in two days of intensive workshops before implementing the program in their schools. Using case studies in two of these schools and questionnaires for all teachers, the research sought to ascertain the effect on “teachers’ confidence, pedagogy and professional satisfaction” (2010:2) as well as the outcome on student engagement. The results indicate that Musical Futures has had a considerable impact on the learning of most students in terms of engagement, musical understanding and developing their abilities.
For teachers, there was an overall increase in confidence and in their ability to satisfy the needs of individual students, including previously disenchanted students. This study reinforces the view that, in order to engage adolescents, teachers may find a more positive response to musical activities if they situate the curricula within the students’ musical milieu.

Having examined explorations into the meaning of creativity, rather than attempting to develop an all-encompassing definition of the term, I discovered that there is an enormous range of views. The longevity and voluminous output of research devoted to refining the concept reveals a divide between investigations into the characteristic products of creativity and examinations of the processes that support the realization of creative activity.

In view of the educational context informing the aims of this thesis, pursuing the issue of process has proved to be more relevant and fruitful. In a school with the distinctly international and multicultural student cohort that provides the focus for this study, the difference in interpretation of creativity between Asian and Western cultures is also of considerable significance. Given this frame of reference, the pedagogical approaches advanced by the 20th Century movement towards student-centred music education that continue to be promoted in this century, provide an appropriate vehicle for the development of creativity in the music curriculum. The following chapter presents the methodology used to examine the factors that affect students when they are engaged in producing creative musical responses.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 The research focus
The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that may inhibit secondary students in their quest to produce creative musical responses. In pursuing this inquiry I would also have the opportunity to assess the positive influences operating in my classroom. I would then be able to adjust my pedagogical practice to incorporate these insights. As the setting for this study involved both Australian students and a significant proportion of Asian students, it was necessary to consider the diverse cultural influences operating within this cohort.

3.2 Methodological approach
As expressed by Elliott, the theoretical underpinnings for this study are found within the interpretative paradigm: “interpretative researchers seek to build our knowledge of complex social phenomena (e.g., teaching, learning, music making) by grasping the meanings and values that educational experiences have for various groups of people” (2002:92). The overarching methodological approach was qualitative and the study employed the action research model.

Macintyre (2000) considers action research as a way of evaluating activities that take place in the classroom, enabling teachers to investigate their own practice and implement change. Action research emerged as appropriate for this study because it would be conducted within the school environment, and undertaken by the people who would be most affected, with its consequent alterations effecting immediate change (Noffke & Somekh, 2008). The process of action research includes various stages:

- Identifying the problem
- Gathering and analyzing data
- Devising a plan of action
- Consider, explain and convey the outcome of the process (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).
This process is cyclical, in that, once observations and reflections have led to a course of action there is a phase of analyzing and assessing this action. Following this, modifications are made which lead to a new cycle where the knowledge acquired from the previous cycle can be implemented (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). In this study, Cycle One could be considered the pilot project. The knowledge gained from this was used to shape the present study, which represents Cycle Two. Within both cycles, minor adjustments occurred during the process as indications emerged that these would lead to an improvement in the classroom environment.

3.3 Methods
To gain a wide, rich layer of data that would capture the complexities and diversity of the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), this research used student reflections and interviews. To provide data, Cycle One had relied only on the students’ reflections. In order to gain a greater insight into the background of the cohort, Cycle Two included interviews.

Qualitative data was obtained from three sources:

- as a participant observer, I maintained a journal that included field notes and reflections;
- students were asked to write reflections at the end of each task; and
- five students participated in semi-structured interviews.

Through the use of these methods of data collection “triangulation may be used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to enrich our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge” (Jick, 2006:219). In addition, as part of the usual practice of evaluating the course, students were asked to submit comments anonymously, and these provided anecdotal information.

3.3.1 The setting
Located in a small rural township north of Melbourne, the international school at which this research was conducted offers education in the IB tradition to a population
of 450 students, many of whom are international students. The school provides both
day and boarding facilities. A ten-minute walk from the main campus, the historic
music building where the study was conducted consisted of ten main rooms,
providing ample space and a nurturing environment for group musical activities. With
several years experience as this school’s Year 10 classroom music teacher, I had
acquired considerable knowledge of students and the educational climate in which
they learned. By using a site where I already had a good understanding of the culture
of the school I was able to focus all my efforts on the research considerations rather
than spending time becoming familiar with a new environment. Access to this site
was gained without difficulty and the research was approved by the school principal.

3.3.2 The participants
The research participants were a class of seventeen Year 10 students (the initial size
was sixteen, with an additional student joining during the research). Five were
Australian born and twelve were international students from China, Hong Kong,
Thailand, Korea, Singapore, Japan and Malaysia. Of the seventeen, three were
females. As one of their electives, they were undertaking a music course involving
two 110-minute lessons a week for one semester. The Music Director taught one of
these sessions; the other was conducted by myself.

Several factors influenced the choice of this particular cohort. Firstly, by electing to
do this course these students were expressing an obvious interest in music. The
decision to use a year level where music was not compulsory meant that the
possibility of dealing with students who were not particularly engaged - and therefore
of limited value to this study - was excluded. Its focus was to discover approaches that
would assist students who wished to engage in creative musical activities, rather than
deal with issues of motivation. In addition, the distance of the music building from the
main campus meant students were required to walk to their classes and as this
research was conducted in early autumn, the usually cold and wet weather in this area
was a disincentive for those less enthusiastic about music.

Year 10 students would have completely acclimatized to the structure of a secondary
school and would have recovered from the drop in creativity noted by Torrance
(1964) that occurs when children move from primary to secondary schools. I also considered students at this year level had the emotional maturity to be able to reflect deeply on their actions and feelings and to respond to the research with a degree of engagement that would enhance the effectiveness of the research. In my pilot study the Year 10 students involved had produced in-depth responses and were enthusiastically committed to exploring these same research questions. Year 10 is a significant education phase when students are making important decisions about subject choices and often using the music elective class to assess their ability to pursue music as an IB subject. They therefore have a vested interest in understanding their own creative output.

3.3.3 The Tasks
The same tasks were used in both Cycles except for Task 4, which was added after reading the student responses, with the hope that students would be more forthcoming in their writing and provide more data about the difficulties of producing creative musical responses. The tasks (Table 1, see also Appendix 1) were devised so that each activity involved students working individually or in different sized groups. The rationale was to consider what influence lone participation and group size had on the students’ effectiveness. Students were encouraged to choose their own group members and to change groups if they found the situation unworkable. Some of the tasks were more structured than others but students were, on the whole, given considerable autonomy. Three of the four tasks were based on a unit of work about film music, while a completely different one where the students composed their own ring tone, was included to provide a wider variety of activities and possibly, as a consequence, produce different feedback.
Table 1: Description of Tasks over 9-week cycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Group of 4</td>
<td>Create music that reflects Chinese culture</td>
<td>Week 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>Create music that reflects a person’s character</td>
<td>Week 3, 4 and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Create a ring tone of 8 bars or 15 seconds of music for their mobile phone</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Group of 4</td>
<td>Create music that evokes an emotion</td>
<td>Week 7, 8 and 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For two months previously, students had been immersed in a program of musical literacy, singing, listening and playing. They were also versed in the elements of music and had discussed how composers writing for film make use of these musical elements. Listening activities had focused on a diverse range of film music.

The tasks were organized so the first provided an exemplar of how the students might organize themselves and approach the group activities. Initially they were given 110 minutes to prepare each activity. They were to present their performance to the class at the next music session. However, after the first task, students expressed a need for more time and as this had been a recurring complaint during my pilot project, I gave them an extra 110 minutes to complete the task. For the last task, I waited until every group felt that they were ready to perform, regardless of the time that involved. After reading the student responses, the last task was added in the hope that the students would be more forthcoming in their writing and would provide more data about their difficulties in producing creative musical responses.

3.3.4 Informing students and gaining consent

Students were informed of the collaborative nature of the study and that all findings would be made available to them. I specifically engaged them in the research process by telling them I would value their involvement in providing data for my university study and explained that their views on creating musical responses were a rich source of information that would assist in expanding my understanding of difficulties they encountered. It would also allow me to improve my teaching practice while
contributing to their individual creative potential. It was important that they felt ownership of the research, were empowered by its processes and outcomes and involved without feeling undue pressure (O’Toole, 2006). With the limited English language skills of some students, considerable time was devoted to ensuring the whole cohort had a clear understanding of what they were being asked to do. Offering the services of school interpreters, using the English competent students to provide more immediate assistance and ensuring all had read the Plain Language Statement (Appendix 2), which was also delivered to the parents and school principal, provided further clarification.

It was explained that opting out of the research would have no negative ramifications and that non participating students would continue their involvement in all the study’s activities, including their reflections which would not, however, be used in the research. The students were assured that their anonymity would be safeguarded and that confidentiality would be observed in both the data collection and report writing phases. They were also informed of the manner in which data would be collected, stored and disposed of at the end of the research process (Habibis, 2006). Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Melbourne.

Initially, a minority of the international students were concerned about signing a legal document, even though they were willing to be a part of the research. This may have stemmed, at least in part, from a culturally based reluctance to identifiably involve themselves in an unfamiliar activity but further explanation of the form and the benign nature of the study, helped assuage these concerns. In the absence of any further reservations, Signed Consent Forms (Appendix 3), which included permission to be audio taped if interviewed, were provided by the students and their parents and from the principal of the school, who is the international students’ legal guardian.

3.3.5 Adopting pseudonyms

Rather than allocate pseudonyms to the students I was advised to allow them to choose their own. It was suggested that in labeling their reflections some would be likely to forget an allocated pseudonym, an error that would cause considerable confusion. Having asked the students to supply their own pseudonyms, these would
also be used for the five interviews. Not understanding the need for anonymity in this research, some students were initially perplexed by my request for pseudonyms but once informed, the overall reaction was one of hilarity. Providing little or no anonymity, some of the early pseudonyms caused a great deal of mirth. For instance, the only Japanese male student wanted to adopt another Japanese male name that would have easily identified him, while the one flute student in the cohort chose the pseudonym ‘Flute’. Once the laughter had subsided, these students found less identifying names and eventually the whole group achieved true anonymity.

3.3.6 Interviews

Sampling

Five students were interviewed (Table 2). The size of the sample was dictated by constraints of time and the need to control the amount of data being collected, which would then require transcription and analysis (Ely, 1991). However, for Patton, regardless of these external limitations “validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from a qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities than with sample size” (2002:245). As the classroom teacher of Year 9 music, a compulsory subject at this level, I was well acquainted with most of the cohort in the research, with the exception of six students who had joined the school in Year 10. By allowing for a settling in period, it was then possible to observe and consider the class as a whole, ensuring an informed choice in selecting the most suitable interviewees.

Informing this process, purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to select the students based on gender, country of origin, level of music training and the interviewee’s representation of the issues being investigated. As Kumar (2005) observes, purposive sampling allows the researcher to select those members of the cohort who provide the sort of information that contributes most successfully to answering the research question.
Table 2: Profile of the five students interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Musical Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>Enrolled at the school since year 7, with two years of formal piano lessons during her primary schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Enrolled at the school since year 7, with informal piano lessons provided by his friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Enrolled at the school since year 7 and had been receiving formal guitar lessons for two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Enrolled at the school in year 8, and had received formal piano lessons since he was five years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>Enrolled at the school since year 7 and had received two years of formal piano lessons during primary school and formal guitar lessons for the last two years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview conditions**

The interviews took place in a small room in the music building, which was familiar to the students and provided a friendly and private environment (Mills, 2011). The interviews were audio taped. The decision not to videotape was based on the belief that this might inhibit the students, reducing the possibility of a relaxed and free flowing interaction. Although offered, the international students did not accept the services of an interpreter. While there may have been a number of factors that influenced this decision, I later discovered that the school’s language teachers frowned on any use of the students’ native languages, as they considered that detrimental to the development of their English language skills.

**Interview questions**

The interview questions (Appendix 4) evolved from the literature and focused on background factors that might have influenced these students in producing creative musical responses. They ranged from an initial enquiry about students’ interpretations of the concept “creating” to various aspects of the students’ previous and current experiences of play, daydreaming and being involved in creating musical responses. It was anticipated the interviews would last for twenty minutes but there was scope for adjusting the length to accommodate the students’ varying capabilities in responding
and if necessary, to provide time for them to expand on their answers. (Kumar, 2005). After the interviews had been transcribed, these were checked against the audio recordings and member checks of the transcriptions were undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Flick, 2009).

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Because of the small size of the study, performing the data analysis manually was a manageable task. The raw data from the students’ reflections was typed into a word document and then classified according to student and task. The reflections for each task, provided by all the students involved, were considered and analysed to establish codes. These codes were marked in the margins of the transcripts and the main categories were determined (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using these categories, excerpts from the reflections were collated according to the themes and patterns (Patton, 2002) that had emerged and were filed for each separate task. These collections of excerpts were then examined for supporting and contradictory viewpoints. The field notes and reflections in my journal were organized chronologically, typed and analysed for codes. The categories, themes and patterns were identified and used to support and illuminate the students’ reflections. The interview data was transcribed into a word document. Excerpts for each question were collated in separate files and analysed for commonality and differences. After the data was organized and collated, the categories, themes and patterns were identified. The analysis and discussion emanating from this process are presented in the following chapter.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The data analysed in this study was drawn from four sources:

- the students’ reflections;
- my reflective journal; and
- interviews with five students.

The substantive data for the research question came from the students’ reflections. My reflective journal presented data that provided situational background information and clarified or expanded on the insights that were gleaned from the students’ reflections. As the interviewing phases occurred simultaneously with the reflection writing, the focus of these data sets was different and has led to the analysis being presented in separate sections:

- student reflections; and
- interviews.

For the purposes of this data analysis, the participants in this study are referred to as students.

4.1 Data Analysis of Student Reflections

Analysis of the data from the student reflections suggested three broad categories:

- the structure and dynamic interaction of the groups;
- the processes involved; and
- other influences.

The themes emerging from these categories are presented below.

4.1.1 The Structure and Dynamic Interaction of The Groups

Size of groups

In order to assess the effect that size has on the functioning of a group, Tasks 1 (creating Chinese film music) and 4 (creating film music that evokes emotions) were undertaken in groups of four or, in one case, five. Task 2 (creating film music that
reflects a person’s character) operated in pairs and Task 3 (creating a ring tone) was completed individually. From the students’ reflections it is clear that many found working in pairs was much more difficult than working in groups of four. One explanation could be that the creative input available was reduced because of the smaller size and this might also mean that the members had to work harder. Possibly the greater volume of suggestions arising from the larger groups provided inspiration that created a groundswell of ideas for the whole group to draw upon.

Osborn (1993) describes this process as “brainstorming” and postulates a process of developing a large quantity of ideas, and then evaluating them, as the most expedient method to nurture creative ideas. In responding to one of the tasks, Ashley explained “it was much better getting ideas with four people because everyone thinks more creatively. Groups of 4 are very good to work with”. Michael found that he had to work harder in a pair because, in a group of four, he was able to “relax a bit and [I] don’t really think that hard to make a melody”.

Although this could be construed as the “free rider” effect (Slavin, 1995), where some of the members of the group are responsible for producing the required output while the rest do very little, my journal observations, as well as responses from the members of all the groups, suggest that any problems that arose were more to do with the open-ended nature of some tasks and the difficulties encountered by international students in adapting to them, than an attempt to evade work. It could also be assumed that the larger the group, the less effort members are likely to contribute proportionately when the “free rider” effect occurs. In this study, however, the perceived difficulties reported by many of the students seemed to be related more to the performance of their work and the discomfort that they experienced during these performances, regardless of the size of their group.

Vincent described his feelings: “in a group of 4 it is easier to work because we felt more comfortable when perform”; but then went on to add “sometime I felt so bad because I can’t play any music[al] instrument and I don’t want to be a burden of my group”. In even larger groups this feeling of discomfort was also apparent. Ren, who had guitar skills, said; “I did play the guitar, but I played very bad, so in group I always asked other people what I should play, so sometime I feel very bad”.
international students, coming from a background where imitation and flawless presentation are the norm, the reality of insufficient time to practice for a perfect performance was an ongoing problem.

Paradoxically, while working in a pair, Stephen complained, “I felt strained to write music as there were too many conflicting ideas. I think I would have done better by myself as I seem to have more freedom. Within a group I have to please myself and my group members”. This was a student who had some experience of writing his own songs and this may explain why it was difficult for him to accommodate ideas from another member. Vincent had similar difficulties, claiming that “sometime it’s hard to work [in a group of two] because of difference of ideas”. On the other hand, Edward found that it was easier to mesh ideas together when working with one other person. Obviously, the success of working in a pair was dependent on selecting a sympathetic partner.

For Task 4, one group operated with five members and this proved to be unworkable. From this researcher’s journal it appears the problem could be attributed either to the group dynamics, the distribution of instrumental skills or both. In this particular group, students had skills on the same instruments and so were either unable or unwilling to explore instrumental variety and the textural and timbral possibilities that a greater range of instruments would have presented. Daniel from this group suggested that,

> maybe 5 people in one group might be difficult because we ended up having people playing same instrument. 2 people playing guitar and 2 people playing piano. I’m the only one playing drum. I think I work better when there’s less people in a group.

**Importance of friendship**

Students were asked to arrange their own groups; this strategy being based on anecdotal evidence and the research of Green (2008b) that friendship groups tend to operate more effectively in this age range. This is especially so for international students, who have frequently come from a different educational background and may feel uncomfortable engaging in these open-ended tasks, which are probably foreign to their experience. Green found that “the reason why they [pupils] were able to cooperate and communicate in such ways was because they were allowed to work
with friends” (183). In this study’s school setting it appears that for faculties other than music, working with friends was a rarity because it was deemed disruptive and not conducive to achieving the best result. This prohibition on working in friendship groups made these musical experiences all the more enjoyable for the students and led them to describe music as a “fun” subject.

Irrespective of the size of groups, many students commented on the importance of working with friends. For one group, consisting entirely of fellow dormitory members, success was ascribed to knowing each other so well they had the capacity to resolve disputes amicably amongst themselves. They seemed able to respectfully accommodate their differing viewpoints and to incorporate them in an acceptable outcome. Vincent described this as; “the group work went pretty well because ours is dorm mates and we know each other so we don’t to worry much about having arguments with them”. In a study that explored “possibility thinking” in 9 to 11 year olds, Craft suggests that through their tolerance of ongoing disagreement, friendship groups can continue to work productively in the face of an uncertain outcome: “the resolution of ideas toward one agreed perspective was not necessary; disagreement was common between children and ways in which possibilities would be developed seldom resolved” (2011:56).

Several students commented that they would have been unable to participate without the support of their friends. “If I don’t have the help from my friends I wouldn’t be able to make a song” (Vincent). Jake also explained, “it is hard to make a song but when my friend was next to me, I could compose”. Some of these students came into the elective with little musical knowledge and experience. In addition, they had limited English comprehension skills. Their friends were not only acting as translators but also, in some cases, providing music tuition that enabled them to participate quite effectively. Green refers to this as “peer-directed learning” (2008a:183) and has found this arrangement has many benefits. Her research suggested that students were able to understand their friends’ explanations more easily because they were presented in jargon free, age appropriate language or non-verbal communication.

As suggested above, one negative aspect of working in friendship groups was the uneven spread of instrumental skills, which occasionally meant that students’ options
were limited to one or two families of instruments, making it difficult for them to achieve a reasonable outcome. For one of the tasks, Howard’s group had “three pianists in our group, which made it very hard to co-operate with each other”. Similarly, for Daniel’s group it would have been more productive if “we could have more piano because I don’t play keyboard”. With previous teaching providing them with an understanding of the elements of music, it seems these students found that a combination of different instrument families presented a far greater source of tempo and rhythmic possibilities, with keyboards providing melodic shapes and harmonic interest. So the benefits of these friendship groups needed to be weighed against the advantages of non-friendship groups which were able to select from a more balanced range of instrumental abilities, contributing to a broader knowledge of the domain.

Composition of groups
For some groups, the sort of personalities involved had a significant impact on the outcomes. For instance, groups that included one particular student who appeared to block ideas, not only of others but also his own, were sometimes unable to complete the designated task. Even in a larger group, the members were unable to deal with his blocking mechanisms, even though he was working with friends. This participant, on the other hand, found the experience very positive and enjoyed his involvement in the group. Possibly the cultural difficulties he had to overcome marred the experience for the group but provided him with a rewarding encounter.

Several groups found that a change of personnel created difficulties because of their unfamiliarity with these new members. Vanessa explained “there were four people in our group, three of us had previously worked together but the fact that we hadn’t worked with one other member made it difficult as we didn’t have any prior chemistry with him”. In this context, Macdonald, Miell & Mitchell suggest that participants who are not friends “have to establish a way of working together before any productive activity can take place, a feature that comes naturally to friends with a history of interactions” (2002:160). For some students, working with particular individuals enhanced their performance because of a perceived empathy between them. Jacob, a percussionist, explained “I think I work very well with Simon D because he plays the piano and the drum kit so it’s easy to communicate with him when he’s playing piano”.
An added benefit for most of these groups was the possibility of students working with their peers from other cultures, which provided them “with opportunities for nonsuperficial, cooperative interactions” (Slavin, 1995:51). The students involved in this study represented ten different countries and their varying levels of English competence provided an added challenge for some group members. Ashley commented that the “other group members did not have good English speaking skills so that made it a bit difficult but in the end we got a good result”. Further investigation may show that these encounters with members from other cultures also enable the melding and cross fertilization of different views of, and approaches to, creativity.

**Development of group participation skills**

Many students commented on the development of their group participation skills. Michael explained that “I also learnt how to work as a group”, while Mario discovered, “work as a group is the best because we think together”. Not only did they express positive sentiments about their fellow members but were also impressed that their involvement in these groups led to musical creations they were proud to present to the rest of the class. Comments included, “we helped each other to create this music” (Daniel) and, “I learnt about ways to interact within a group so as to make cohesive music together” (Stephen). These experiences are highly congruent with those of students involved in the Musical Futures trial who progressively developed a group learning environment that enabled them to overcome personality clashes and work productively with new people (Jeanneret, 2010).

Generally, as described by Fautley, a sentiment of unity and possessiveness informed the creative process; “a group of students creating something together have joint ownership” (2005:43). Students also appeared to contribute to their groups according to their levels of ability and knowledge, making use of the specific skills they possessed and at the same time, allowing less experienced students to foster and discover their latent talents. As noted by Green, this process of “differentiation by outcome” involves all students being given the same task while, at the same time,
being “expected to produce outcomes at different levels according to their various capacities” (2008b:138).

**Increase in self-esteem**

Like the students in the Musical Futures trial (Jeanneret, 2010), students’ responses to all four tasks in this study indicated they experienced an increase in their self-esteem. Their pleasure in the sort of tasks they completed was reflected in many comments and positive responses to working successfully together and being able to complete the tasks to a standard they deemed appropriate. Vanessa felt “our song turned out very well as it conveyed the emotion well and we worked well as a group, we listened to each other and respected each other’s ideas”. Ren found:

> although I played bad but also can play in group to let song more better, so I learn the small thing also can be important, and I want to learn more guitar still, the group have is very good because together to think how to do and together to finish.

Instructed by group members, several students developed new skills on instruments of which they had little or no prior knowledge. Daniel “learnt how to make a new melody on piano” while Ren said he “learn how to play drum and tempo, so is so happy”. Another student was sufficiently inspired by his musical engagement to elect to take music as one of his year 12 subjects; “so this experience is make me more than imaginative. I will take IB more next year” (Carter). Positive responses to students’ involvement in the activities included comments like, “now that is how you compose a song” (Jake), “I think our group is the best” (Daniel), and, “I felt good after I performed” (Tom). For some students, creating their own musical response was a unique experience and provided them with a glimpse of their potential. Ryan expressed this as “creating your own ring tone is exciting and seeing how creative you can be is cool”.

### 4.1.2 The process

**Finding inspiration**

In investigating the manner in which students sought inspiration, it is pertinent to refer to the “cycle of creativity” coined by Craft (1997) and following the work of Wallas (1926) and Fritz (1946). Her elucidation of this process involves five phases:
• Preparation;
• Letting go;
• Germination;
• Assimilation; and
• Completion

“Preparation” is a stage where the creative environment is developed. This would include becoming acquainted with the group members and exploring the physical environment in which the group was to operate. Craft also describes this phase as “reaching a point of frustration where one feels the need to make change happen” (1997:26).

“Letting go” involves relinquishing control of the thought process and allowing ideas from the unconscious to filter to the surface. This may be accompanied by inactivity and feelings of despondency and aimlessness. Csikszentmihalyi labels this essential stage in the process of creativity as “incubation” and from his studies of creative individuals found that this is where “it is important to let problems simmer below the threshold of consciousness” (1996:98). “Germination” entails ideas finally being realised and is possibly accompanied by great excitement, eagerness and a feeling of control. “Assimilation” is a period of consolidation, which involves inner thought processes and requires time for ideas to be integrated. “Completion” occurs when the ideas are brought to fruition by editing, reworking and preparing for presentation.

Individual differences mean that focus and time may be concentrated on one particular phase over another but ultimately all phases play a role in the creating process. Craft (1997) also noted that involvement in the “cycle of creativity” not only increased creative responses but also led to a multiplier effect where one cycle would create several new cycles, which might occur simultaneously. Students’ written responses to their experiences present examples of all these phases and it is informative to view their reflections in the light of this cycle.

During Task 1, (writing Chinese music), finding inspiration in the preparation phase was a problem for most groups. As the following responses illustrate, getting the
impetus to develop these initial ideas was difficult: “it was hard to get ideas at the start” (Leroy), “first time I don’t know what to do” (Carter), and, “before I started, our group can’t think of anything of the storyline” (Michael). Mario also found it difficult “to think of other cultural song which [when] I’m not Chinese”. The situation was similar in Task 2 where students were working in pairs. Nikki explained that “it was hard to get ideas” and this seemed to be the overwhelming initial response to this exercise.

Perhaps the efforts of the previous two tasks held the students in good stead for Task 3, where they worked on their own. In this task there was a much more optimistic feeling from the students about their ability to produce the required work. Daniel describes this as “I didn’t get idea from anywhere, I just listen to what sounds the program [Acid computer program] got and put it together to make one good ring tone”. Similarly, Edward discovered that he “could make up my ring tone because I keep listening to the Acids in the program, then trying to mix it up together. At last, my fantastic ring tone is done”.

Contributing to the feeling of comfort with this task were several factors related to its specifications. It was more structured than earlier tasks, with well-defined parameters and a fairly simple objective. The opportunity to use the program, Acid, allowed students to utilize pre-recorded loops, where notational skills were not required and students could hear their music while they were producing it, providing the opportunity to revise and refine their product with some immediacy. Vanessa found this exercise well within her reach; “making a ring tone was easier than expected” while Nikki explained that she “used to listen [to] hip hop song. I loved all the beats in their songs. Every second it feels like kind of a lyric or a paragraph of a story on me”. By taking reference from her own music Nikki was able to use her aural skills to produce a gratifying and acceptable result. Stephen analysed the characteristics of ring tones and found his inspiration by trying “to think of something short and catchy”.

Composing their ring tones for Task 3 provided a break from the other tasks, which were more creatively demanding. Although students enjoyed the activity and most were obviously content with the result, I noted a level of dissatisfaction amongst some of the students who were less impressed with the fruits of their efforts and missed the sense of being creatively extended. Vanessa explains that “I didn’t really like mine as
I felt it was boring and slow” and other students described the process as not so challenging and as a consequence, lacking a sense of fulfillment. These comments implied that the various creative phases described by Craft (1997) were not so obviously part of this task and therefore did not elicit the same kind of creative response.

While Leon’s “preparation” for all the tasks was clearly marked by engagement rather than frustration, his responses were initially minimal, encapsulated in the comment “I have no idea. But I think it’s interesting”. When the international students in the class were offered translating services to write their reflections in their native language, Leon’s entry presented a complex appraisal of how ideas can be stimulated.

The inspiration of music comes from nature. In fact, most of [the] music in Europe originated from nature. I think it is good that the teacher divided the students into groups in class and asked them to do music creation. However, to do music creation needs more interest and good mood. I’ll suggest the teacher should bring students outside to take a walk and let them experience the flavour of nature. In this way, they will be in a happy mood, the inspiration will naturally come.

For the last task - creating music that reflects an emotion - most groups experienced a “dead” period, corresponding to the “letting go” phase, where there was a lack of ideas. But after this non-productive period they seemed to suddenly find a basis for their piece and were able to accomplish the refinement and reworking needed to meet their expectations. In most groups, there was also evidence of a more relaxed approach to the class activities and more willingness to experiment. Jacob observed:

we started slow and didn’t know what to do, we started to fool around a bit so the first part of the lesson wasn’t very progressive. Then we started to get ideas from us fooling around and just playing anything on the instruments.

Wiggins suggests that from this scenario we can assume that “what may appear chaotic is actually musical thinking in action where students are ‘trying out’ or ‘finding’ their ideas on instruments, judging their merit, and then either adopting or discarding them” (2007:457). In describing his group, Carter commented “it was quiet [quite] hard to create a song. Because in our group nobody gets idea. So suddenly we take some part from a real song. When I get a [an] idea we can get idea lot and lot”. A similar feeling of excitement occurred for Howard who found that, “when we are
about to perform I suddenly thought of using a song I knew and put a drum beat in it to make it to our performing piece”. In both these groups the “preparation”, “letting go” and “assimilation” phases were clearly delineated.

While all the groups appeared to experience most of the phases in the “cycle of creativity” it is also possible they had gained some experience in solving group problems from the previous tasks and once the ideas started to flow they were able to operate more effectively, and successfully utilized the resources that the group members provided. In his study of tertiary students, Dairianathan (2006) found they reported becoming more creative the more they engaged in creative activities. So it is possible that these students could have been gaining additional skills in creating their own music because of their previous creating experiences.

Steps involved
Once the overall musical framework for the tasks had been agreed upon, each group devised different strategies for the development of their music. In many cases, one or two elements of music were used as the stimuli for gaining a foothold on the central idea of their composition. In his group, Leroy found that “the melody was the most important so we are able to follow and make the rest of the song”. Edward contributed to this by “playing membranophone to create a constant beat. When we are making up or joining each people [person’s] pentatonic, we have to think the time line and the beats”. In another task he notes that “at begin, we tried hard to think out the best melody to create these. After a few times practice, we keep changing some part of melody, at last we get the best music”. Another member of the group, Vanessa, found “Chinese sounding” instruments and fiddled with them to find a sound that was appropriate for a Chinese film. In the same group, Steven analysed the characteristics of Chinese artistic endeavors and thought “about the feel of Chinese music, this made me picture a Chinese landscape and I played what this scenery made me feel. I thought about Chinese films I had seen before and tried to imitate their song”.

For Ashley’s group, the focus for their music was mood.

It was easier to produce music if you know what kind of music you want to make. Our group decided on scary music and we then used instruments that sounded scary like the piano, flute and vocals. From our knowledge, we knew that if we play notes far apart on the piano it sounds scary.

In Jake’s group, trial and error was the agreed approach in developing a melody:
[I] thought that we are not going to be able to compose any song. But then we started playing random notes and soon got a melody. Then we played our melody and we just joined in with different instruments and after a while we made a song.

In the same group, Michael “thought it was really hard to make a melody using all black notes, but in the end I got it right”. For Vanessa’s group,

[j] it took a while to make a song we all liked, we started by improvising on the guitar and finding a tune we liked. Then the other three members found percussion to match. We fitted all the instruments together then all decided on the emotion it conveyed. After finding our emotion we modified the song a bit, to make it match the emotion better.

Some groups appropriated parts of other songs and then modified them to fit the outline of their music and the instrumentation available. Carter commented, “and it is taken by [from] some Jap song and everyone got our instrument which is guitar, piano, keyboard. Actually guitar player got two people and each instrument got one person each”. For Howard’s group, by augmenting a known song with a percussion accompaniment, they were able to complete the task. In the same group, Ryan explained:

[we] [I]ost a lot of time trying to find an emotion or a melody. Then Howard started playing a piece on the piano and it clicked. I told James to take the metal xylophone and I played the drum. We tried different melodies and it finally came.

In another task, Stephen’s group decided on a style of music to match an emotion:

We started off by choosing a feeling, as we wanted to do something different. We chose to do an ambitious-dance hippy feeling. To do this I wrote a jazz-funk melody which is fast and exciting. Because of our choice we decided to have a big drum, maracas and extra percussion to make the sounds feel larger.

Jake’s group concentrated on rhythm:

first we played random notes till we got a rhythm. After we got our rhythm, we just add more beats to it till we finally get a song. This time I came up with the rhythm then everyone added into it.

As indicated above, although the initial ideas presented some difficulties for all of the groups, they were eventually able to assess and select the elements of music most appropriate to the creative demands of their task. Given that most of these students had been well versed in these elements, it is interesting to note that while they were
all able to find an effective method for developing their music, they also tended to focus on a small selection of the possibilities available to them.

**Motivation**

In all the tasks, it was evident that the achievement of a successful performance was the primary motivation and the positive comments of the rest of the class provided the required reward. Students showed little interest in the assessment of the tasks and looked to their peers to provide feedback about their efforts. This lack of concern for external evaluation could also be ascribed to the assessment in this subject being based largely on student’s involvement and performance rather than their level of knowledge measured by a written examination. My journal entries suggest that in spite of students receiving a mark which would contribute to their overall grade for the semester, they were, nevertheless, fully engaged and motivated by their own intrinsic interests.

In describing “flow”, where an individual is completely absorbed by an activity to the exclusion of everything else, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) noted key characteristics that identify this experience. These include having a clear idea of what is to be achieved, challenging but achievable goals, a feeling of being swept up in the process, complete focus on the task in hand and a lack of concern about assessment.

The ring tone task, which differed from the others in being more structured, offered the students intrinsic motivation, since many were keen to write their own ring tones and were also interested in using them afterwards. This resonates strongly with the findings of Amabile who concluded that “people will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction and challenge of the work itself - and not by external pressures” (1990:67). Although the anticipated result made the ring tone exercise intrinsically motivating, its highly structured and algorithmic approach set it apart from the other more open-ended tasks. In that context, it is interesting to note that there were some students who expressed dissatisfaction with their end result. Vanessa, for example, approached it in a logical and methodical way and had little difficulty in fulfilling its requirements but was ultimately disappointed:

I got inspiration from the most famous and annoying ring tone, the Nokia ring tone. The Nokia ring tone is very simple, so I tried to create something simple as
well: I used C major key with a small range and scale type notes. I don’t think my
ring tone was quite as effective as it could have been.

In other tasks, levels of frustration were mainly attributed to lack of time caused by
problems with group dynamics, lack of ideas or a need to achieve a more polished
performance. It is possible that the ring tone task was so structured that it did not
provide the freedom necessary for students to fully explore their creativity. At the
same time, some were much more comfortable working in this way because they had
very specific instructions to follow.

**Enjoyment**

The overwhelming response to all these activities was positive. Students expressed
their pleasure in their own personal accomplishments and having successfully
collaborated in a group. They also tended to describe their involvement as a pleasure
or a worthwhile experience and this was clearly evident in Nikki’s responses: “when I
was working with my group people it was awesome” and later, “when we doing this
work I feel really calm and peaceful. Obviously I love doing this work”. Several other
Asian students similarly described the outcome of these positive experiences as a
sense of peace and calm, a feeling which may well find its origin in their native
culture.

In societies influenced by Confucian principles, the attainment of harmony is said to
be paramount and the expression of overt emotions is discouraged (Kyung, 2007). So
perhaps the internally focused feelings these students describe are inherent in this
philosophy. Alternately, the emotions tapped in the musical domain could be so
distinct from those elicited in their other subjects that these students see music as an
additional and fulfilling plane in which they can operate. Credence is lent to this
assessment by the fact that for many students at this school, the predominant
educational focus is on fairly “dry” subjects, with an emphasis on rote learning and
clear requirements for success; in turn, this may provide limited room for the
development and exploration of the individual’s creative potential.

Many of the students’ comments bordered on the exuberant: “I learnt that music can
represent the person’s characteristic. It was fantastic” (Tom), “but I felt really
successful because I actually made it with Jake” (Howard), and “we had to express an emotion via music and this was a very good experience” (Ashley). Edward’s comment, “That’s how we do the awesome music”, again echoes the concept of “flow” as defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1996). A more subdued comment came from Stephen who “felt quite fulfilled because I think our song accomplished the task of making people think about how this music makes them feel”.

**Fun**
Student’s responses often used the term ‘fun’ to describe their experiences. For Vincent, a student with little previous musical experience; “when I doing the composing the song I found it’s fun to play instrument with friend”. Similarly, Ashley explained, “we had to express an emotion via music and this was a very good experience. I also had a fun time”. Although students encountered many difficulties, not only in relation to group dynamics but also in accessing ideas, they seemed to enjoy the challenge and the hard work involved in developing and completing their work. When Elizabeth accepted the opportunity to express herself in her native language she presented a complex overview of the role of music in her life:

> Musical composition is a fun activity for me. I do not know the reason, but my feeling is always affected by the type of music I listen to. I sometimes get emotional; I have learnt the way to control my feelings by listening to various types of music. In the process of composing music, I can learn very many things. One day when I finished composing the music of my own, I realized that the harder I work, the better music I compose. I have been and will be composing a variety of music. It helps the way I perceive the world.

Csikszentmihalyi postulates a state of “flow” in which creators are totally engaged in their activity with little consideration for how they are feeling at the time, but this phase is followed by a sense of happiness at the completion of the task. He observed that, “the link between flow and happiness depends on whether the flow-producing activity is complex, whether it leads to new challenges and hence to personal as well as cultural growth” (1996:124). This conception of flow is echoed in Elizabeth’s experience and while many students confronted difficulties, the strength of their creative engagement carried them on to success.
**Hard work**

Though students displayed the strength of their motivation and ultimately, pleasure in completing the tasks, many also indicated that they involved hard work. Finding most of them difficult, Jake concluded; “I learnt that making the song was hard but after we got the base rhythm, it was easy”. Ren explained that, “[I] think an idea is hard”, while Leroy felt, “[i]t started off really hard to figure out how to create the piece”. Developing music to convey a character, Vanessa discovered that “making music for people is difficult as people are so complex and there are so many sides to people. I felt we had a good song in the end but it was difficult to convey the character”. Carter realized “that made music [a] hard thing” and Leon commented “how do I get idea for music. Just one more try. Try many times. Hear something different”. In spite of the difficulties, almost all students felt their efforts were finally rewarded: in Mario’s words, “I feel stress when I play or perform, but it really fun”.

**Feelings of inadequacy or performance anxiety**

For some of the international students anxiety about performing in front of their peers was a significant problem. My journal entries note several students who claimed their previous experience of music had consisted of large classes instructed by the teacher in a “chalk and talk” style. Here, students are expected to listen passively without questioning content or style, to learn by rote, to avoid asserting themselves and to be assessed by reproducing the material presented in class (Kyung, 2007; Ng, 2001). In demonstrating a typical Taiwanese music class, a video presented by Wu (2009) shows a class of fifty students sitting silently in rows, writing notes from the board.

For newly arrived international students, the teaching style used in this study provided a sharp contrast. It allowed them to work autonomously in separate rooms with the expectation that they cooperatively contribute to their group, with assessment largely based on their degree of engagement. Jake mentioned that as a pianist, “it was playing it to an audience rather than playing alone” that made the experience more challenging, while Mario felt “stress when I play or perform, but it really good fun”. One recently arrived Japanese student had great difficulty overcoming her inhibitions. My observations indicate her efforts involved changing many well-established behaviors to allow her to express an original and creative idea. For Michael,
discomfort was not expressed as anxiety; rather he “felt really happy and embarrassed at the same time when I played in front of other people”.

For some students, these cultural considerations may inhibit the experience of “flow” or may make it harder to obtain, given a “flow” precondition is a lack of concern for failure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

4.1.3 Other influences

Teacher involvement
One student felt that interference by the teacher had a negative effect on his group’s music and performance. When the group was asked to play a little more softly the result was disappointing. Simon D clarifies:

First week we had trouble playing with all together because we weren’t ready and didn’t have any ideas. On the second week we had a good idea so we played it. We played with feeling and it was very fun. It was very hard to make the ending, but we used drum fillings to end the song. We played a rock music and we played loud as possible and try to enjoy but the teacher told us to play softer so we couldn’t perform well.

Entries from my journal indicate that allowing this group to operate without any teacher input would have led to a more successful and fulfilling outcome. Although the students were not following the previously established task requirements, they were obviously working through issues to produce music with which they were very satisfied. One of the requirements not followed by this group was using a pentatonic scale to achieve an appropriate tonal color. This was, however, a group, consisting of students with very little musical background and Simon D had obviously put a great deal of effort into helping his fellow members achieve an outcome in which they took considerable pride.

Wiggins suggests that “restricting pitches or rhythms that a composer can use, for example, could inhibit the invention of musical ideas” (2007:465). The same could be said for restricting the volume and although the ideas were still forthcoming, the experience for the students was dulled by the teacher’s intervention. Here, the outcomes desired by the teacher came into direct conflict with the goal of successful group interactions. Nevertheless, there were many positive outcomes, not only for the
struggling members of the group but also for the more knowledgeable Simon D. Obviously though, there is a fine line to be drawn between the objectives of the teacher and the creative output of the group. Possibly there are too many teacher defined outcomes involved in these activities and in this case, the goal of successful group interaction might have been a more worthy aim than the task objectives. In Craft’s words, there was a need to be “willing to leave the script” (2005:69) or adopt the strategy of “standing back” (Green, 2008a:31).

For another group, my positive feedback provided the confidence to continue with and believe in their work. “The teacher then came in and said it was awesome and we just stayed with it” (Jake). The role of the teacher in this educational setting - whether positive or otherwise - can be seen in the context of “field”, postulated by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), where the teacher has the power and authority to make artistic decisions about students’ work in the music domain. Sternberg (2003) suggests that when “environments”, such as the classroom, threaten conventions accepted by students, creativity can indeed be inhibited. It is therefore important for creativity to be fostered in an atmosphere that encourages and provides incentives for creative activities.

**Issues of time**

Findings from Cycle One indicated students felt very strongly that their efforts were compromised by time restraints. As Sternberg explains, creative activities require the provision of sufficient time for ideas to percolate: “If children are asked to think creatively, they need time to do it well” (2003:127). With this in mind, the present study allocated considerably more time for each task than was allowed in the pilot study, but lack of time was still an issue for some groups. However, in the ring tone task, which was undertaken individually, there was no suggestion that limited time was an inhibiting factor. This would indicate that learning to work in a group and deal with the idiosyncrasies of the group’s personalities impinged on the time necessary for developing ideas.

Kennedy, in her study of adolescents engaged in composing, noted that part of the compositional process involved “thinking time” (2002:5) which was difficult for her students to define but involved sketching out plans and incorporating the ideas that
had been stimulated by listening to music. In the present study, students suggested they needed more rehearsal time to perfect their presentations. For Vanessa, “if we had more time to work on our piece it would have been better”. However, my journal entry noted that in spite of providing the extra time the groups had requested, when the moment came to present the material to the class, “the same complaint was registered about not enough time, although every group was ready”. Later, in Task 4, Vanessa affirmed, “it was beneficial to have more time than we usually do as it took a long time to fit all the instruments together nicely”.

From observations of these groups, it appeared that there was a degree of perfectionism creeping into the situation but this development also indicated a real desire to refine and improve these presentations. Through its ability to rework recordings until all blemishes have been eliminated, the recording industry has reinforced this preoccupation with perfection. Since students tend to have few opportunities to hear music “live”, this level of performance becomes the norm and may give them the idea that any worthwhile musical performance must be of an unrealistically high standard.

The dilemma for students in this situation is to know when to stop and avoid overworking their material. A related problem, from a pedagogical perspective, is balancing the needs of these slower groups with the needs of those who have already finished their tasks. Although it is possible to give them other activities to continue with, there is an expectation that the whole class, including the group requiring more time, will cover all topics presented in the curriculum, which then become the basis for report writing.

Another factor in students’ consideration of how much time they required relates to the time at which all these music sessions occurred - the first two periods of the school day. In her study, Kennedy (2002) observed that adolescents found night time the most productive period in which to work and, for the present study, this could explain the creative lethargy that students sometimes seemed to feel at the beginning of the day.
Evaluation
Although students did not explicitly comment on task evaluation it was, nevertheless, a factor motivating their desire for a successful outcome. From my journal it was obvious that the groups were seeking a positive response and were aware the tasks were being evaluated. Possibly due to the nature and style of the school that they attend, students had such limited experience of non-evaluation that they did not mention or were unable to judge its significance.

In group discussions after the tasks were presented, the students’ own evaluation of their performance, both in their groups and individually, correlated strongly with the researcher’s own judgements of their work. Students’ comments were not necessarily focused on the creative aspects of their presentations, but there was agreement about the effectiveness of the groups. Vanessa’s assessment provides a representative example of this alignment of views: “I believe our end product is very good and we achieved our goal of making ‘Chinese sounding’ music for our scene”. In this context, Amabile proposes that “creativity may be something that is difficult for people to describe, but is still relatively easy for them to identity with a good degree of reliability” (1996:62).

Changes from Task 1 to 4
By the last task students still had trouble accessing ideas but once they had developed some strategies to deal with this they spent much of their time engaged with the issues of meshing their thoughts into a cohesive performance. In the process of developing their ideas they still experienced Craft’s “cycle of creativity” but it was clear that many students were acquiring facility with accessing creative responses, similar to that noted by Dairianathan (2006) in his research of Singaporean students. This did not eliminate some students’ difficulties in accessing new ideas for the open-ended tasks, but for the more structured ring tone, this was not a problem. Most of the students who had a reasonable knowledge of the domain - and years of experience in producing creative music responses - expressed little concern, either because it presented no challenge for them or because they had the personal resources and strategies available to undertake all of the tasks confidently.
But for some international students who also had musical backgrounds, the expectations of the open-ended tasks were difficult to meet. Having attended music classes at this school for several years, they were familiar with these types of tasks but although their solid base of knowledge was undoubtedly an asset, it may have lead to an inflexibility of thinking that inhibited their creative responses (Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004). For Amabile, “the important distinction is not the amount of knowledge but the way in which that knowledge is stored and the ease with which it can be accessed” (1990:82).

4.2 Data Analysis of Interviews
The interview questions were designed to assist in understanding these students’ previous experience of creating and to shed light on how this background may have influenced their creative music responses.

Being creative
As might be expected, the literature as a whole reveals many differing interpretations of the concept “creativity”. More particularly, noticeably divergent understandings of its meaning emerge from Western and Asian cultural perspectives. Some students in the cohort were Asian and in expressing their own interpretations of creativity, interesting comparisons with the literature emerged. To what extent their responses might be ascribed to the evolution of their own national cultures or to their Australian school experience is a question worth pursuing.

Of the three Asian students, two described being creative as composing songs and being able to play instruments. Michael said “it’s like being able to compose a song and create melodies and…being able to play instruments”. For Carter, song writing involved appropriating songs and modifying them to suit his purpose. Howard, the third student, explained it as “ideas from different things which you can create something new of your own”. Of the two Australian students, Ashley also adopted the idea of novelty: “being creative is like in art where you put things together that are not usually together and it sounds good”. Steven viewed the term as communicating with someone else through his music so that “you get to evoke a feeling to someone else through your art” and “it creates an understanding between them”.

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The absence of a clear cut dichotomy between a “novelty” centred Western perception of creativity proffered by Australian students and an Asian students’ sense of creativity as imitation and reinterpretation after achieving competence could be explained by changes in the cultural perceptions of Asian students resulting from several years of study at this school. But it is worth noting that one Australian student understood creativity to be an active process of communication rather than the development of a novel idea. This could also reflect the nature of the question, which related creativity to student interactions in the classroom rather than a more abstract and generally, for students at this level, inaccessible notion of the term.

Play in childhood
Gardner claims that “if, in early life, children have the opportunity to discover much about their world and to do so in a comfortable, exploring way, they will accumulate invaluable ‘capital of creativity’, on which to draw in later life” (1993:31). Similarly for Kyung “fantasy is a way for children to act out impulses and to re-examine new ideas through playful combination with familiar ideas” (2007:33). It seems plausible, then, that imaginative game playing and freedom to invent worlds might well lay the foundations for creative thought.

When asked, the students had some difficulty in recalling their childhood experiences of play. After some prompting, Steven said that in observing the play of his siblings, he realized that, like them, he had devised stories and used them as a basis for developing games. They created “stuff like stories; something like a narrative, something like an adventure or they’ll be going out trying to do something or rescue something. So they create a story and base a game around it”. Ashley initially remembered physical activities such as bike riding and ball games. In a game called “Sharks”, “[i]f you’d go over the bridge there was a shark there so you’d run across quickly or someone tags you”. Ashley would also

[p]lay teachers or whatever…like you’re the teacher and you get the students to read out in the class and your friends read out stuff and yeh, just stuff like that. Like ‘tiggy’ and one person would be a dragon or something and they’d run around and grab you.

Later she was able to remember more details: “So throughout the game you’d add morals. So as you’d come across ‘ok the dragon can’t come here, this is a sacred
area’. You’d add little rules”.

Michael read comic books, played sports and “chasy” as well as playing the piano with his brother playing on his drum kit. The game of “chasy” involved additional rules so that “when one guy catch another guy we start hitting the drum once, then another one catches another one then we start hitting it again. It was really noisy in our house”. Howard’s free time was also spent playing “hide and seek” or “tiggy” where, “whoever tagged us, the tag would change and in the park there were slides and you’d climb up on it. If you’re on the slide you have to go up the slide, you can’t tag it from the floor”. Other activities included card games such as “Uno”.

Carter provided a description of a game with an elaborate set of rules where the players would draw an “S” on the ground and with one space at the top and the bottom: “you have to go on one leg to stand and go in the other team or group to play. And if people get to stand on two legs then they’re out”.

From these responses, it is clear that all the students remember spending a large proportion of their childhood engaged in physical activities, some of which involved games they had either invented and provided with an accompanying set of rules, while others were traditional games they had modified to suit their requirements. Overall, these students’ recollections of richly imaginative childhood games continually evolving into more complex, challenging and satisfying forms, undoubtedly qualify as Gardner’s “capital of creativity” (1993:31). In the process of their creation and development they also bear a striking resemblance to Dairianathan’s (2006) description of the beneficial effects of initial efforts in enhancing subsequent creative facility.

**Use of free time now**

For some students, the way in which they used free time provided an illuminating insight into their engagement with activities reflecting their creative interests and the promotion of creativity in the rest of their lives.
Steven, for example, reported that most of his free time was spent making music or engaging in creative activities such as “making short films and stuff and music for our films in digital media”. Ashley searched the internet for social networking sites and music which she listened to extensively on her iPod. Michael spent much of his time practising piano but would also have liked to play tennis.

Other students used their free time mainly to exercise and did not involve themselves in activities that could necessarily be seen as enhancing their creative responses. Carter played soccer and used the internet to provide himself with information about “what’s happening in the world” and to keep abreast of new games. Similarly, Howard played basketball, computer games and talked with friends in his free time.

Finding musical inspiration

Asked what stimulated their musical imagination, students provided answers relating directly to the comments made in their reflections and their conception of “being creative”. Ashley’s approach to producing a creative response was to use the elements of music as a point of reference:

I usually work with deciding the colour first; say I decided black and that’s related to scary. So I know to make scary music you use the notes very far apart on the piano to sound scary. So that’s how my brain works…

She compared her approach to another student, saying “…some people like Simon D and stuff, they just make something and something comes out of it. They play the drums and then it reminds them of adventurous things and they make it”.

Steven looked to his feelings, stating “certain events can evoke a feeling in myself and if I’m feeling happy or sad I’ll create something that’s happy or sad at that time and I’ll try to evoke the feeling that I’m currently having”.

Carter sought out ideas from different genres to provide inspiration and used these to develop his own musical response. “First of all I get idea first from Pop or Jazz or whatever and get some idea and making music”. Howard found that ideas just came to him when he was not involved in any specific activity explaining that “probably when I’m sitting down doing nothing I think of stuff and it just pops up probably. Nothing to do and then something just pops up in my mind and I think I could do it”. Michael
was unable to answer the question and my journal entry indicated he was uncomfortable dealing with this topic and therefore it was not pursued.

**Daydreaming**

Imaginative play, of the type illustrated in the student quotations above, is seen as a means by which children are able to discover the world and the way it operates. It also allows for the development of new perceptions and ways of thinking about this world (Joubert, 2001). As children progress through the education system, this imaginative facility may gradually become suppressed by the need for some organizational conformity in the efficient functioning of schools, making creative responses problematic. “In the classroom, they may be surprising and counter to an educator’s plans. This surprise element makes it difficult to support creativity, especially when the teacher may be trying to keep 20 or 30 children on task” (Runco, 2004:14). In place of imaginative play, daydreaming and night dreaming may occur and offer “new ways of confronting our current concerns or for resolving issues raised in our work or daily life” (Singer, 2009:197).

All of the students interviewed had experienced daydreaming and these experiences varied considerably in context and content. Although Ashley initially claimed she did not daydream, she conceded; “I think about things and I get thrown out of class sometimes” and at home she deals with “sort of distractions or something and I start thinking about that”. Steven, on the other hand, felt that he often daydreamed “usually something surreal” and explained this experience as “creating an idea or something or thinking about something that happened or something that might happen”. Carter also experienced daydreaming “almost every time. In the class when I get bored I daydream”. He went on to provide details of this occurrence; he was “the main character of the story…I and her make boyfriend or girlfriend”. He also described being involved in a soccer match where he sees himself as playing well.

Howard related his daydreaming to feelings of tiredness and dreamt of being back in his home and “what it would be like …with my grandparents, friends and those sort of things”. Michael suggested that he had only experienced daydreaming once “when I was sitting in a maths class, it was really boring and I can’t understand anything and I
was thinking of something else”. Elaborating, he said this would entail “being able to
go out and relax myself and just do whatever I want”. More specifically this included
playing tennis and piano “being really good at it, in piano especially. Being able to
compose a song like other people can because I think composing is a really hard
thing”.

**Experience of creating music**

Students cited many factors as important to the process of creating music. Ashley
described feelings of anxiety about the very act of creating music and a lack of time to
achieve this goal. She related this stress to a paucity of experience and knowledge.
The issue of working in a group was also important as “the people might not
cooperate or give ideas so you’ll have to think of it yourself”. For Ashley, working on
her own meant she knew she could rely on herself and she expressed an ambivalence
about prescribed tasks: “it’s good to work with constrictions as well so you get a feel
of Chinese music but it’s easier without constrictions”. This sentiment was echoed by
Stephen who explained:

> Sometimes it can be hard ‘cause, depending on what it is, like if its like go
> create something that’s happy or this colour, I may not be feeling like that at
> the time and it might be constricting; I have to do something that I’m not
> feeling that I would be doing at that time. But without those restrictions
> sometimes it can be harder to think of ideas because you have too much
> freedom with it.

Michael’s evaluation of the problems involved in creating music focused on the
composition of groups. He expressed pleasure at the prospect of producing a musical
response but having declared himself unable to find ideas easily, his experience was
dependant on the successful functioning of the group. The other members’ ability to
provide lyrics and chords prefaced Michael’s success in producing a satisfying
contribution; “like he is really creative on making the lyrics of the song then the
chords so I can come up with anything that fits perfectly with the lyrics”.

Howard, on the other hand, found accessing ideas relatively easy:

> You can’t get ideas at the start but then in the end when you start playing it
> would, for me, it would just start coming up, the ideas. When you’re doing
> something and then you just suddenly think of something, which will make
> it better, which will fit in.
For Howard, group composition was not his preferred working mode because of difficulty in having his ideas accepted and problems in meshing the group’s collective ideas together. Although Howard had readily generated creative music responses he preferred opened ended tasks:

It doesn’t have to be in a happy mood or in sad mood because when you tell the class to do some theme, maybe in a movie, and then they might think of something else in that time which might not fit to the theme that you want them to make the music in. When you try to make a happy song but you’re in a sad mood it’s very hard to make a happy mood song.

Experience of creating in primary school

I find it preferable to devote the early years of life - roughly speaking, up to the age of seven - to a relatively unstructured or "creative orientation" where students have ample opportunity to proceed as they wish and to explore media on their own (Gardner, 1989:156).

The interviews revealed that few of the students had enjoyed the benefits of Gardner’s preferred pedagogy in their primary years. Ashley had creative experience in dance but the music was chosen: “we had to choose a song and make up our own dance for the group for the whole song”. Steven found subjects other than music where creative expression was made “by going about an activity in a special way to make it more appealing for the students. So making a poster and you have to make it with all these materials and stuff like that”. Howard’s art experiences involved “thinking of pictures and things like that” but in all other subjects “the teacher would just tell us what to do”. Music classes for Michael consisted of singing, theory and playing traditional Indonesian instruments but with no opportunity to explore his own ideas. Carter was not asked this question as he was suffering language fatigue and was obviously uncomfortable continuing to answer questions.

The data from the other sources provided richly textured information about the factors affecting students in the process of accessing their creative musical responses. Armed with this knowledge I now have an avenue for developing teaching strategies to produce an appropriately nurturing educational environment. These issues will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

My aim in undertaking this study was to gain knowledge about my classroom and to improve specific aspects that had been the source of frustration for some time. At the same time, I was driven by a desire to assist my students in their music making. It seemed to me that as the people most affected the students would be able to provide many clues about the difficulties they encountered.

5.1 Pedagogical implications

The data from this study confirmed most of the findings of Cycle One. In both cycles, students identified lack of time as a significant difficulty in completing their tasks. As this had been noted and more time had been allowed in the second cycle, it appears that some students felt the need for still more time to refine their work, something that is difficult to accommodate within the competing demands of a curriculum. A possible solution would be for these students, who appeared to be highly motivated, to complete the tasks outside classroom time. Because, in this school setting, tutorials are offered and facilities remain accessible to students until 6 pm, additional rehearsals and practice could be extended at the discretion of the students. This would enable them to achieve the level of competence for which they were striving, while allowing them greater opportunity to canvas and develop their ideas.

In both cycles, the cohort contained students with considerable instrumental skill who felt significantly inhibited in accessing creative ideas. Two students, in particular, had learnt the piano for many years and their difficulties with producing creative music responses would appear to confirm Sommervelle’s (2009) assertion that piano teaching focuses on the reproduction of music rather than the sheer pleasure of playing. While a reasonable level of knowledge of the domain underpins a successful creative musical response, Lubart & Geogrsdottir suggest that “the negative side of acquiring substantial knowledge on a topic is that it can lead to rigid, ‘fossilized thinking’” (2004: 29). If, as Dairianathan (2006) contends, the more you engage in creative pursuits the more creative you become, then possibly these students need a lot of practice in accessing their creative ideas. The data from the interviews, although limited by the number of students involved, confirmed that creative activities like
play, and daydreaming had been prominent in the lives of the students who had more ease with creative activities.

While in both cycles students commented on the difficulty involved in producing creative responses, they insisted that the effort was nonetheless “fun”. They appeared to enjoy the challenge and following Amabile (1990), seemed intrinsically motivated. The final reflections (Appendix 6) are the anonymous responses in which students evaluate the course and, on the whole, confirm these observations. The fact that many of the students experienced several or all stages of Craft’s “cycle of creativity” suggests it would be valuable to explain this staged process to them so they can understand that the path to accessing ideas is not straightforward and involves inconsistencies.

It was in the discussion of their feelings that the responses between cycles differed most markedly. In Cycle One, students had openly expressed their emotions and clearly explained the difficulties they encountered. As less articulate members of this study’s cohort, the international students found difficulty in expressing themselves in abstract terms (unless they used an interpreter and wrote in their native tongue) and so their responses tended to be focused on more pragmatic problems. As a result students’ comments on the concrete difficulties they identified in the present study can be taken into account in shaping a more effective classroom environment. In contrast to the international students, working cooperatively in groups seemed easier for the Australian students. This could be related to the difference in previous learning situations and teaching styles. But the teaching of cooperative learning techniques could be used to enhance engagement in group activities for all the students. Additionally, teaching ‘brainstorming’ techniques would assist students to assimilate and blend the ideas of others.

Although working in friendship groups has many advantages, there is a level of musical knowledge required for this arrangement to be productive. Groups need a spread of instrumental skills and an understanding of the domain and these attainments may be lacking within particular friendship groups. At the same time, some of the students with limited musical knowledge will benefit from the informal
learning generated by interaction within the group and handed down by its more musically capable members.

As a teacher, this study has made me realize the importance of leaving students alone to work things out for themselves and the enormous untapped productivity of informal learning. While at first sight ‘lying on the floor’ and other apparently unproductive behaviors could be interpreted as avoiding creative endeavor, it has become clear to me that they are, in fact, an important part of the creative process.

5.2 Limitations of the study
This study is for a minor thesis of 20,000 words and was therefore limited in the number of cycles that could be observed. There is also the issue of generalizability, given the unusual nature of the setting and the demography of the participants. The language difficulties of some of the students meant that their data was restricted and limited their capacity to express themselves fully, particularly in relation to their emotional responses and in their ability to explain in detail the difficulties they encountered. The study was plagued by interruptions including sports days, camps, holidays and an outbreak of influenza in the boarding house. In the context of a study conducted at a school these were unavoidable.

5.3 Future directions
The knowledge and insights acquired during this study have improved my teaching practice while expanding and enriching the musical experience of my students. By enhancing the role of informal learning, it has allowed these students to become more inventive and self-reliant musical learners who will, I hope, apply this self-directed approach to the benefit of their other educational experiences. For teachers in other disciplines experiencing difficulty in eliciting imaginative and creative responses from their students, I hope some of the strategies emerging from this study, particularly in relation to the management of self directed group learning, will be of assistance. Finally, I would like to make a contribution to the continuing debate surrounding curriculum design and the teaching and learning practices that enable and foster creativity in the classroom.
References


Appendix 1 – Tasks

Task 1
Students were asked to consider how music might reflect a time or a place. They listened to several examples of music that had been written for that purpose. They were then asked to create a storyboard about Chinese culture and develop a group music performance that reflected their story and Chinese music. Students were to choose their own groups consisting of four members and each member was to undertake one of the following roles:

• develop a melodic line using a pentatonic (five note) scale
• create an ostinato
• develop a harmony or a suitable percussion line using an idiophone
• use a membranophone to create a constant beat.

Task 2
This task was to produce film music that would reflect a person’s character. Again, students engaged in discussions and listened to appropriate music to stimulate their ideas. In this task students were to work in pairs of their own choosing and decide on the nature of the character that their music was reflecting.

Task 3
Using Sibelius or Acid computer software, this task was quite different from those they had previously undertaken. Students were to work individually and were to devise and record a ring tone of eight bars or 15 seconds for their mobile phone. They were then to play these recordings to the class.

Task 4
This task was to create music that reflected an emotion and students were to work in groups of four, with one group consisting of five.
Appendix 2 – Plain Language Statement

MELBOURNE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Identifying the inhibiting factors that impede creative music responses in secondary students.

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Dr Neryl Jeanneret (supervisor) and Mrs Rosemary Boyle (Masters student) of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne. Mr Settle has given us permission to invite you to be part of this research. This project will form part of Mrs Boyle’s thesis, and has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

The aim of this study is to investigate ways of eliciting creative musical responses from students in a music classroom setting. You can choose whether or not you want to be involved and can change your mind at any time during the project. The research has nothing to do with your grades or assessment.

We will ask you to write reflective responses to music classroom activities over a period of 4 weeks. Some students will also be asked to participate in a 30 minute interview so that we can get a more detailed picture of the factors that influence your creative musical responses. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to ensure that we make an accurate record of what you say.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply.

The findings of this research will be used to inform teaching practices in the classroom, and this will benefit the students. If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it in the envelope provided.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either of the researchers; Dr Jeanneret: 8344 8882, Mrs Boyle: 57811622. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.

Dr Neryl Jeanneret (Chief Investigator) & Mrs Rosemary Boyle (Masters student)

HREC: 0933037.1 Date: 23.3.2010 Version: 1
Appendix 3 – Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Identifying the inhibiting factors that impede creative music responses in secondary students.

Investigators: Dr. Neryl Jeanneret and Mrs. Rosemary Boyle

Name of participant:

Name of investigators: Dr Neryl Jeanneret, Mrs. Rosemary Boyle

1. I consent to participate in the research entitled Identifying the inhibiting factors that impede creative music responses in secondary students.

2. I agree to participate in an interview.

3. My involvement in the research has been explained to me and a written copy of this information has been given to me to keep.

4. I authorize the researchers to use my responses in the final report.

5. I acknowledge that:
   (a) the possible effects of agreeing to participate have been explained to me to my satisfaction;
   (b) my involvement in this project is voluntary. I can decide not to be involved at any time without explanation or prejudice and in this event any unprocessed data I have provided will be withdrawn;
   (c) the project is for the purpose of research;
   (d) the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   (e) I have been informed that with my consent any interview in which I participate, will be audio-taped and I understand that audio-tapes will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;
   (f) this consent form, once signed and returned, will be retained by the researcher.
I consent to the interview being audio-taped

☐ yes

☐ no

(please tick)

Participant’s signature: ____________________________ Date: ___________________
Appendix 4 – Interview questions

• Can you explain to me what ‘being creative’ means to you?

• When you were primary age what games did you play outside school?

• Did you play games that you invented yourself? If so, can you share the basic ideas of them with me?

• When you have free time now, what do you like doing?

• What things stimulate your imagination the most at this age?

• Do you daydream? If so, what about?

• How do you feel when I ask you to create music in class (writing music, producing your own)? Why?

• Did you do these kinds of activities at your last school or in your previous education system?
### Appendix 5 – Final Anonymous Reflections

| It was kool. |
| I think the lesson is good. Maybe we need more free time. The teacher always take care with us and I’m really enjoy it. Thank you Mrs. |
| I like listening music but I don’t like play music because I don’t know how to play. I want to play one instrument. |
| I actually live everything in the course, the composing, performing and stuff (besides walking from school to music center). |
| In the music class I like singing with others. I feeling singing together is interesting. And I hate rest. I don’t like listening and wrote music element. I haven’t grudges. |
| I liked the work with computer. I hated to walk to music building. It was so cold. |
| It was awesome! I think there was a good amount of theory but if there was more there would have been too much. I liked creating music in groups and would have liked to do what we did last year with a paper and patterns and you had to make soundscapes. I think it would have been good to try playing other instruments I don’t usually play. |
| This term of music has been really enjoyable. Personally, I thought the best parts of this course was playing in a group and being able to have some freedom in the types of pieces we could play. Theory wasn’t always the best although I found it always helped a lot with our assignments/tests. So even though we complained about it, I think it was worth putting in the sometimes tedious time! The only thing I really didn’t enjoy was having to walk down here in the rain! Maybe school could get a bus to take us down in future? Anyway, thank you for such an amazing and fulfilling semester! |
| I am glad I chose music as an elective. I like doing “different” things and I like doing singing. I don’t like it when every theory class is about the same thing and we learn the same thing over and over. I like it when we do something as a big group and it |
turns out really well and I like making things up in small groups. I like doing stuff on
the computers but I don’t like it when we don’t have enough time.

I like when we have free time and we can go up and play instruments. I like when we
do our own band. I hate when we sing. I think we should do more band and play
instruments. We should play more instruments especially piano (individual). I hate
when we do theory.

I am…….. That’s all. Thank you.

I like singing. I hate listening. Something about note values. We need to practise
more.

I like music class. I like to play piano very much. But in my class there is not lots of
free time for me to practise piano. It would be very good if I can practise more.

Well, in learning music, I like playing piano and theory, so I get to know more about
music. I hate singing, cause I don’t sing as good as everyone else. I also love making
pop songs and organizing music stuff like Sibelius and Acid. I plan to take music until
I graduate in this school, because I know it will be fantastic to do it. When I grew
older, I wanted to be a music composer and tried to be the same as Beethoven. I
enjoyed the year 10 music class and it was one of my best subjects in the whole year.

I really enjoyed doing music class. Music class was one of my favorite classes and
I learned a lot of things. I specially enjoyed playing instruments in group. I didn’t
really hate anything but it was a bit boring learning same theory over 4 times. I think
we should do more playing instruments and have more fun. I will look forward to
having more fun in music class next semester.

1. Singing. 2. Reading. 3. I don’t know. 4. Nothing.
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Author/s:
BOYLE, ROSEMARY

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