



The role of the teacher in relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes

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DECLARATION

I, Selmari Quinn, solemnly declare herewith that this thesis entitled *The Role of the Teacher in Relationship-driven Teaching and Learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music Classes*, presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Visual and Performing Arts with Music, submitted to the North-West University, is solely the result of my own work and has not already been submitted to any other university.

Date: November 2024

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my beloved Mommy

I arrived in your arms

you left in mine

you will live in my heart forever more

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



My husband, thank you for your unwavering support. You are my rock, my hero, and my most significant source of strength. Your love and compassion have carried me. Your resilience and kindness have been my shelter. Your support has been my constant guiding light. I am endlessly grateful to you.



To my mom and dad, your support has been with me from the very beginning, and I am forever grateful. Your determination, hard work, and the values you've instilled in me have shaped who I am today. You have given me wings to fly. Mommy, how I wish you were here with me now, but I feel your presence and know, somehow, you're watching over me. Daddy, your love and support, especially through these difficult past months, mean more to me than words can express.



To Liesl and Mignon, you continue to inspire me every day. I am deeply thankful for the beautiful relationships we have built, the countless laughs we have shared, and the wisdom and guidance you have both offered. Your kindness and your compassion have touched my heart, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have shared this journey with you. You have enriched my life in ways I will always cherish.



To my Caylin and my Keira, follow your wildest dreams. Always pursue what sets your soul on fire and brings you true happiness. Never forget to lead with kindness in all that you do. Always see the beauty that surrounds you, and may you flourish at every step of your journey. I believe in you with all of my heart.



My Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of opportunity. Thank you for your boundless favour and grace. Grant me a heart of gratitude. Guide me to live so that I honour and glorify Your Name.

ABSTRACT

This self-study explains the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes. Self-study research entails a personal inquiry situated within one's unique context, incorporating collaboration to support professional growth and development. This self-study included six participants: two critical friends, two Reggio Emilia specialists and two music educational experts. The researcher took on a dual role as both the investigator and the subject of inquiry. The data collection encompassed multiple sources, including 1) personal reflections from a learning journey in Reggio Emilia, Italy, 2) reflexive journal entries on the role of a Reggio-inspired music teacher within a South African educational context, 3) semi-structured interviews involving critical friends, 4) correspondence with experts on the Reggio Emilia approach, and 5) discussions with music education experts. Various forms of textual data, including exchanges with Reggio Emilia experts, transcribed semi-structured interviews and discussions with critical friends, discussions with music education experts and weekly reflection logs, were consolidated into a single heuristic unit in ATLAS.ti 24. Codes were conceptualised into categories and themes. The research process was carried out in a manner that was both dynamic and iterative. After analysing the data inductively, I noticed connections to theories and models of positive psychology in the data and, therefore, undertook the process of abduction. This self-study contains two findings chapters, one reflecting on my experiences in Italy in the town of Reggio Emilia, and one reflecting on my teaching. The findings were interpreted, and five roles of the teacher in a relationship-driven Grade 1 Reggio-inspired music class were developed. The roles of the teacher are to 1) facilitate musicking, 2) create a compassionate and inclusive classroom environment, 3) teach life skills through music activities and apply reflective practices to enhance life skills, 4) create moments for intentional connection to form relationships and to create a learner-centred classroom, and 5) be communicative because communication supports relationships, enhances a compassionate and inclusive environment and reinforces reflection and the development of life skills. Consequently, if the teacher fulfils these roles, the outcome may be an optimal learning environment where learners and teachers can flourish.

Keywords: Self-study, Reggio-inspired music teaching, relationship-driven, life skills through musicking, reflection, learner-centred classroom

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AREA	Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance
CRT	Culturally Relevant Teaching
NWU	North-West University
PERMA	Positive Emotions, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment
PME	Positive Music Education
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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INTRODUCTION

Reggio Emilia is a term that describes an approach to education that originated in a flourishing town in Northern Italy named Reggio Emilia. It is one of the major approaches to early childhood education worldwide and has inspired many teachers all over the world (Edwards, 2012). The benefits of the Reggio Emilia approach are the expansion of the child's self-esteem, which in turn results in healthy social and emotional development, promotes empowerment, prompts curiosity and encourages the striving for academic success (Gardner & Jones, 2016). The Reggio Emilia approach is rooted in social constructivism and embraces four key elements: the image of the child, negotiated learning, documentation and relationships (Edwards et al., 1998; Hendrick, 1997; Mphahlele, 2019).

The first pillar of the Reggio Emilia approach is the distinctive image of the child. Every child is seen as the protagonist and collaborator in their own learning. Every child is unique; this uniqueness encapsulates their personalities and cultural and historical identities, and guides their curiosity and interests (Edwards, 2012). Children are described as the creators of their education because their learning is driven by their curiosity (Andress, 1998; Gandini, 1993).

The second pillar of the Reggio Emilia approach is negotiated learning. Children are celebrated as social beings who construct knowledge socially (Kim & Darling, 2009b; Rinaldi, 2005). They communicate their knowledge through the "hundred languages of children"¹ (Mphahlele, 2019, p. 9). The Reggio Emilia approach draws on a Vygotskian perspective (Stone, 2012; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). As in Vygotskian theory, the understanding is that the child's social learning is developed before their cognitive development (Stone, 2012; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Many teachers describe cooperation and collaboration, which form part of the negotiation process, as the cornerstones of the Reggio Emilia approach (McNally & Slutsky, 2017).

¹ *The hundred languages* of children are the "languages" identified by L. Malaguzzi. These languages include art, clay work, music, drama and dance (Forman & Fyfe, 2012; McNally & Slutsky, 2017). Children use *the hundred languages* to express their understanding of the world around them.

The third pillar of the Reggio Emilia approach is documentation. The documentation process can be described as visible learning and includes representations of the children's work. It involves the parent in the learning process by enabling them to understand the child's experiences within learning (Kim & Darling, 2009b; Rinaldi, 2012). The teacher also documents relational interactions within the Reggio Emilia approach for further reflection.

The fourth pillar of the Reggio Emilia approach is relationships. The child's development relies on their relationship with their surroundings; this includes their relationship with the environment (Edwards et al., 1998; Santin & Torruella, 2017), other children (Santin & Torruella, 2017), parents (Gardner & Jones, 2016) and the teacher (Gardner & Jones, 2016; Santin & Torruella, 2017). The child's interpretation of their interactions with ideas around them, materials, places and people is seen as learning (Hendrick, 1997; Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 1998). The teacher's function within the Reggio strategy is to encourage and guide the child through a "relationship-first approach" (Slater, 2004, p. 58). Therefore, the Reggio approach emphasises the importance of building and sustaining relationships (Biermeier, 2015).

Learners benefit from relationship-driven teaching (Field & Hoffman, 2012; K. C². Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Malaguzzi, 1993; Maldonado-Carreño & Votruba-Drzal, 2011; Sabol & Pianta, 2012; St. John, 2006; White, 2020). In relationship-driven teaching, teachers "seek to understand" the needs and beliefs of the children (Covey, 1989). In addition, teachers support the holistic development of the child through an intentional relationship. Therefore, the holistically engaged child is nurtured academically, socially and emotionally through a teacher-child relationship (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999; Wiechmann, 2016). There are three components to relationship-driven teaching as a classroom strategy: commitment, modelling and communication (Marlowe, 2011). Therefore, the teacher manifests the intentional relationship through a steady commitment, social behaviour that promotes the relationship with the child, and open and honest communication (Wiechmann, 2016). For children to engage and benefit in the

² "If the first authors of multiple references share the same surname but have different initials, include the first authors' initials in all in-text citations, even if the year of publication differs. Initials help avoid confusion within the text and help readers locate the correct entry in the reference list" (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 267),

relationship-driven classroom, they need to feel safe from danger, physically and emotionally (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999; Wiechmann, 2016). Children also need to feel accepted and valued, and that their involvement and contributions are meaningful (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999; Wiechmann, 2016). Therefore, the child needs to perceive autonomy and empowerment within the learning process (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999).

Relationship-driven teaching has been proven to promote self-determination (Field & Hoffman, 2012) and to benefit autonomy, self-confidence, and inclusion (Slater, 2004). In addition to the benefits for effective academic performance and achievement (K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Schlicte et al., 2006; White, 2020), teaching that is based on relationships has proven to increase productivity (Laasch, 2014) and encourage exploration in learning (K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006). Furthermore, relationship-driven teaching enhances the child's motivation and engagement in the classroom (Sabol & Pianta, 2012; White, 2020) and promotes positive behaviour (K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Laasch, 2014; Maldonado-Carreño & Votruba-Drzal, 2011). Successful relationships, collaboration, inclusion and social competence (K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Slater, 2004) are prominent features of relationship-driven classrooms.

If motivation, achievement and enthusiastic behaviour are present in the classroom, the chances are that there will be a successful child-education relationship (Steele Royston, 2017). Learning starts with the relationship between the teacher and the learner rather than with the teacher's knowledge or skill (C. Rogers, 2002). This connection between the teacher and the child allows the classroom to be a motivational and safe setting (Steele Royston, 2017). Once this relationship has been established, optimal learning will follow (Slater, 2004).

Learning is a basic human right (McNally & Slutsky, 2017), and creative development is a fundamental human right (Cutcher, 2013). Researchers have studied creative development (Biermeier, 2015; Steele Royston, 2017) as well as the quality of music teaching through relationship-driven teaching, and found that positive relationships were not the only outcome of such studies, but a greater understanding of music was also evident (Steele Royston, 2017). Therefore, creativity is fundamental to building and sustaining relationships as it is the medium for communication and understanding (Biermeier, 2015).

The Reggio Emilia approach is ideal for an arts-rich education to expand all learners' creative promise and potential (Cutcher, 2013). It is an approach for enhancing and creating music (Bond, 2013; Falter, 2018). However, "Where is the music in *the hundred languages* of children?" (Andress, 1998, p. 14). This question has generated considerable research (Andress, 1998; Bond, 2013, 2015, 2018; Falter, 2018; A. P. Smith, 2011; Yanko, 2015) in the Music and education field. Music programmes that have incorporated Reggio Emilia principles have concluded that Reggio music is an essential medium for cooperation, exploration and reflection (A. P. Smith, 2011). Children also develop greater analytical and critical skills whilst enjoying making music and exposure to various musical experiences (Muller, 2019). Additionally, teachers can explore the children's identities through their compositions (Yanko, 2019).

Even though the Reggio Emilia approach to music has evident benefits, there are some genuine challenges. The journey from being a general music teacher to a Reggio Emilia music teacher is extensive and challenging. Teachers generally have to adjust their teaching philosophy (Bond, 2013; Yanko, 2015), with little or no direction and support in doing so (Burgess, 2013; A. P. Smith, 2011). This scenario points to the research gap within Reggio Emilia music teaching (Burgess, 2013; A. P. Smith, 2011). More Reggio Emilia music applied research is needed and would greatly benefit general teachers, music teachers and children within the early childhood education community (A. P. Smith, 2011).

The Reggio Emilia approach has been investigated in South Africa to reconceptualise environmental education in Foundation Phase teachers' education courses (Murriss et al., 2018) and to experiment with literacy practices at independent schools (Chambers, 2021). To improve the quality of education, the application of the Reggio Emilia approach has been examined at the Ndlovu Preschools in South Africa (Van der Laan, 2010). Still, no music education studies have focused on relationship-driven teaching and learning at Reggio Emilia-inspired schools in South Africa. This study differs from the studies mentioned above as the Reggio Emilia approach has not been researched in Grade 1 Music classrooms in the country.

In 2021 and 2022, I taught Music to 50 Grade 1 learners at a Reggio-inspired school in Johannesburg, South Africa, and I was fascinated by the approach. I intended to incorporate the Reggio Emilia principles in my music teaching, but I had concerns about

how to execute music lessons within this apparently unstructured environment. There was no direction or support provided on how to conduct relationship-driven music lessons in a Reggio-inspired environment (Burgess, 2013; A. P. Smith, 2011), and I was confronted with discipline concerns in music lessons adopting the Reggio Emilia approach. I wanted to know whether it would be possible for groups of children to express their learning in sound simultaneously through music, drama, dance, instrumental explorations and other means within the range of *one hundred languages*. This study has advanced my self-understanding as a teacher and facilitator and aided my development as a Reggio Emilia music teacher (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Cole & Knowles, 1998). This study will also enable other music teachers in the same situation and contribute to the broader research programme in teacher education (Zeichner, 2007).

This study will be beneficial to Foundation Phase educators, Reggio Emilia-inspired educators, *atelieristas*,³ teachers interested in relationship-driven teaching, and class music teachers, because it will support and encourage teachers to develop and reflect on their professional and personal development. This study was also intended to contribute to the self-study⁴ research community because of the reflective understanding promoted. Various ideas on how to integrate the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach into music lessons in a way that is progressive in advancing relationship-driven teaching will be integrated into this study. I would like to improve my teaching practice by assisting Grade 1 learners in developing their musicking through the Reggio Emilia approach, while consistently reflecting on my own practice. Music teaching will generally take the form of 'musicking', which refers to music as an activity and an experience instead of a noun which describes music as an abstract concept (Small, 1999, p. 9).

1.1 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this self-study was to explain the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes. Relationship-

³ The educator responsible for the 'art studio' or *atelier*. This educator aids the children within their creative development and also serves as support to the other educators with documentation and curriculum needs (Edwards, 2012, p. 379).

⁴ Self-study research can be defined as a personal situated inquiry involving the input of critical collaborators to ensure improved learning through a transparent and systematic research process to generate and present knowledge (Samaras, 2011, p. 22).

driven teaching was defined as an approach whereby the teacher forms meaningful relationships with the children to develop and promote self-worth, character and a sense of personal value (Schlicte et al., 2006).

1.2 Research Question

How can the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes be explained?

1.3 Procedures

The specific procedures for conducting this self-study will be introduced here, but discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. These procedures include the design of the study, the research approach that was adopted, the role of the researcher and the participants, data collection strategies, data analysis strategies, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

1.3.1 Research Design

Qualitative research strategies were employed to understand and explain my practice as a self-study researcher. Self-studies are exploratory and emergent in nature. I, therefore, strived to explain, generate, provoke and challenge knowledge through reflection on my practice (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Ham & Kane, 2004; LaBoskey, 2004b). I started my quest by explaining my role as a teacher-researcher and facilitator to aid my development as a Reggio Emilia music teacher. I also contributed to knowledge development in the field of Reggio Emilia music and relationship-driven music teaching.

Self-study research strategies were adopted to explicate the meaning of the data. For data collection, qualitative strategies were applied. Data were collected within the natural setting of the self-study, the music class (Samaras, 2011). The methods for data collection included personal reflections on a learning journey in Reggio Emilia, Italy, reflexive journal entries on my role as a Reggio-inspired music teacher, semi-structured interviews involving critical friends, discussions with experts on the Reggio Emilia approach, and discussions with music education experts (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; J. Loughran & Northfield, 1998).

1.3.2 Research Approach

Self-study research can be defined as a personal situated inquiry involving the input of critical collaborators to ensure improved learning through a transparent and systematic research process to generate and present knowledge (Samaras, 2011). Self-study research emphasises the teacher's growth and development within their teaching context (Bullock & Bullock, 2019; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). This study was a self-study project, because it was self-initiated and aimed to explain and improve my teaching in the Reggio Emilia music classroom. As Craig and Curtis (2020, p. 27) state, self-study research develops formal knowledge from practical knowledge. The study was interactive as self-study research depends on the interaction between the researcher and critical friends, who listen and present different perspectives on the context (J. Loughran, 2007; Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019). The self-study approach is not linear because, as the researcher, I oscillated between interpretations to find meaning (Samaras, 2011).

Because of the flexibility and emergent nature of the self-study approach, different research methods can be incorporated as needed (Tidwell & Jónsdóttir, 2020). This study was bound by place as it occurred in a natural setting, the music classroom (Samaras, 2011).

1.3.3 Role of the Researcher

The essence of self-study entails remaining reflective to recognise and grasp the teacher-researcher's position within the context (J. Loughran, 2004). In this study, I was the sole researcher. My role as a reflexive researcher involved investigating, determining and discovering my position in the research process and within the Reggio Emilia music classroom (R. Berger, 2015; Finlay, 2002; Luttrell, 2019). As the primary participant in this study, I sought to explain my role and development as a teacher through relationship-driven teaching in the Reggio Emilia Music classroom (Cole & Knowles, 1998). I started developing my knowledge and understanding of the Reggio Emilia approach through professional development courses at AREA (Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance). I was fortunate to attend the International Study Tour in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in November 2023. The International Study Tour to Reggio Emilia explored the background and history of the Reggio Emilia Approach to education by delving into the concept of *The Hundred Languages of Children*, examining relevant documentation and interpretations, addressing the rights of the child, examining the dynamics within the school while

exploring the environment and educational spaces, and emphasising parental involvement in the learning process. Additionally, I visited several Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools within the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, as well as the Reggio Children exhibitions, ReMida (an educational centre that utilises recycled materials as resources), and the Reggio Children Documentation and Educational Research Centre. I reflect on these experiences in Chapter 5.

1.3.4 Participants

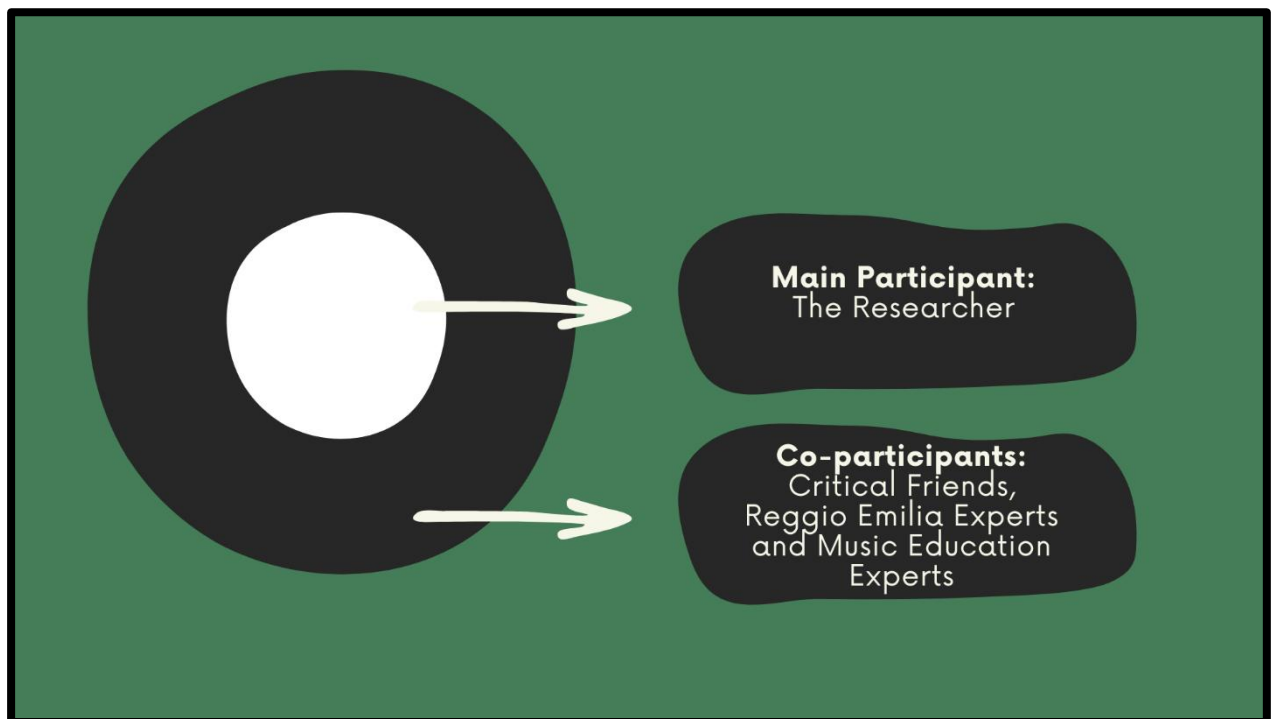


Figure 1.1: Position of Participants

The participants in this study can be viewed on two levels (Figure 1.1). Firstly, within the core of this study lies the main participant (Chang, 2008). Self-study research focuses mainly on the researcher. The researcher is researched to comprehend their perspective and position within the research context (Bullock & Bullock, 2019; Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019). I was, therefore, the main participant in this study. The second level of participants comprised critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts. They were the co-participants in this study (Hauge, 2021). The co-participants supported my reflexive journey through their involvement in the discussions, semi-structured interviews and e-mail correspondence (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Chang, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Cole & Knowles, 1998; J. Loughran & Northfield, 1998). The data generated

from the co-participants served as “mirror data” (Hauge, 2021, p. 8). Mirror data were collected in order to reflect on my own practice as a teacher and a researcher (Hauge, 2021, p. 8). This study focused on relationship-driven teaching and learning. It was possible to gain a more vivid understanding by involving other individuals in the research process, but they did not become the main participants in the study (Thomas, 2019).

1.3.5 Data Collection

I was the primary participant as well as the primary instrument for data collection. Data were collected through multiple methods. Data were comprised of personal reflections from a learning journey in Reggio Emilia, Italy, reflexive journal entries on my role as a Reggio-inspired music teacher, semi-structured interviews involving critical friends, discussions with experts on the Reggio Emilia approach, and discussions with music education experts (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; J. Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019).

I had discussions and conducted semi-structured interviews with critical friends. The purpose of the discussions and semi-structured interviews was to gain feedback on my practices from critical friends in order to reflect and improve as a relationship-driven, Reggio-inspired Music teacher (J. Blake & Gibson, 2021). After observing my teaching practices, the critical friends examined the data through a different lens and asked provoking and challenging questions during the semi-structured interviews. Collaboratively, we explored new ways to improve and develop my practice (J. Blake & Gibson, 2021).

I had weekly discussions with music education experts who interacted with my lesson plans and reflections. The music education experts contributed with suggestions on how to improve as a relationship-driven Music teacher (J. Blake & Gibson, 2021). Through collaboration, we explored innovative approaches, which enabled me to develop as a relationship-driven music teacher (J. Blake & Gibson, 2021).

Readers were invited to “intimate, intense exploration of ideas and issues” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 19) in the correspondence with Reggio Emilia experts (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Cole & Knowles, 1998; J. Loughran & Northfield, 1998). The correspondence took the form of e-mail exchanges, WhatsApp messages and phone calls and it was not modified in any way to ensure a true and

accurate account of the data. This correspondence with Reggio Emilia experts makes the development of thoughts and ideas visible to the reader (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

Reflective journal entries (Addendum O) helped me respond to difficult questions and stimulate honest reflection on my teaching. These reflective entries were significant in creating transparency in the research and made my thinking and experiences clear to the reader and, crucially, myself (Ortlipp, 2008). Reflective journal entries assisted in understanding, identifying and exploring my own practices and allowed me to develop and improve my teaching.

This study's purpose was not to prove or authenticate anything, but to explore and explain relationship-driven teaching and learning in the Reggio-inspired music classroom. The music classroom was the context "for personal understanding of your development, work, and growth as a teacher" (Samaras, 2011, p. 9). The setting for the data collection was a Christian all-girls school. This school has not adopted the Reggio Emilia approach.

1.3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis was a continuous and ongoing process throughout the study (Gísladóttir et al., 2019). I used reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Reflexive thematic analysis implied critical reflection on myself within the research; this involved reflecting critically on both my role as a researcher and my role within my classroom practice (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Berger (2015, p. 220) describes this process as:

Turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognise and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation.

Although thematic analysis is not linear in nature (Braun & Clarke, 2021), I approached the analysis in a structured, systematic and calculated way.

I started by familiarising myself with the data through a process termed 'immersion'. Immersion refers to a rigorous and comprehensive engagement with the data. Once I read through the data, I reread the material and made notes, trying to derive the material and the notes' meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 34). As I worked through the dataset

comprehensively, relevant parts were grouped together and assigned codes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Textual data, including correspondence with Reggio Emilia experts, transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews with critical friends, weekly reflection protocols and reflective journal entries were included in one heuristic unit in ATLAS.ti 24 (Frieze, 2014). ATLAS.ti 24 is computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, also known as CAQDAS (Frieze, 2014). Textual and visual data were stored, organised and categorised in ATLAS.ti by me, as the researcher, to simplify the process of retrieving and revisiting data (Frieze, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through ATLAS.ti 24, I was able to generate themes from the data. These themes with similar underlying meanings were identified through codes with the potential to address the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Leavy, 2017; Pinnegar et al., 2020). My promotors, Prof L van der Merwe and Prof M van Vreden, scrutinised my codes and themes to ensure validity and significance.

As the researcher, I was involved in developing the themes. Themes were generated on the basis of the research question, my understanding of the data, and the full dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I revisited these themes to ensure relevance, substance and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021). After identifying links to theories and models of positive psychology through inductive data analysis, I initiated the process of abduction (Saldaña, 2015). Relationships between themes were assessed and developed. To ensure my data had substance, I explained and described each theme before knitting together a narrative that addressed my research question (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

1.3.7 Trustworthiness

The essence of self-study research is its collaborative nature, which aids the study in retaining “credibility, validity and trustworthiness” (Kosnik, 2001; J. Loughran, 2004; Schuck, 2002). These collaborations refer to critical friendships and promotors. Critical friends promote and challenge one’s perspectives on practices and values (Schuck & Russell, 2005). They encourage the researcher to view data holistically without preconceived notions and bias (Kroll, 2005; J. Loughran, 2007). Critical friends are advisors with different perspectives who add precision and nuance, and enhance the validity of a study (Schuck & Russell, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2016).

Self-study research is characterised by the truthful accounts that are presented (M. L. Hamilton et al., 2020). The construction of this self-study narrative was publicly

communicated to optimise validity (A. Feldman, 2003). I provided comprehensive and explicit descriptions of the data collection and the method of data collection (A. Feldman, 2003). Furthermore, a clear account of how the narrative developed from the data was provided. The reader is made aware of how the data have materialised into a meaningful narrative (A. Feldman, 2003). Thick descriptions validated the data within the context (Pinnegar et al., 2020; Samaras, 2011). This descriptive language ensures that the data resonates with the reader (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Readers gained an insight into the self-study through the multiple sources of data presented (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). These representations were authentic and included negative and positive information to gain a holistic view of the narrative (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; A. Feldman, 2003).

I described and presented my personal and professional growth (Figure 8.1) in the study (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; A. Feldman, 2003; Northfield & Loughran, 1997). This development was described meticulously and precisely within my personal and professional context to enable the reader to relate and understand relevance (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Given my past experience in the music classroom, a prolonged engagement in the field helped to ensure the achievement of a deeper understanding of the meaning of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This prolonged engagement of the researcher and the promotor benefited the collaboration to reflect on the different layers of meaning within the data (Gísladóttir et al., 2019). My promotor constructively evoked different explanations and interpretations (Bullock, 2020).

1.3.8 Ethics

Self-study is the study of self, more specifically, “a self or self-in-relation to others” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 14). It is a research approach used to reflect on and improve teacher practices (Kitchen, 2019). In the self-study approach, the academic is both the researcher and the research subject (Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004).

Prior to conducting the study, informed consent was sought from critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts, and permission was obtained from North-West University’s BaSSREC Ethics Committee (Addendum N). This study did not present any risk to participants apart from the everyday natural risks encountered by everyone (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). The semi-structured interviews took place on a digital platform, avoiding all face-to-face exposure (Mphahlele, 2019). The semi-structured

interviews were 15 minutes in duration, and this eliminated the potential for exhaustion and over-exertion.

Permission was obtained to include contributions from critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts (Sullivan et al., 2016), who were familiar with the expectations for their participation. They were also assured that their identity would be kept anonymous and that their participation would be confidential (Samaras, 2011). All participants in this study had the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the research without any repercussions. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. All co-participants were invited to choose their own pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Only I, as the researcher, knew their identities. Anonymity was ensured by creating composite characters (Muncey, 2010) to protect the identity of participants and remove the possibility of revealing any participants to the study. The composite characters I created were based on the reflections and notes of participants in this study (Muncey, 2010).

In a self-study project, ethical responsibility extends to the researcher, making self-care an important consideration. Just as I am committed to avoiding harm to any participants, I also prioritised my well-being, ensuring that the research process would be constructive for everyone involved. Given that this self-study critically examined my practice, I saw a psychologist every month to monitor my psychological health (Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019). I benefitted from the research since it supported my professional development as a teacher. The outcome of the research findings was likely to have a positive impact on music education in South Africa and relationship-driven teaching within music education.

Conclusion

In the introductory chapter, the Reggio Emilia approach to education with a focus on its four pillars: the image of the child, negotiated learning, documentation, and relationships were introduced. The introduction highlighted the existing research gap, leading to the formulation of the research question. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the research methodology, detailing the procedures, research design and approach, the role of the researcher, and the participants. Data collection and analysis strategies were discussed, along with measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations. These foundational elements provide the framework for the study, guiding the exploration of relationship-driven teaching in the Reggio Emilia music classroom.

INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW OF REGGIO EMILIA MUSIC TEACHING

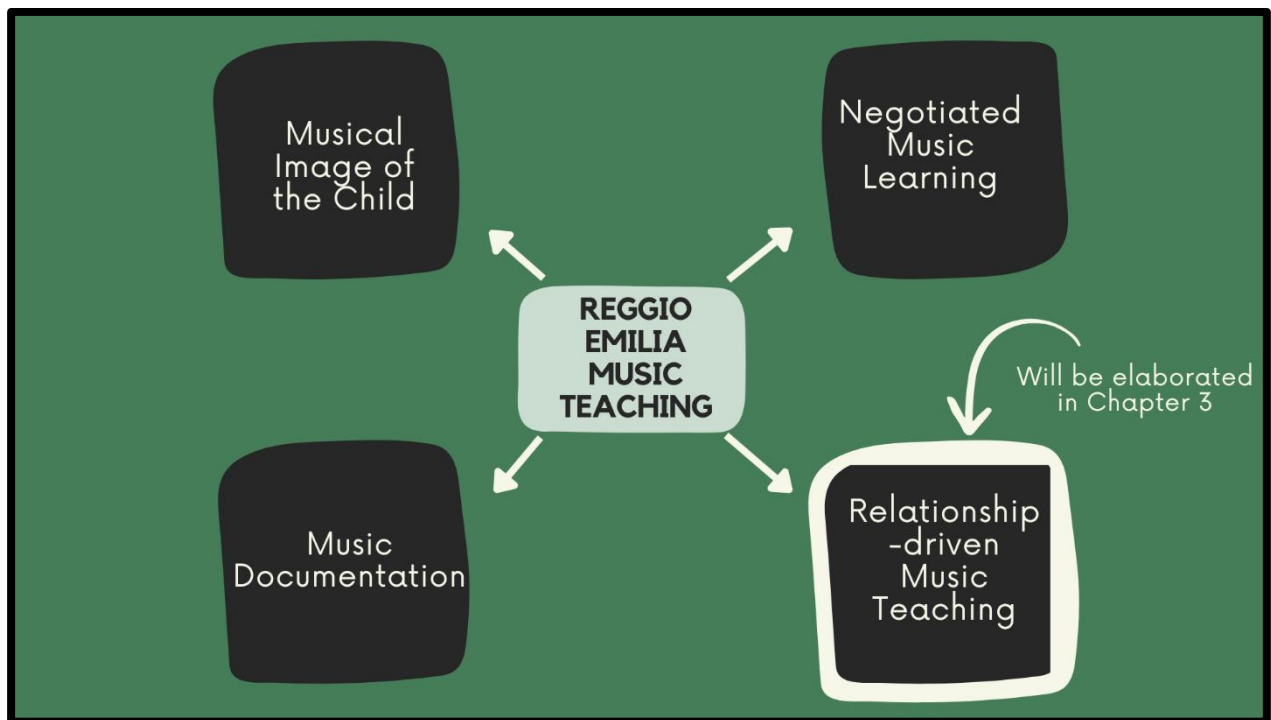


Figure 2.1: Reggio Emilia Music Teaching

This chapter will present an integrative literature review. Integrative reviews are extensive and aim to comprehensively understand the matter at hand (Oermann & Knafl, 2021). The review will include various sources ranging from academic journal articles, books and grey literature to offer a spread of knowledge that provides an exhaustive overview of the literature (Oermann & Knafl, 2021; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). Fresh perspectives will be produced through a critical analysis of the patterns and themes, and the relationship between them through the reconceptualization of the literature (Oermann & Knafl, 2021; Torraco, 2016; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005).

Reconceptualization is an integral part of the integrative review of the literature. The reconceptualization provides a refreshed and novel outlook on knowledge as it integrates and unifies old and new to evolve into a new perspective on the literature (Oermann & Knafl, 2021; Torraco, 2016). The main ideas emerging from my analysis will be presented within a thematic framework (Torraco, 2016). A visual representation of a literature map (Figure 2.1) will guide the reader and offer a more comprehensive overview of the literature for the review (Torraco, 2016).

Reggio Emilia is a term that describes an approach to education that originated in 1945 in a small, prosperous city in Italy named Reggio Emilia (Edwards et al., 2012a). This influential approach to early childhood education has shaped the practices of teachers across the world (Edwards, 2012). The Reggio Emilia approach embraces four key elements: the image of the child, negotiated learning, documentation and relationships (Edwards et al., 1998; Hendrick, 1997; Mphahlele, 2019).

Similar to the Reggio approach to learning in general, the Reggio approach to music does not involve a set of pre-planned lessons with a list of predetermined musical outcomes (Foerch & Iuspa, 2016; Hanna, 2016). The approach is about setting up a learning environment to stimulate interest, invite social learning and encourage the child to be a protagonist and collaborator in their learning (Hanna, 2016). The child's innate musicality is a tenet of the Reggio approach to Music (Hanna, 2016). The four key elements have been reconceptualised, including the musical image of the child, negotiated music learning, music documentation, and relationship-driven music teaching (Figure 2.1).

2.1 The Musical Image of the Child

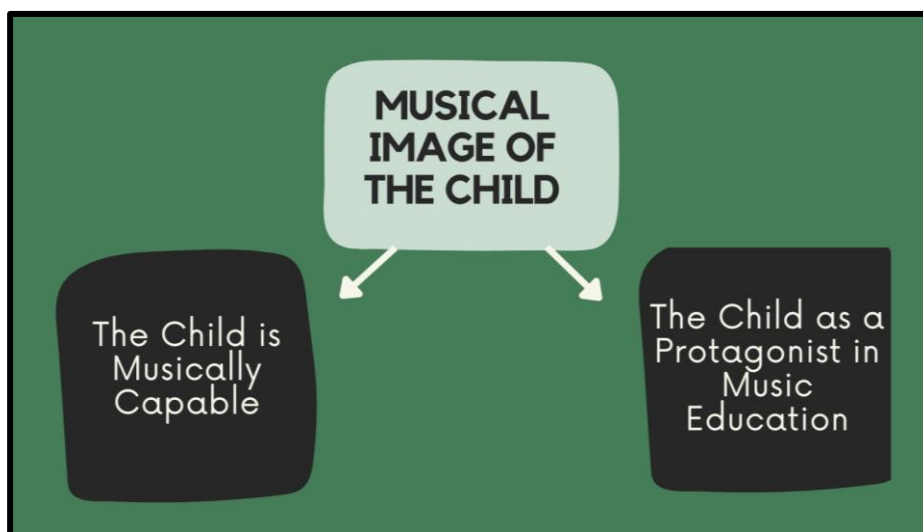


Figure 2.2: The Musical Image of the Child

The first key element of the Reggio Emilia approach is the image of the child (Figure 2.2). The musical image of the child refers to the child being seen as a capable musical being (Bond, 2015; MacGlone et al., 2021). Research has established that humans are innately musical; from the foetal stage, they respond to music (Dowling, 1999; Hodges, 2006; Kisilevsky et al., 2009; Levitin & Tirovolas, 2009; L. J. Trainor, 2005). The child's musical

responses and connections are manifested through movement and dancing (J. Gallagher & Sayre, 2014). In addition, singing precedes language development, confirming that humans can sing naturally (Flohr & Trevarthen, 2007; Peretz & Zatorre, 2005). The human brain is, therefore, wired to be musically able (Koelsch & Siebel, 2005). A study that Reynolds and Filsinger (2013) conducted concluded that children engaged naturally with music during play and are capable as musicians. Bond (2015) reiterates that music will transpire in any circumstance because children are musical beings and musically competent.

Musical skills development occurs in the individual's auditory, vocal, rhythmic and cognitive dimensions (Briggs, 1991). The auditory abilities of the 6-year-old child expand at a rapid rate. The child can distinguish between loud and quiet dynamics, and differentiate between intervals such as the fourth and the sixth (Briggs, 1991; Carter et al., 1972). The 6-year-old child's vocal development is more resonant, and ascending intervals are more challenging than descending intervals vocally (Briggs, 1991). During this stage of development, the rhythmic ability of the child grows (Briggs, 1991). Research has found that young children enjoy spontaneously composing songs (Briggs, 1991). These compositions include melodic contours and rhythmic qualities, although the child acquires rhythmic skills before they develop competence with melodic intervals (Briggs, 1991; Swanwick & Tillman, 1986). The child can arrange rhythm through visual symbols while clapping the rhythm (J. Gilbert, 1980). This cognition in music and learning is first evident at this age of child development (Briggs, 1991).

In the Reggio Emilia approach, children are seen as the protagonists in their learning. The musical image of the child points to the child taking the lead in constructing their musical education (Hanna 2016). Moorhead and Pond (1978) established that children have the capacity to create music through the exploration of their voices. They further confirmed that children also used movement in music to express themselves. The child shows a fondness for music and embraces the chance to engage in musical activities (Campbell, 2002). Waters (2015) found that musical creativity thrived when children took the leading role in musical learning. Like Waters, Smith (2011) enabled her class to be the protagonists in their own learning when they composed their own music. She concluded her research by adding that not only were the children able to work together to compose their own music, but they could also reflect on and commend each other for the role played in the project (A. P. Smith, 2011).

2.2 Negotiated Learning in Music

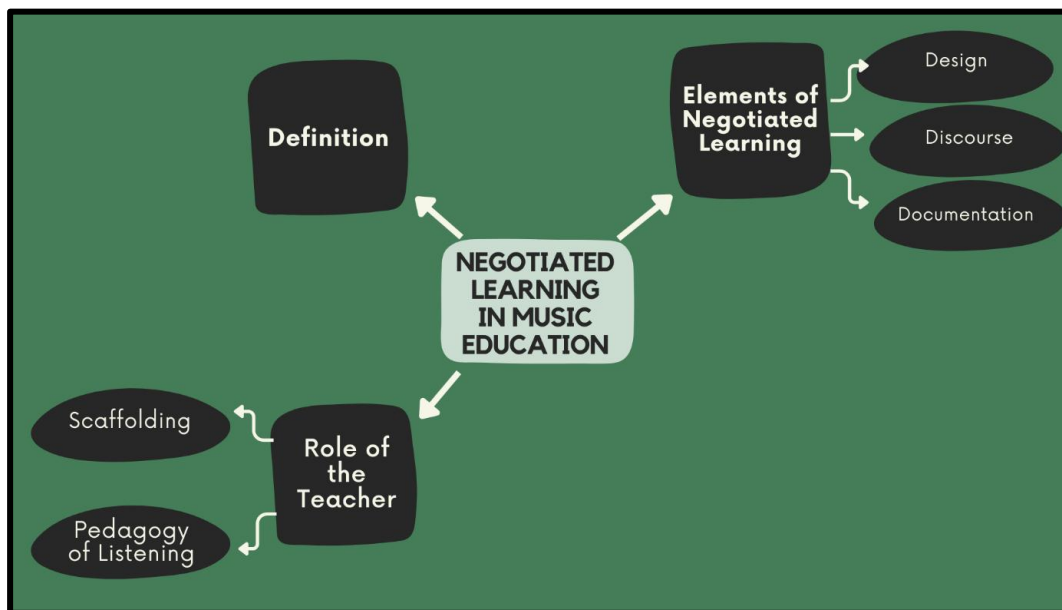


Figure 2.3: Negotiated Learning in Music

The Reggio Emilia approach is rooted in social constructivism (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). Social constructivism refers to the social construction of knowledge through interaction, collaboration and negotiation (Gandini, 1993; Soncini, 2012). According to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) (1978), the child's learning originates in social relationships with adults and older peers (J. Gallagher & Sayre, 2014; Vygotsky, 1981). Vygotsky theorised that the child's thinking evolves spontaneously and non-spontaneously (Adachi, 2021; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Spontaneous progress takes place when the child finds a solution to a question unassisted, while non-spontaneous progress takes place when the child is steered and scaffolded by an adult or older peer towards finding a solution (Adachi, 2021; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). From a Vygotskian angle, the adult is essential for the child's musical behaviour by transmitting music to the child and also being the music practice partner and co-player (Adachi, 2021).

Researchers describe the Reggio Emilia approach as emergent and child-led, where the teacher is a co-learner and a co-musicker (Bond, 2015; Westlake, 2015). Forman and Fyfe (2012) argue that the Reggio Emilia approach is negotiated learning, which brings us to the second key element of the Reggio Emilia approach (Figure 2.3). Negotiated learning can be described as the middle ground between child-led and teacher-led approaches. The negotiated curriculum is "child-originated and teacher-framed" (Forman

& Fyfe, 2012, p. 248). Forman and Fyfe (2012, p. 248) also describe the curriculum as “teacher-provoked and then child-engaged”. Therefore, the Reggio Emilia philosophy is not a series of predetermined lesson plans in a curriculum but rather a philosophy that stimulates and encourages the child's interests (Foerch & Iuspa, 2016). The child's interests are ascertained through observation, documentation and reflection on the responses and the dialogue that emerge from the stimulation by the teacher (Bond, 2015; Gandini, 2009, 2011c; McNally & Slutsky, 2017; Westlake, 2015). Negotiation plays an integral role in collective cognition and equips the child to intentionally design their individual learning collectively with peers and adults (Edwards et al., 1998; McNally & Slutsky, 2017; Westlake, 2015).

This design of their education includes the child's individual and co-construction of knowledge with peers and adults through interactions carefully arranged by adults (Malaguzzi, 1993; McNally & Slutsky, 2017; Yanko, 2015). This learning adventure is, therefore, a partnership and a negotiation between the child and the teacher (Foerch & Iuspa, 2016; McNally & Slutsky, 2017; Rinaldi, 2006; Yanko, 2015). The teacher in negotiated learning is on a quest to find meaning, which starts with listening (Rinaldi, 2012). The pedagogy of listening is a characteristic of the Reggio Emilia approach that serves as the relational glue between the child and the teacher. Teachers who have adopted the pedagogy of listening into their teaching style embrace the child by paying close attention and listening intently to their interests and ideas (Falter, 2018; McNally & Slutsky, 2017). The image of the child is supported through the pedagogy of listening, as this conveys that the child's ideas and interests are noteworthy and understood (Fyfe, 2011). Listening refers to the receptiveness to the communication and expressions of children to understand and create meaning without constructing answers, but rather to articulate and pose meaningful questions (Rinaldi, 2006). Forman and Fyfe (2012, p. 259) describe this act of listening as “listening with the third ear”; listening to the unspoken, the meaning behind the words, ideas and emotions.

The pedagogy of listening is, therefore, inclusive and embraces different interpretations and opinions (Rinaldi, 2012). In the musical context, teachers use the pedagogy of listening to gain an understanding of the interaction that the child has with music activities and also musical instruments, and how this contributes to the construction of knowledge (Hanna, 2016). Through the pedagogy of listening, teachers can assist the child in taking control of creating and co-creating knowledge (Falter, 2018; McNally & Slutsky, 2017).

This relationship between the child and the teacher is central to learning (Falter, 2018). Falter (2018) studied music teaching practices and their compatibility with the Reggio Emilia approach. She concluded that a pedagogy of listening is a crucial aspect of presenting children with relevant music education.

As part of the pedagogy of listening, teachers also engage in a scaffolding process to enable the child to acquire specific skills. In Vygotskian theory (1978), the ZPD refers to the space between acquired knowledge and potential knowledge, activated through social interaction and mentoring (Foerch & Iuspa, 2016). In other words, the ZPD is the stage where pre-existing ability and knowledge are challenged and built on to establish new understanding and knowledge (Edwards et al., 1998; Foerch & Iuspa, 2016).

The teacher listens and observes the child and scaffolds a concept for the child by providing less and less support until the child can grasp and master the concept unassisted (D. Wood et al., 1976). The child gains an understanding of music concepts through a progressive process that unfolds; therefore, music learning is an ideal skill to be scaffolded to empower children in music (Gordon, 2013; Hanna, 2016; Reynolds et al., 2007). Westlake (2015) observed children and adults co-constructing music in a Reggio-inspired preschool and suggests that teachers scaffold music learning to a greater extent to enhance creativity. Interactive music learning became a meaningful social space for children and adults (Westlake, 2015). MacGlone et al. (2021) described interactive musicking as a place of connection. This partnership in learning between the adult and the child results in the fulfilment and gratification needed to reconstruct and reshape understanding (Malaguzzi, 1998).

In the Reggio Emilia approach, there are three elements in negotiated learning: design, discourse and documentation (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). Design is the stage of negotiated learning where proposed solutions to problems are constructed through one of *the hundred languages* in the Reggio Emilia approach (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). These proposed solutions should be clear in instruction and easy to comprehend in order to co-create knowledge in a learning community (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). It is within a group and a learning community that learning transpires. The child's learning is shaped by their roles and engagement within their learning groups (Hong et al., 2017). In the design stage of negotiated learning, the child has the chance to be creative. Through dialogue with group members and teachers, the child can co-construct knowledge as they design their inquiry

(Kim & Darling, 2009a). The design stage is then taken to the next level of discourse, where verbal communication is vital.

The discourse stage is an enjoyable stage that consists of reasoning, presenting perspectives and negotiating meaning to understand and construct knowledge together (Forman & Fyfe, 2012; Jones & Nimmo, 1999; Nimmo, 1998). In the discourse stage, intellectual conflicts arise, which entail reasoning, negotiation and reflection to promote knowledge development and expansion (Forman & Fyfe, 1998; Jones & Nimmo, 1999; Nimmo, 1998). The child uses music as a vehicle for inquiry (A. P. Smith, 2011). Through play, children can discover, explore, and conceptualise their own musical theories (Marsh & Young, 2006; K. L. Smithrim, 1997; Tarnowski, 1999). Music ideas are often conceptualised through social interaction (Westlake, 2015). With the child's social engagement in investigation and discussion, Musicking cannot be separated from the child's social spectrum (Westlake, 2015). Music creates a space for collaboration (A. P. Smith, 2011). Westlake (2015) found that the child's musical understanding and capability improved during collaborative musicking. Music-making is a collaborative space and creates a space for reflection (A. P. Smith, 2011). Through music making, the child is able to reflect and communicate not only with others, but also with self (Barrett & Tafuri, 2012). The discourse in the learning community is then documented to understand the construction of learning. Documentation is not a mere description of the learning that occurred, but is seen as the process of making the learning visible (Rinaldi, 2012).

Documentation in negotiated learning depicts and reveals what the child experiences and thinks during learning. It becomes focused and interactive communication between the child, the teacher and the parent (Bullard & Bullock, 2002; Forman & Fyfe, 2012; Kim & Darling, 2009a). Including the parent in the learning process advances a comprehensive understanding of the child and the child's knowledge creation (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). The parent presents a different perspective on the child than the teacher through an experience of the child outside the school environment (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). Documentation, therefore, becomes not only a space promoting communication, but also a partnership in creating knowledge where the child, the teacher and the parent are all connected through the learning process (Rinaldi, 1998). This collaboration between the teacher and the parent generates insight into the reasoning and opinions of the child (Forman & Fyfe, 2012). The partnership between the parent and the teacher develops into a learning partnership, eventually leading to an intellectual association where

learning occurs not just at school, but is enacted outside of the school environment as well (Forman & Fyfe, 2012).

The documentation process understandably contributes to developing the relationship between the teacher and the child (Rinaldi, 1998). Within the Reggio Emilia approach, documentation makes learning explicitly visible and sustains the learning process (Rinaldi, 1998, 2006). It serves as a tool to reflect and review; the child is enabled to self-reflect, while the teacher can review the learning that has taken place (Rinaldi, 2006). Within negotiated learning, documentation promotes and encourages listening (Foerch & Iuspa, 2016). Documentation also takes into account the child's interests and accomplishments, which values their personal significance as well as their thinking (Bullard & Bullock, 2002). It is important to note that the documentation is not an exhibit of the child's work, but rather a discourse open to interpretation, assisting in establishing links and creating significance and meaning in learning (Forman & Fyfe, 1998). For this integrative literature review, it is essential to unpack the documentation in music education in view of the fact that documentation is one of the pillars of the Reggio Emilia approach.

2.3 Music Documentation

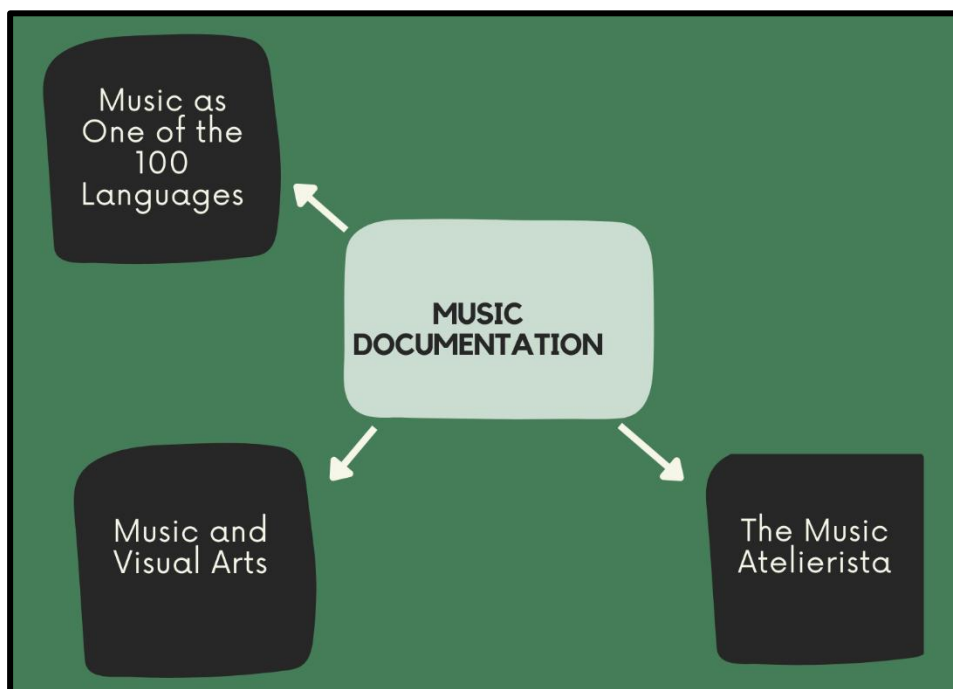


Figure 2.4: Music Documentation

Figure 2.4 illustrates the third key element of the Reggio Emilia approach: documentation. In the Reggio approach, documentation is a key practice used to capture, reflect upon, and share children's learning processes. The role of the Reggio Emilia teacher is to draw on the documentation of *the hundred languages* to reflect on the knowledge and comprehension of the child (Biermeier, 2015; Falter, 2018). *The hundred languages* of children refer to the illustrative and symbolic languages that the child uses to represent and convey personal knowledge (Biermeier, 2015), perceptions (Edwards et al., 2012b), aspirations (Forman & Fyfe, 2012), observations (Biermeier, 2015); and comprehension (Falter, 2018). Through *the hundred languages*, the child's reasoning is made explicit (Bond, 2015; Malaguzzi, 1998). Expressions through the hundred symbolic languages imply the endless possibilities the child can draw on to demonstrate their knowledge (Hanna, 2016). The child's expressions through *the hundred languages* often precede their verbal language abilities (Dewey, 1934).

Documentation in education is both a noun and a verb (McNally & Slutsky, 2017). The thoughts and interpretations of the child are recorded, reconsidered and presented by the child through *the hundred languages* (Bullard & Bullock, 2002; McNally & Slutsky, 2017). The knowledge the child assimilates socially is documented and presented to inform and stimulate further thinking (McNally & Slutsky, 2017). The exhibition of constructed knowledge induces and inspires future endeavours to create a deeper understanding for the child (Gandini, 2011a).

Documentation is the visible creation of knowledge (Foerch & Iuspa, 2016). Learning is made visible by displaying photos, video recordings, narratives, diary entries and dialogue transcripts (Bullard & Bullock, 2002; Foerch & Iuspa, 2016). Documentation empowers the child and the teacher to reflect on and evaluate their understanding to improve their abilities and celebrate their achievements (Bullard & Bullock, 2002; Nelken et al., 2009; Rinaldi, 2006). Through documentation, the child's self-confidence is strengthened by the feeling that their work is meaningful and that they are being listened to (Bullard & Bullock, 2002; Foerch & Iuspa, 2016). Documentation of *the hundred languages* that is shared with the parent, enables the parent to be part of creating knowledge and, therefore, encourages collaboration and relationships between the child, family, and teacher (Kim & Darling, 2009a; Turner & Wilson, 2010).

2.3.1 Music as One of ‘The Hundred Languages’

The Reggio Emilia approach maintains that the child has at least a hundred descriptive languages in which to express and portray their knowledge (Forman & Fyfe, 2012; Gandini, 2012; Hanna, 2016; A. P. Smith, 2011). *The hundred languages* do not refer to verbal speech, but rather to a range of symbolic and expressive modes such as visual arts, song, dance, drama and photography used by children to express their knowledge (Gandini, 2012; Hanna, 2016). Music is celebrated as one of *the one hundred languages* of children because of its significant role in the child’s life (Campbell, 2002). Music’s self-expressive qualities further make it an ideal means for children to express their knowledge and understanding symbolically (A. P. Smith, 2011). In her study, Wiens (2009) stated that Music in the Reggio Emilia approach is one of the hundred expressive languages. Music creates an expressive space that supports the child’s emotional regulation and fosters a connection with self and others (Campbell, 2002; Steinberg et al., 2021). The musical expressions of children are often heard in spontaneous vocal conveyances to communicate their emotions (Bjørkvold, 1989).

Music and the music environment invite discovery (A. P. Smith, 2011). The music environment should enable and encourage discoveries, explorations and compositions in such a way that the child experiences self-autonomy in their explorations and their music compositions (A. A. Berger & Cooper, 2003; Young, 2002). Flohr and Trevarthen (2007) describe exploration as free and guided. Free exploration is a self-guided discovery of sound and exploration of instrumentation, while guided exploration involves the child and the teacher (Falter, 2018; Flohr & Trevarthen, 2007). Through free exploration and guided exploration, the child predominantly engages in the exploration of sound qualities (Moorhead & Pond, 1978). Much like discovery, music allows the child to engage in experimentation (A. P. Smith, 2011). Experimentation in music takes the form of gross motor movement, such as dancing, as well as vocal and instrumental improvisation (Falter, 2018; Gould, 2006).

The outcome of documenting the child’s experimentations with music is aimed at the manifestation of the child’s thoughts, interpretation, understanding and innovation, not at expanding musical virtuosity (Hanna, 2014, 2016). Documentation has, therefore, been proven to complement and reinforce musicking for the child (Reynolds & Waters, 2014b). The child’s musical perceptions and comprehension can be reviewed through

documentation (Hanna, 2016). Music documentation may include sound or video recordings of a child's vocal or instrumental performance or improvisation, the child's interpretation of music through movement or music composed by the child (Hanna, 2016). Because of the spontaneous nature of children's musicking, video documentation of music emerged as the most effective avenue for documentation (A. P. Smith, 2011).

Through video documentation, the process of musical learning is made visible (A. P. Smith, 2011; Westlake, 2015). Documentation enables the child and the teacher to reflect on, evaluate and make sense of their musical knowledge and register the social construction of knowledge and their accomplishments (A. P. Smith, 2011; Turner & Wilson, 2010; Westlake, 2015). Musical knowledge, often referred to by Elliott (1993) as musicianship, describes the development of a child's practical musical understanding.

Musicianship can also be reflected through the child's made-up notation (Barrett, 2000). The child's made-up notations enable the teacher to access the child's musical thoughts and interpretations (Hargreaves, 1986). Hargreaves (1996) proposed a developmental model of the child's graphic musical representations. The developmental model embraces four different graphical musical representation phases: the enactive phase, figural phase, figural-metric and formal-metric phase. The enactive phase involves scribbling, while the figural phase is single-dimensional, with the child focusing on only one dimension, for example, the rhythm of a piece of music. The figural-metric includes more dimensional illustrations, while the formal-metric phase of graphic representation closely resembles Western notation (Hargreaves, 1996).

The young child can be innovative and reflect on intricate matters (Matthews, 1984). Kanellopoulos (2007) proposes that discussions between the teacher and the child are the first step towards reflection and might shed some light on the child's musical experience. In a study that Carr (2011, p. 259) conducted, she found that young children reflected and created meaning through "revisiting conversations" and documentation of their learning. Hanna (2016, p. 19) interprets the process within documentation as "retrospective" and "prospective". The same documentation that is used to review former visible learning helps to explain and inspire the subsequent construction of knowledge.

2.3.2 Music and Visual Art

Music and Visual Art within the Reggio Emilia classroom are media for self-expression and a means of discovery (Hanna, 2016; Westlake, 2015). Music creates a space for collaboration and reflection, which supports relationship-building. Reflecting on the connection between Music and Visual Art might serve as a convenient way of exploring the role of the teacher and making the construction of knowledge more meaningful for the child. Music and Visual Art are non-verbal languages that activate and build the whole mind (Hanna, 2016; Nelson & Zobairi, 1999). Through Music and Visual Art, children are enabled to learn through a compound mix of relations within their social, emotional and cultural contexts (Hanna, 2014; Nelson & Zobairi, 1999). Hanna (2016) compared Visual Art and Music in her book *The Children's Music Studio: A Reggio-Inspired Approach*. She correlates seven art principles with musical principles: line, colour, texture, value, space, shape and form (Hanna, 2016).

The lines within Visual Art correspond to the melodic line in music; lines within an artwork create pictures, while music melodies create a song (Hanna, 2016). Musical lines refer to the contours in a melody and the ascending and descending nature of the tones (Hanna, 2016). Lines and melodies have a starting and a finishing point (Hanna, 2016). Within the lines of artwork, colour plays a vital role in the emotion evoked and the portrayal of the picture. The warm and cooler undertones of an artwork correspond to the timbre of the music, otherwise referred to as the tone colour (Hanna, 2016). Children easily recognise colours and tone colours, and often prefer one colour or one sound or instrument to another (Hanna, 2016).

Various materials and techniques create texture within art (Hanna, 2016). The artwork's texture is characterised by adjectives such as rough, smooth, hard or soft, while texture can also be created in music through the use of single or multiple instrumentation. Instrumentation creates thick or thin textures in music (Hanna, 2016). Another characteristic of Visual Art is value, the gradations between white and black tones on a canvas. Value in music refers to the flow and balance between loud, quiet, slow and fast (Hanna, 2016). The separation and relationships between objects indicate the spatial features of Visual Art; this spatial relationship also appears in Music, where the relationship between sound and silence and duration are distinct features of the dimension of space in music (Hanna, 2016).

A work of art is comprised of lines, straight and curvy. These lines create shapes on the canvas. Similarly, shapes in music are created through phrases and repetition of phrases (Hanna, 2016). The dimensionality of an artwork refers to the work's form, while the form of a musical composition can be related to the harmony within a musical piece, the arrangement of pitch, and whether notes are played singly or simultaneously (Hanna, 2016).

Music is part of the child's daily existence and plays a significant role in the child's life (Campbell, 2002; Reynolds & Waters, 2014a; Trinick & Pohio, 2018; Westlake, 2015). In a study conducted by Reynolds and Waters (2014a), they found that the child was simultaneously engaged in musical and social interactions, which points to music as a holistic experience for the child. Music is a central theme of play and is immersed in the social play of the child (Westlake, 2015). Music within the Reggio Emilia classroom is a medium for self-expression, a way of discovery, a way to experiment, and research. Music creates a space for collaboration and reflection, which supports relationship-building.

2.3.3 The Music *Atelierista*

The aim of the *atelierista* is not to educate, but instead to assist and steer the child in their explorations and the presentation of their comprehension through *the hundred languages* (Bond, 2018; Hanna, 2014). Music educators have long debated the role and responsibilities of a music *atelierista* (Bond, 2013; Hanna, 2014; A. P. Smith, 2011; Westlake, 2015). Music educators have advocated that music *atelieristas* should be musically skilled with vast musical knowledge as well as being confident and musically flexible individuals (Bond 2018). The music *atelierista* should be able to operate fluidly to respond to the child's enthusiasm and interests, while engaged in the child's musicking and complementing the experience (Biermeier, 2015; Bond, 2018; A. P. Smith, 2011; Westlake, 2015). The role of the music *atelierista* is to suggest active engagements with music, stimulate the child's musicality and encourage musical explorations (Hanna, 2014; A. P. Smith, 2011; Westlake, 2015). The music *atelierista* should empower the child to develop authentic compositions by demonstrating the correct techniques through singing, performing on instruments and movement (Hanna, 2014). The music *atelier* refers to the space where children will participate in music making and where music learning will occur. The use and care of the music *atelier* and the musical instruments are the responsibility of the music *atelierista* (Bond, 2013; A. P. Smith, 2011). To enhance music learning,

integration of the work of the music *atelierista* and fellow teachers is vital, as is communication between them (Bond 2018).

The music *atelierista* supports and collaborates closely with the class teachers, supporting them in the documentation process and promoting music as one of *the hundred languages* of expression. By integrating music deeply into the classroom environment, the music *atelierista* helps teachers recognize and encourage musical expression as a valuable part of each child's learning journey (Westlake, 2015). It is essential for the music *atelierista* to encourage the child's creativity. Creativity is enhanced through multiple encounters, open-ended problems with multiple solutions, and peer collaboration (Biermeier, 2015). The child enjoys creating in partnership with others, which helps to unleash the child's creativity (Biermeier, 2015). A secure, relationship-driven environment is essential for stimulating the child's imagination and creativity (J. Gallagher & Sayre, 2014; Saab & Stack, 2013).

2.4 Relationship-Driven Music Education

The fourth critical element of the Reggio Emilia approach is relationship-driven teaching, which I will unpack in more detail in Chapter 3. Relationship-driven teaching is an approach to education where the teacher sustains the child's comprehensive development through an intentional positive relationship (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999; Wiechmann, 2016). Teachers adopting the Reggio Emilia approach seek to understand the needs of each child by using strategies and interactions to inspire connection (Biermeier, 2015; Covey, 1989; Divoll, 2010; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). The teacher's strategies might include small group learning and teacher-child interaction and dialogue (Gandini, 2011b). Interaction and relationships with people, places and ideas inspire learning (McNally & Slutsky, 2017). Through carefully designed relational encounters, children feel that they grasp and accomplish concepts leading to affirmation, self-approval, self-confidence and a sense of self-worth (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; McNally & Slutsky, 2017).

In the Reggio approach, the interactions with children are used to build a relationship with the child, which establishes a relationship-driven teaching environment (Hamre et al., 2014; Hu et al., 2017). Relationships are integral to the Reggio Emilia approach as they stimulate knowledge creation (Biermeier, 2015). Three key elements influence the child in the Reggio Emilia approach: the parents, the teacher and the environment (Figure 2.5)

(Biermeier, 2015). Malaguzzi believed that development occurs through collaboration; therefore, the child's relationship with the parent, the teacher and the environment stimulates and enables knowledge creation (Biermeier, 2015; Rankin, 2004).

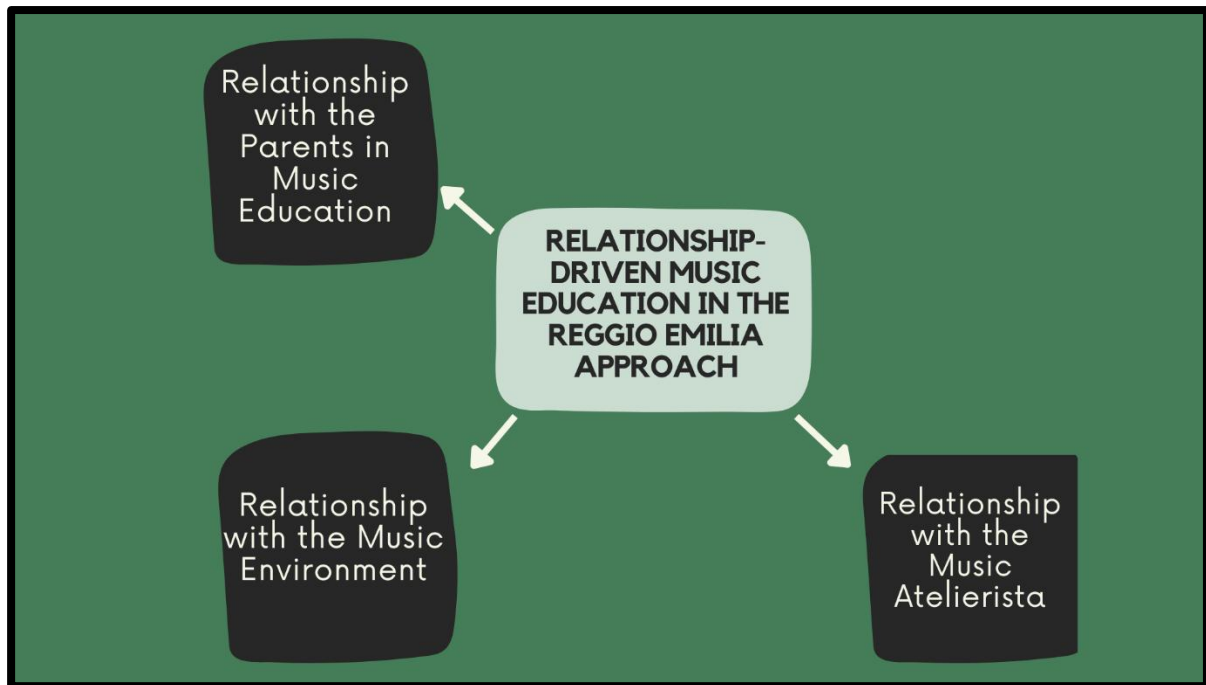


Figure 2.5: Relationship-Driven Music Education in the Reggio Emilia Approach

Relationship-driven music education incorporates the relationship with the parents, the music environment, and the music *atelierista*.

2.4.1 Relationship with the Parents in Music Education

The emotional connection between an adult and a child is crucial in promoting positive development (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Howes et al., 2000; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). Positive development includes higher levels of engagement, motivation and academic performance (National Research Council, 2004). According to Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory, the quality of relationships in the early years of development provides the platform for children to have the liberty to investigate and explore. Children use relationships to establish how they see themselves (Baker, 2006; Hedges & Cooper, 2018).

Within the music education setting, parental collaboration has proven to be crucial (Wills, 2011). De Vries (2009) emphasises the indispensable role that the parent plays in the development of their child's musical abilities. The parent is considered the child's first

music teacher and mentor, and is actively engaged in singing, musical games and playing instruments (Biermeier, 2015; Carlton, 2014; Koops, 2007; Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017; Rodriguez, 2019; Young, 2003). The musical collaborations between the parent and the child contribute to their child's feeling of competence and regulation of emotion in the child, while clear communication is established, which results in a strong bond between the parent and the child (Barrett, 2000; De Grätzer, 1999; G. E. McPherson, 2009). The relationship and collaboration between the parent and the child promote the retention of music, life-long learning of music, achievement in music, and the associated cognitive and emotional benefits (Brand, 1986; Sichivista, 2004; Zdzinski, 1992, 1996, 2013). The parent serves as the role model for their child, and the value the parent ascribes to music and music education serves as a forecast for the musical interaction at home (Ang et al., 2022; Wills, 2011). Collaborations between the parent and the child should exclude disapproval and correction (Littleton, 1991; Neelly, 2001; Taggart, 2000; Tarnowski, 1999). Collaborating with the parent promotes musical exploration (Fox, 1989). An involved and perceptive parent and a teacher who approves and praises the child and stimulates musical explorations directly influence the child's musical abilities (Fox, 1989; Zdzinski, 1992).

2.4.2 Relationship with the Music *Atelierista*

There is a lack of research on the relationship between the music *atelierista* and the child. The music *atelierista* collaborates with the child to broaden their musical ability, knowledge, and understanding (Hanna, 2016; Kenney, 2004). Within this collaborative relationship between the child and the music *atelierista*, emotional support is derived from the emotional bond that is shared between the *atelierista* and the child; it includes the support, learning environment, engagement, commitment and compassion that is offered by the *atelierista* (Blair, 2002; Hamre et al., 2014; Hamre & Pianta, 2007; Hendricks, 2018; Hu et al., 2017). Compassion is intentional and is demonstrated through trust, empathy, patience, inclusion, community and authentic connection (Hendricks, 2018). Children who thrive socially and emotionally are usually exposed to emotional and instructional support (Blair, 2002; Hamre & Pianta, 2007).

The music *atelierista's* instructional support improves the child's thinking skills by encouraging exploration through collaboration and active engagement (Bond, 2018; Hamre et al., 2014; Hanna, 2014, 2016; Hu et al., 2017). The music *atelierista* adopts

various educational strategies within the process of instruction. These strategies include scaffolding, brainstorming, and collaboration when interacting with the child (Biermeier, 2015). The relationship between a child and the music *atelierista*, therefore, complements the experience and the progress of the child musically, psychologically and socially (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Field & Hoffman, 2012; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hanna, 2016; Howes et al., 1994, 2000; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). A positive, collaborative relationship between the child and the music *atelierista* produces higher engagement levels, resulting in better music learning (Hanna, 2016; White, 2020). In addition, a healthy connection between the music *atelierista* and the child allows the Music classroom to be a motivational and safe setting (Hanna, 2014; Steele Royston, 2017). Therefore, once a positive relationship between the music *atelierista* and the child has been established, optimal musical learning will follow (Slater, 2004; Steele Royston, 2017).

This positive relationship between the music *atelierista* and the child is expressed through the mutual understanding between the child and the *atelierista* (Biermeier, 2015). Knowledge creation depends on this relational understanding between the music *atelierista* and the child, and does not emerge from the *atelieristas* intelligence or expertise (Steele Royston, 2017). Although there is a lack of literature on the relationship between the music *atelierista* and the child, it has been established that the music *atelierista* is the designer of the environment and, most notably, a collaborator to aid the child in broadening their understanding (Hanna, 2016; Kenney, 2004).

2.4.3 Relationship with the Music Environment

The environment refers to the classroom and playground surroundings, which consist of a blend of influences on learning: physical influences and psychosocial influences (Makin, 2003). The physical environment contributes to the comprehensive development of the child. A stimulating environment promotes attentive and reflective knowledge creation (Steglin, 2005). Therefore, a healthy relationship with the environment contributes to the significance of the child's knowledge creation (Biermeier, 2015). Within the Reggio Emilia approach, the environment is referred to as the third teacher. The environment as the third teacher needs to be rich and invigorating, encouraging exploration, engagement and building relationships (McNally & Slutsky, 2017; New, 1998). The third teacher stimulates the child's intellect and understanding, while providing opportunities for engagement, visible thinking and further knowledge acquisition (S. Fraser, 2012; New, 1998). Fraser

(2012, p. 118) suggested eight elements to enable the environment as the third teacher: aesthetics, active learning, collaboration, transparency, bringing the outdoors in, flexibility, relationship and reciprocity (Figure 2.6).

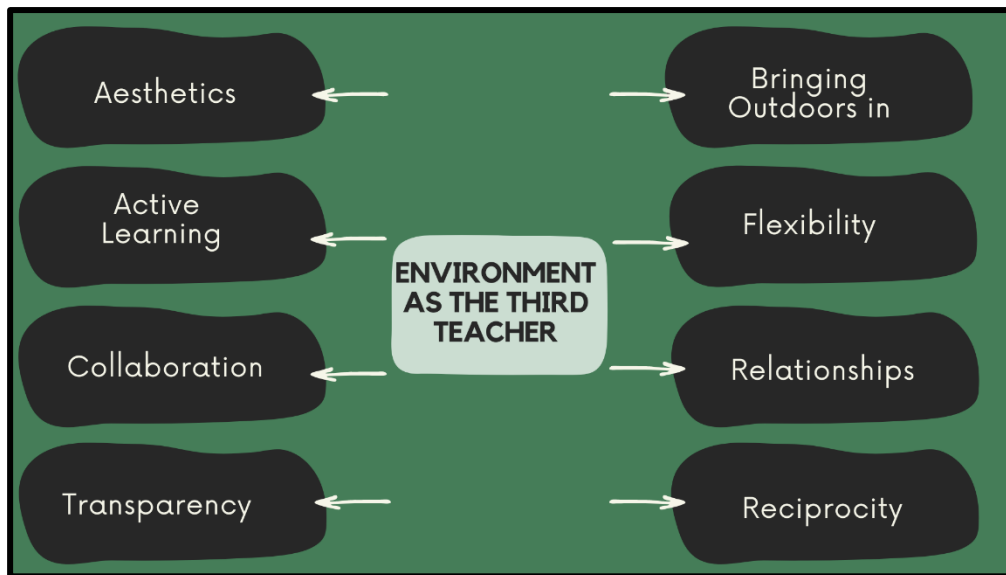


Figure 2.6: Environment as the Third Teacher

As the third teacher, the environment should be aesthetically pleasing. The environment should be an attractive and inviting space for the child, a functional space of fascination filled with elements of interest that present the child's curiosity and knowledge (Biermeier, 2015; S. Fraser, 2012; Gandini, 2011b). The environment as the third teacher should enable active learning through stimulation and access to various materials to enable the child to express understanding. Taggart (2000) affirms that a dynamic and diverse music environment enhances the child's music vocabulary. An inspiring environment includes a variety of musical instruments and supports spontaneous music play (Cooper & Cardany, 2008). Furthermore, a rich music environment allows for varied expression in music, language development and coordination (Cooper & Cardany, 2008). The third teacher should inspire and present opportunities for social and individual knowledge construction, making the child's investigations relevant and worthwhile (S. Fraser, 2012; Gandini, 2011b).

In an active learning environment, the third teacher should also present opportunities to stimulate and inspire the child (S. Fraser, 2012). A stimulating environment with various mediums and materials will excite the child and encourage the child to investigate (S. Fraser, 2012). The active music environment inspires the child to explore musically and

supports sound exploration (Taggart, 2000). Through this active and dynamic learning environment, the child builds knowledge through a variety of sensory adventures (Gandini, 2011a).

As part of the sensory adventures, the child acquires and builds understanding individually and collaborates with others (S. Fraser, 2012). Collaboration is encouraged in Reggio Emilia through classroom setups that inspire cooperation between the child, teacher and parent (Edwards et al., 2011). The classroom setup should enable face-to-face interactions to strengthen relationships within the learning environment (Gandini, 2011b). Cooper and Cardany (2008) suggest an arrangement of paired musical instruments within the musical environment. Paired instruments contribute to collaborative games like turn-taking and copycat, and also allow the adult to model behaviour, therefore enabling collaborative music play between the adult and the child (Cooper & Cardany, 2008).

Communication between the child, teacher and parent in the Reggio Emilia environment should be transparent (S. Fraser, 2012). Through the documentation process, learning is clear and visible. Another aspect of transparency is that the teacher is approachable and willing to gain understanding from other perspectives, including the child's (S. Fraser, 2012). In Bond's (2018) case study of a music *atelierista*, transparency was noticeable as there was a desire from the music *atelierista* to adjust his practices and progress through reflection and regular observation and responses from fellow teachers to design a musical experience as well as create a place of belonging for the child.

The third teacher creates a sense of belonging in the child (S. Fraser, 2012). Taking cognisance of the environment around the child fosters natural, physical and social connections, resulting in a deep respect for the world around the child (S. Fraser, 2012). Yanko (2015) experimented with bringing the outdoors in by taking a class into the forest to investigate the sounds heard. The children studied the sounds of different-sized rocks being dropped into the water and the timbres of rhythms being thumped on branches and tree trunks.

The environment as the third teacher is flexible and welcomes creativity (S. Fraser, 2012). The creation of the environment should take into account the interests of the child (S. Fraser, 2012). Through in-person exploration, the child gains more understanding than is possible only through adult guidance (A. A. Berger & Cooper, 2003). Taggart (2000)

believes in a flexible music environment to develop the child's musicianship, where the child can explore and observe freely. A flexible musical environment, where the child's vocal and instrumental explorations are nurtured, is crucial to developing the child's musical abilities (Fox, 1989; Kenney, 2004, 2004; Taggart, 2000; Tarnowski, 1999). The child can relate musically and socially within a flexible musical environment (Neelly, 2001).

The relationship within the environment as a third teacher refers to the relationship between the child and the various materials. This relationship is also visible in the documentation process, enabling the teacher to see the child's thinking. Cooper and Cardany (2008) recommend puppets in musical play. Puppets inspire the child to engage musically through vocal sounds and communication. The child participates in collaborative play but also enjoys performing for the teacher or parent, allowing the adult to witness the child's thinking (Cooper & Cardany, 2008; S. Fraser, 2012).

A reciprocal environment responds to the child's interests and needs (Edwards, 2012). The teacher is responsible for designing an environment that allows learning through engaging experiences (Edwards, 2012). These engaging experiences are often referred to as provocations and intended to trigger conversations (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007). Provocations are purposefully selected and presented to invite and captivate the child to investigate further (Turner & Wilson, 2010). Yanko (2015) stimulated the children by taking them into the forest to explore all the sounds they heard. This inspiring and stimulating interaction triggered conversation and investigation, and the children were fascinated and quite reluctant to leave the forest area after the lesson. The environment is essential for the child's learning as it stimulates the child's intellect and understanding, while providing opportunities for engagement, visible thinking and knowledge acquisition (S. Fraser, 2012; New, 1998).

Conclusion

In this chapter, Reggio Emilia music teaching has been reimagined through four central elements: the musical image of the child, negotiated music learning, music documentation, and relationship-driven music teaching. These elements have been redefined within a Reggio Emilia framework, showcasing their potential to transform music education. With relationships serving as a cornerstone of the Reggio Emilia approach, the next chapter will explore literature on relationship-driven teaching in Music

Education to further enhance our understanding of fostering positive connections in the music classroom.

INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW OF RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Relationships are the mirrors through which we get to learn about ourselves. Through the experience of relationships and encounters with others, we become aware and discover ourselves (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Buber, 1970; Erricker et al., 1997; Gibbs, 2006; Noddings, 2003; Shields & Edwards, 2005; Stern, 1985; Tacey, 2004). Teaching and learning where the teacher supports the child's comprehensive development through an intentional positive relationship are often referred to as relationship-driven education or a pedagogy of relationality (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999; Wiechmann, 2016). Within the domain of Arts education, explicitly referring to drama, dance, music and visual art, relational pedagogy is a framework that embraces a whole range of relationships (D. Fraser et al., 2007). These multiple relationships include the relationship between the teacher and the child, the relationship and dynamics among peers and, as Fraser et al. (2007) argued, the relationship with the self and the relationship with the creative process. For the music teacher who aims to impart meaningful music instruction, it is essential to approach music education from a perspective that emphasises relationships and care rather than adopt a purely knowledge-driven approach (Hendricks, 2018). A relational approach to teaching music helps the child recognise their evolving identity, supports their creative development, and enhances their well-being in music education (Silverman, 2023a).

Compassionate music teaching prioritises connection and relationality and goes beyond mere musical achievement (Hendricks, 2018; Silverman, 2023a). Silverman (2023a) reflects on various ensembles, including drumming circles, orchestras and choirs, and delves into the relationships that evolve from these groups. These connections include camaraderie among members and a sense of belonging, adding to meaningful teaching and learning (Edgar et al., 2023). Silverman (2023a) argues that the connection is the result of active participation and it is ignited by coordinated and collective music-making.

3.1 A Review of the Literature According to Hendricks' (2018) Six Qualities of Compassionate Music Teaching

Compassion and care are elements of connection that are fundamental to humanity and should be emphasised by the teacher (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Bresler, 2023; Edgar, 2014;

Silverman, 2023a). Compassion is a connection between equals, not just between the one who helps and the one who is being helped. Compassion becomes authentic when we acknowledge our shared humanity (Chödrön, 2007). Compassionate music teaching is planned and purposeful and is defined by six qualities: trust, empathy, patience, inclusion, community and authentic connection (Figure 3.1) (Hendricks, 2018).

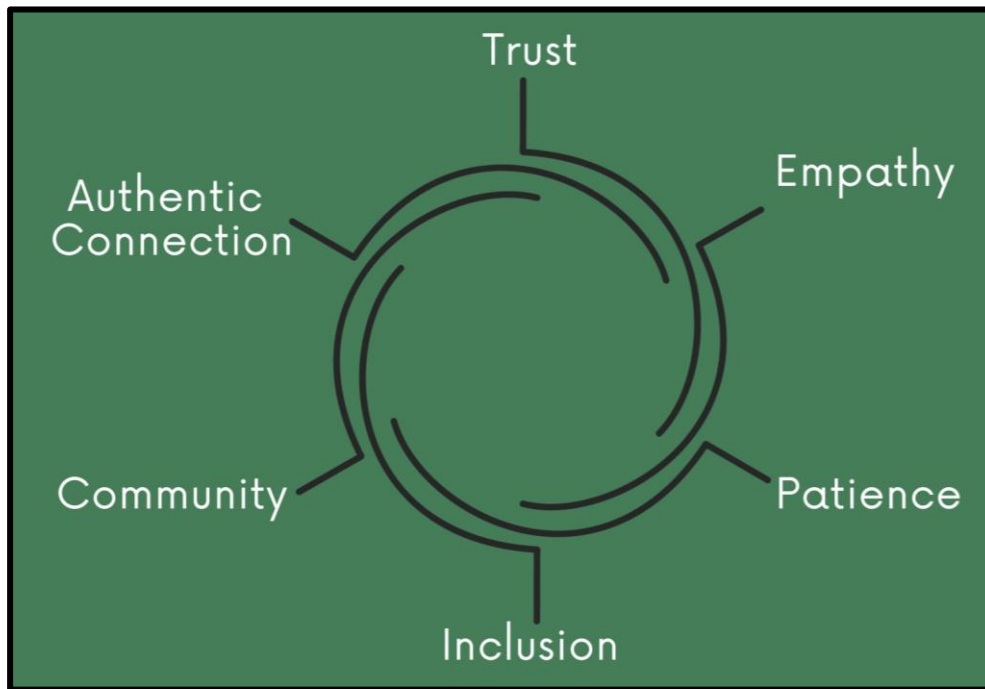


Figure 3.1: Qualities of Compassionate Music Teaching (Hendricks, 2018)

3.1.1 Trust

Trust involves the continuous, mindful management of one's reliance on fellow group members while symbolising having confidence in the ability of others within a group to support collaboration and community (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Trust is the foundation of healthy relationships (Kutsyruba et al., 2015). Compassionate relationships enable the child to gain trust (S. Blake et al., 2007; Eckenrode, 1991; M. T. Greenberg et al., 1983; Murray, 2002). Establishing trust within musical encounters is the cornerstone for cultivating an environment that fosters well-being (Dirks, 2023). Trust embraces seven characteristics: vulnerability, confidence, benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness (Figure 3.2) (Hendricks, 2018, p. 36).

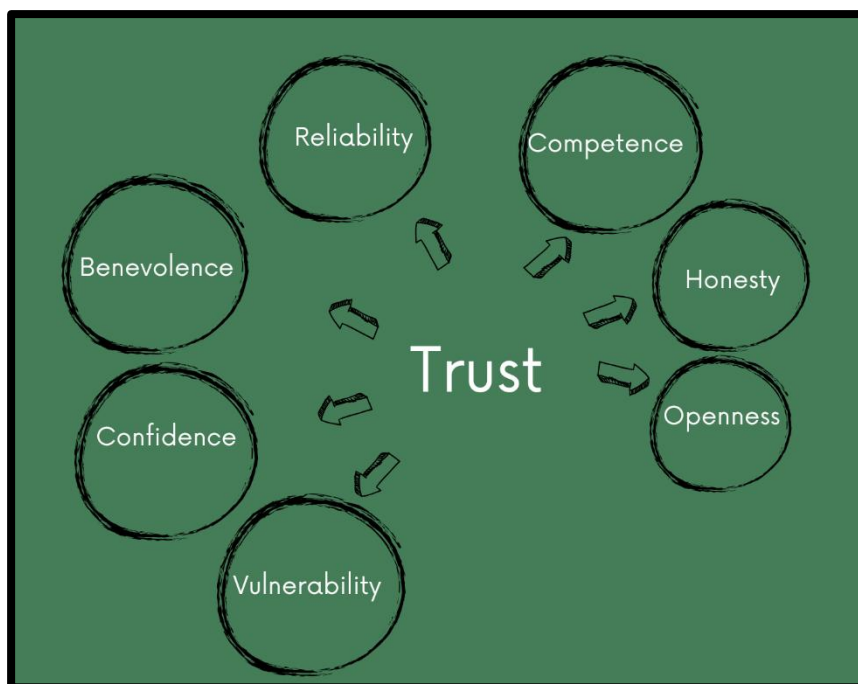


Figure 3.2: Characteristics of Trust (Hendricks, 2018)

The interconnectedness and interdependence within a relationship foster a state of vulnerability. In compassionate music environments, the teacher embraces this vulnerability by giving up control as the superior and only creator of knowledge to become a co-equal contributor to knowledge creation in musicking and music learning (Clark, 2005; Dansereau, 2023; Edgar et al., 2023; Goodrich, 2023; Hendricks, 2018; Thomas-Durell, 2023). In a trusting relationship, confidence pertains to the trust associated with or faith placed in future occurrences, such as committing to a particular task. Confidence involves trusting someone's ability to successfully complete a specific task within a particular timeframe (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Another characteristic that is needed for a caring and trusting relationship is benevolence (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Hendricks, 2018).

Benevolence is a demonstration of care and is closely tied to the concept of relying on the kindness of another (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Hendricks, 2018). It involves the personal conviction that people in the relationship prioritise another individual's well-being and interests and the protection from exploitation of vulnerabilities. Reliability, conversely, depends on the consistency of individuals within the relationship and their predictability, forming the basis for trust. Similarly, competence is vital in establishing trust in the compassionate music classroom, where learners must have confidence in their teachers'

attentiveness and ability to provide the necessary musical skills and guide them towards musical success (Bates et al., 2021; Hendricks, 2018; Silverman, 2023a). Another aspect of building trust is the teacher's honesty and authenticity in their comments and responses in the music class (Hendricks, 2018; Thomas-Durell, 2023). Openness within relationships is associated with our interactions with others and our vulnerability during engagement and sharing. Openness also refers to our confidence in our relations, trusting that our contributions will be respected and not be misused or abused (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

The music classroom is a promising environment where trust can be promoted. Hendricks (2018, p. 49) suggests that the teacher displays integrity through honesty and openness. Learners need to perceive the music teacher as an approachable and attentive listener. The music teacher must demonstrate effective communication skills while being sensitive to the needs of the learners. Furthermore, learners should be encouraged to actively participate in the decision-making in the music classroom, take ownership of their music learning and be willing to share music-learning excitement and goals (Hendricks, 2023a). Promoting empathy among learners by valuing and inspiring new ways of thinking is vital while creating a safe environment. The music teacher should provide the learners with the necessary resources, empowering them for success while encouraging accountability to fellow learners and fostering critical thinking, experimentation and improvisation, while demonstrating compassion and care (Hendricks, 2018; Thomas-Durell, 2023).

3.1.2 Empathy

"Sympathy is me-oriented; empathy is you-oriented" (Howe, 2013, p. 12). Empathy enables an individual to experience another person's emotions and circumstances (Cain, 2019; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). To this end, music can serve as a catalyst, promoting empathy amongst people with different perspectives while establishing community and nurturing compassion and care towards others (Boyce-Tillman, 2020; Hendricks, 2018; Howe, 2013). Teachers need to cultivate greater mindfulness in their own actions to foster empathy among children. Hendricks (2018) suggests adopting a developmental perspective when addressing empathy in the music classroom. The music teacher should demonstrate empathy by being attentive to the child's needs and offering creative experiences that encourage reflection on different viewpoints and perspectives. Open communication should be enabled in the music classroom, while the teacher attends to

the child's nonverbal cues (Thomas-Durell, 2023). Reducing competitiveness is essential to prioritise empathy and cooperation in the music classroom. The music classroom environment should be designed as a safe space where compassion and care are the default responses. Additionally, the music teacher should encourage and model the importance of self-care and display patience to learners (Hendricks, 2018).

3.1.3 Patience

Patience within a compassionate music classroom entails being ready to see the possibility of growth within each child (Hendricks, 2018). Upon acknowledging this possibility, the compassionate music teacher can recognise the necessity of supporting each child in their personal growth journey within their own timeframe (Hendricks, 2018). Compassionate music teaching consequently entails displaying the patience to step aside and empower the child to control their own learning through active listening and, showing an interest in their viewpoints and valuing their contributions (Goodrich, 2023; Hendricks, 2018). Hendricks (2018) described patience as the capacity to perceive learners from a long-term perspective, musically and developmentally. Therefore, the music teacher's role is to enable the learner to move beyond the current moment towards a promising musical future (Hendricks, 2018).

3.1.4 Inclusion

As a compassionate music teacher, embracing the richness of various musical genres and avoiding the notion of superiority associated with a specific style or approach to music is critical (Hendricks, 2018). Hammel et al. (2016) advocate for a learner-centred approach by implementing three fundamental principles. These principles revolve around recognising the unique learning needs of the individual, while empowering them to achieve success by tailoring the curriculum to cater to the individual's needs through multiple levels of engagement (Hendricks, 2018). Through inclusion, we honour the child's needs for music and community (Hendricks, 2018).

3.1.5 Community

Baumeister and Leary (1995) describe the need to belong as an essential, controlling and inescapable force that emerges through meaningful connections within a community. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, the need to belong precedes the basic needs of food and security. Musicking creates suitable circumstances for social

interaction, emotional well-being and belonging in a compassionate environment (Hendricks, 2018). The need for belonging is fulfilled by consistent engagement and positive exchanges within a group and by maintaining a lasting supportive relationship (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Therefore, the compassionate music classroom is ideal for fostering belonging because of the extended collaboration and connection between learners and the teacher (Hendricks, 2018; Hourigan, 2023; Thomas-Durell, 2023).

3.1.6 Authentic Connection

Genuine connection within the musical context requires personal authenticity and is unlikely without a connection with the self (Hendricks, 2018). Music enables us to establish a connection with our inner selves and to convey our true feelings (Hendricks, 2018; Higgins, 2008; Higgins & Campbell, 2010). In a compassionate music environment, the individual feels secure enough to embrace their own vulnerability and to allow for authenticity (Hendricks, 2018; Higgins, 2008; Higgins & Campbell, 2010). The compassionate music teacher possesses integrity and is authentic (Hendricks, 2018; Palmer, 2007), while encouraging and embracing the child's voice and individuality (Hendricks, 2018).

3.2 Role Players within the Relational Music Classroom

From birth, the human being longs for connection and belonging (Dissanayake, 2000). As children develop, they construct and broaden relationships, starting from their home environment and extending to new spaces, peers, and other adults (Erikson, 1950). The relationship with peers, the teacher, self, and musicking will be explored in the following section.

3.2.1 Relationships with Peers in the Music Classroom

Social interactions between peers influence and provide an environment conducive to learning (D. Fraser et al., 2007). Positive learning environments where the child's involvement and input are respected and appreciated are produced through socialisation and positive peer relationships (Karcher, 2008; Riese et al., 2012). An extended amount of time is needed within a collaborative environment founded on trust for authentic and positive relationships to develop in which each person takes the role of a learner (Thomas-Durell, 2023). These positive peer relationships and learning environments promote the child's ability to understand and improve musical skills (Goodrich, 2007).

Relational pedagogy emphasises interconnected and mutually supportive relationships (Noddings, 2003) where the child benefits from social, emotional and intellectual development (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1996). Nurturing the connections and relationships between children establishes compassion and empathy (Hyde, 2008).

3.2.2 The Role of the Teacher in the Music Classroom

The child's enthusiasm for music is acknowledged and embraced by the compassionate music teacher, who also supports the child's passion for music (Hendricks, 2018). The role of the music teacher as a compassionate and reflective individual who contributes to strengthening the connection between teaching and learning will be discussed in the following section (Figure 3.3). Additionally, the role of the music teacher in establishing a safe environment for the child's growth and the dynamic between the music teacher and the child will be explored in the subsequent section.

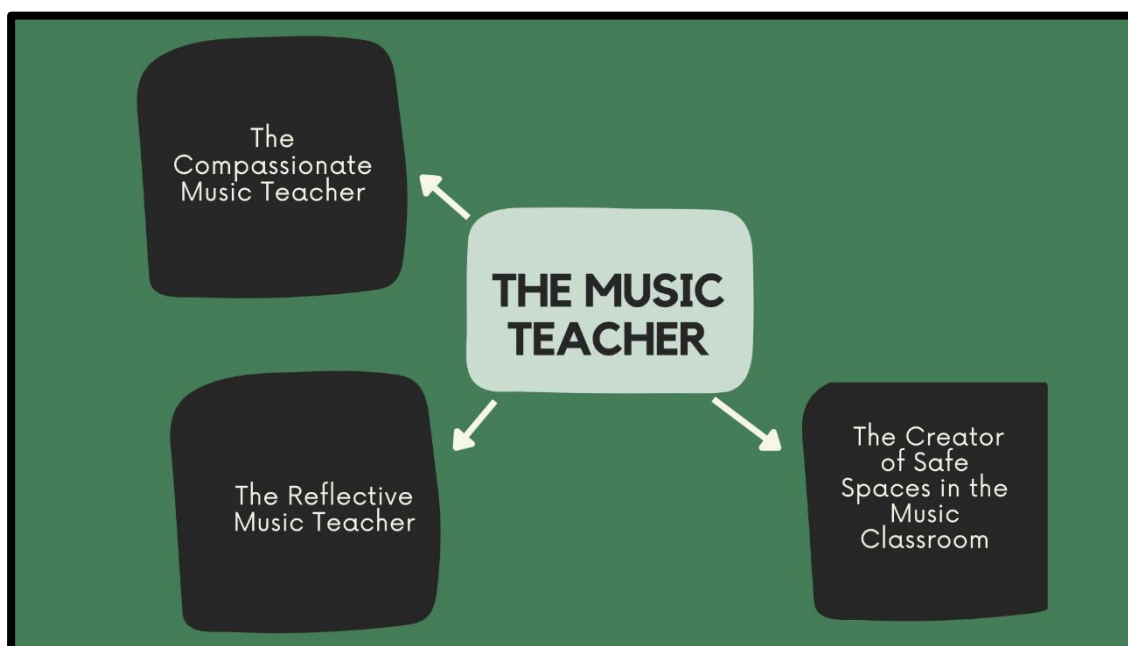


Figure 3.3: The Role of the Music Teacher

3.2.2.1 The Compassionate Music Teacher

The compassionate music teacher empowers the child's musical knowledge to develop spontaneously, while actively listening to and trying to understand the child's viewpoint, taking into account how learning appears through the eyes of the child (Hendricks, 2018). Communication between the child and the music teacher is vital in a pedagogy of relationships (Clark, 2005). The music teacher is willing to listen to the child's verbal and

non-verbal communication and learn from the child, acknowledging that they have a different understanding of the music around them (Clark, 2005; Hendricks, 2018).

3.2.2.2 The Reflective Music Teacher

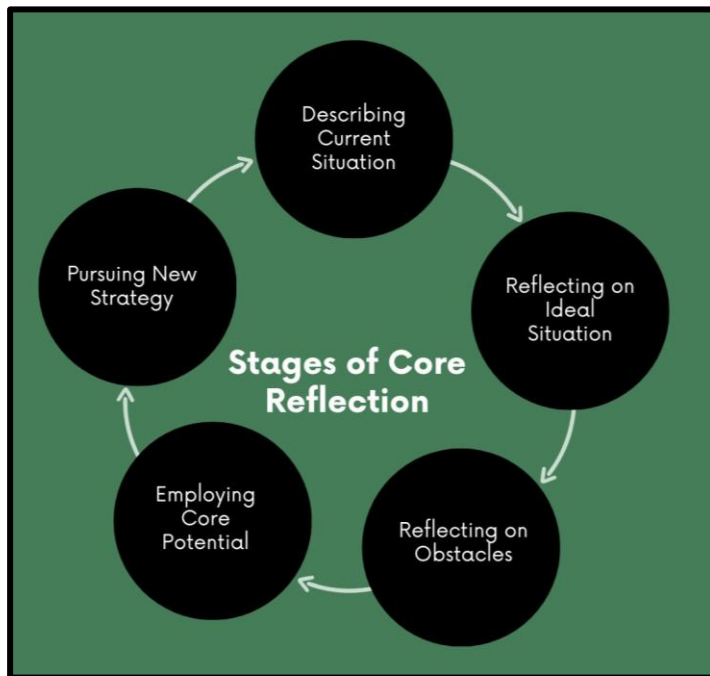


Figure 3.4: Stages of Core Reflection (Korthagen, 2013)

During the stage of describing a current situation, the teacher reflects on the experience and the difficulty they experienced within the situation (Korthagen & Nuijten, 2019). The teacher then persists in reflecting on the ideal situation and their preferences within the situation (Korthagen & Nuijten, 2019). This reflection does not refer to the learning objectives within the music class, but rather the teachers' psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The next stage in the core reflection model is reflection on the obstacle within the situation. However, the purpose is not to reduce the obstacle, but to acknowledge and resolve the difficulty through an alternative point of view (Evelein & Korthagen, 2015). Core reflection (Figure 3.4) focuses on creating a sense of meaning and using core potential to resolve a situation (King & Lau-Smith, 2013; Korthagen, 2013b, 2013a). According to positive psychology, this core potential includes an eagerness, a spirit of enquiry and broad-mindedness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). After employing core potential strengths, the teacher pursues an alternative avenue to engage with the situation (Korthagen, 2014).

3.2.2.3 Creator of Safe Spaces in the Music Classroom

The role of the music teacher is to establish a safe environment for the child's growth. There are various elements to take into account when creating a safe space in the music classroom. The child will participate and thrive in music composition and improvisation if the environment is safe and supportive and fosters empowerment (Boyce-Tillman, 2016). Firstly, the teacher must be emotionally present and actively listen (Falter, 2018; Rinaldi, 2012). Secondly, creating learning opportunities to align with the child's abilities is essential, ensuring they are focused and challenged. When the child focuses on their individual growth, this will eliminate comparisons with peers. Another element to consider is involving all stakeholders in the educational process, including parents (Hendricks et al., 2014). Collaboration and communication between the parent, teacher and child enhance the musical experience (Hendricks et al., 2014; Wills, 2011).

Furthermore, a holistic understanding of a child's well-being and how it affects their music-making can lead to more compassionate teaching (Hendricks & McPherson, 2023). Lastly, teachers should be flexible and employ different instructional methods to cater to the needs of every child. Adapting approaches to ensure the child has rich exposure to music and music-making will enhance the overall learning experience (Hendricks et al., 2014). These safe spaces contribute to intrinsic motivation and active involvement in music, enabling the child to flourish in collaborative spaces (Goodrich, 2021; Hendricks et al., 2014).

3.2.3 Relationship with the Music Teacher

The relationship-driven teacher seeks to understand the needs of each child by adopting strategies and interactions to inspire connections (Biermeier, 2015; Covey, 1989; Divoll, 2010; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Through carefully designed relational encounters, learners feel they can grasp and execute concepts, leading to affirmation and self-approval (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Since the arts, especially music, connect with the child's feelings and personal experiences, teachers have unique opportunities to foster a trusting relationship with the child to ensure expression and emotional engagement with music (D. Fraser et al., 2007; Richardson, 1988). Trust is the fundamental basis for all relationships and entails respect and care. (Hendricks, 2018). Trust is established when a child encounters authentic care, feels a sense of understanding, perceives a teacher's effort to grasp their multifaceted identity, and witnesses a holistic view of themselves from the teacher (Held,

2006; Hendricks, 2018; Thomas-Durell, 2023). The trust between the child, the teacher and the learning environment significantly influences the child as it enables and empowers them to engage in critical thinking, enhances their willingness to learn, improves their abilities and enables them to learn more effectively from a teacher they trust (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Field & Hoffman, 2012; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Held, 2006; Thomas-Durell, 2023). A trusting relationship between a child and a teacher emphasises the teacher's pivotal role in collaborative knowledge creation (Thomas-Durell, 2023).

Within relationship-driven teaching, it is vital for the teacher to actively engage in knowledge creation with the child, functioning as an equal partner (Dansereau, 2023). There is a move from a teacher-centred approach to music education towards the teacher being a co-creator of musical knowledge (Clark, 2005). Engaging in co-creation experiences enhances a compassionate relationship (Hendricks, 2018).

The compassionate music teacher encourages co-musical explorations (Clark, 2005). According to research, the child is born with a competent musical ability (Bond, 2015; Dansereau, 2023; Dowling, 1999; Hodges, 2006; Kisilevsky et al., 2009; Levitin & Tirovolas, 2009; MacGlone et al., 2021; L. J. Trainor, 2005). The relational music teacher, therefore, initiates musical explorations with the child, even if the journey and inquiry are entirely foreign to the teacher (Clark, 2005). Dansereau (2023, p. 107) comments, "The educational priority in a music classroom that reflects a reconceptualisation of childhood is the full and free expression of children as musical beings, rather than their continuous climb to become adult musicians". Consequently, early childhood relational music educators need to create an environment where the child can explore and experiment freely with music and movement (Dansereau, 2023). Allowing the child to explore without the pressure of the outcome-based concept of education, whilst actively listening to the child as a co-creator of knowledge in the music class, creates a compassionate music environment (Dansereau, 2023).

3.2.4 Relationship with Self within the Music Classroom

Relational pedagogy is significant in fostering the child's connection with self. Within the arts (including music), the child's identity takes centre stage; the child articulates his inner world, including his thoughts, feelings and perspective on his world through artistic creation (D. Fraser et al., 2007). The child can uncover aspects of his identity through engagement with visual art, music and dance (D. Fraser et al., 2007). In this process the

child acquires qualities such as perseverance and embraces challenges just as much as he grasps concepts such as rhythm, timbre and expression (D. Fraser et al., 2007). The child is able to enhance his comprehension of his past self and how he is evolving through the arts, because of the memories and emotions that have been evoked (D. Fraser et al., 2007; Noddings, 2003).

Armstrong (2011) maintains that only after you have embraced and focused on yourself will you be able to embrace those around you. Therefore, the acknowledgement of 'self' is recognised as an essential aspect of compassion and self-compassion is needed before compassion towards others can be expressed (Cain, 2019; A. Peterson, 2017). Self-compassion is linked to reduced anxiety, depression and stress (Dreisoerner et al., 2021; López et al., 2018; MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Neff, 2003). Self-compassion is founded on the principles of "self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness" (Oosthuizen, 2024, p. 1).

The first pillar of self-compassion is self-kindness. Instead of self-judgment, self-kindness involves adopting a kind and understanding attitude towards oneself (Dreisoerner et al., 2021; C. R. Rogers, 1951). The second pillar is common humanity, as opposed to isolation; fostering a sense of belonging entails connecting oneself to others rather than withdrawing during suffering (Dreisoerner et al., 2021; Neff, 2003). Common humanity refers to recognising our shared humanity and involves situating our experiences within the human condition, allowing us not to feel isolated within our struggle. This perspective fosters self-acceptance. By acknowledging our fallibility as human beings, we cultivate self-compassion and self-forgiveness, and understand the importance of kindness and forgiveness towards ourselves (Cain, 2019; Hess, 2020; Kelley & Farley, 2019). Mindfulness is the third pillar on which self-compassion is founded. Mindfulness, as described by Dreisoerner et al. (2021) and Kabat-Zinn (1982), is characterised by taking a non-judgmental view towards oneself, contrasting with over-identification, which focuses on problems and negative emotions (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1998, 2008).

Jagers et al. (2019) re-examined the construct of social emotional learning (SEL) and formulated a theoretical framework founded on three pillars: identity, belonging and agency. In a more recent academic endeavour by Edgar et al. (2023), the model developed by Jagers et al. was adapted to incorporate SEL into the context of music education. SEL promotes self-understanding, primarily regarding emotions, identities and

values (Jagers et al., 2019). Through SEL, connection and belonging are cultivated (Jagers et al., 2019). Therefore, the child's relationship with self is developed through SEL in music education and rests on the three pillars of identity, belonging and agency. Self-awareness is nurtured in musical composition, enabling the child to better understand their identity and emotions (Edgar et al., 2023). Collaborative music classrooms create a sense of belonging through empathy, cooperation, mutual creation and interpersonal communication. Agency, as part of the relationship with self, derives from the discussions and embracing of diversity within the collaborative music environment (Edgar et al., 2023).

3.2.5 Relationship with Musicking

Musicking alludes to all the activities that embrace the sphere of music, including performing, listening and composing (Small, 1999). This concept of musicking reestablishes music as a collective pursuit, which should be incorporated into compassionate and relational music education (M. L. Cohen, 2000). Consistent and repetitive involvement in musicking as part of the art-making process is essential because it maintains a relational aspect in teaching and learning.

Through musicking, the child comes to understand both their own abilities and the capabilities, boundaries and potential of music as an art form (D. Fraser et al., 2007). The child develops a capacity to rely on their own sensitivity to the subtleties of the music through these recurrent musicking encounters. When the child plays percussion instruments like a drum or shaker along to music, they must respond and adjust to the changing tempos and dynamics (D. Fraser et al., 2007).

Music can create connections between the child and teacher as well as the child with peers (Ockelford, 2017). For this reason, the music classroom is a crucial space to engage and model care and compassion (Hendricks, 2018; Hourigan, 2023; Thomas-Durell, 2023).

3.3 Outcomes of Relationship-Driven Music Education

Flourishing hinges on relationships and evolves in a milieu of care and compassion (Demaray et al., 2012; Loukas, 2007; O'Neill, 2023). We flourish through care and compassion for others (G. D. Smith et al., 2023). Powell (2022) states that compassionate relationships in music education prepare the music teacher and child to flourish.

Relationship-driven teaching benefits the child holistically and contributes to optimal learning (S. Rogers & Renard, 1999; Wiechmann, 2016). Compassionate music education cultivates emotional well-being, infusing our lives with joy and a profound purpose through being of service to others, resulting in a thriving community and personal flourishing (Jorgensen, 2023; G. D. Smith & Silverman, 2020). The child thrives emotionally, socially, psychologically, spiritually and musically when the relationships among stakeholders are compassionate (Demaray et al., 2012; Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Loukas, 2007; Roux, 2006). The holistic child is able to flourish within a compassionate music classroom (Powell, 2022). Figure 3.5 provides a synthesis of the literature on the child's well-being within a compassionate music classroom.

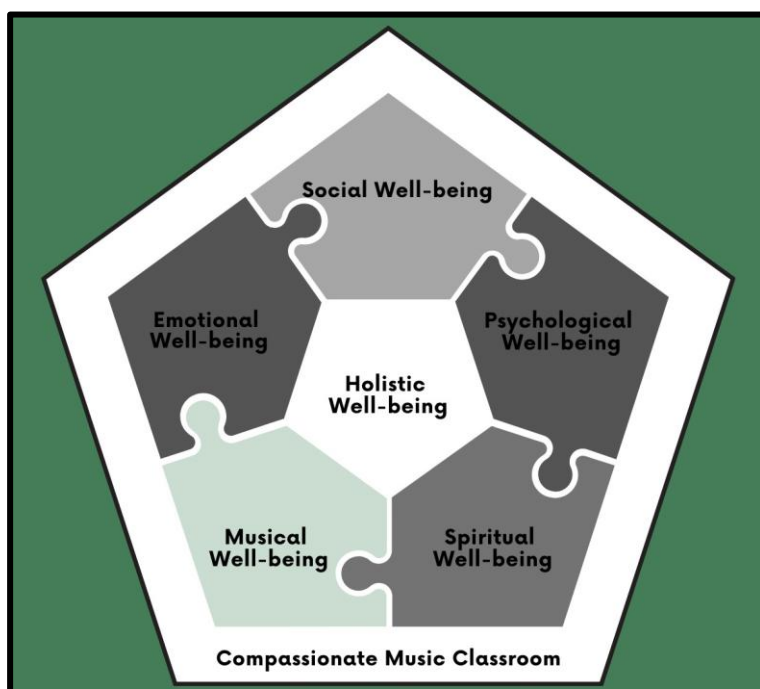


Figure 3.5: Holistic Well-Being of the Child

Relationship-driven music teaching leads to the child experiencing holistic well-being through emotional, social, psychological, spiritual and musical growth (Demaray et al., 2012; Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Loukas, 2007; Roux, 2006).

3.3.1 Emotional Well-Being

Positive emotions such as cheerfulness, contentment, serenity and a zest for life indicate emotional well-being in an individual (Keyes, 2002). Therefore, emotional well-being refers to more positive emotions than negative ones, which leads to a sense of life

satisfaction and the perception of a high quality of life (Keyes, 1998, 2007). “More well-being is synergistic with better learning” (Seligman et al., 2009, p. 294). Noddings (1984) also suggests that education should be a foundation for leading a meaningful life that embraces happiness. Happiness and positive emotions are significant in light of their influence on creativity (Fredrickson, 1998), memory (Fredrickson, 1998) and the fostering of resilience (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). It is important to note that relationships are at the heart of emotional development and well-being (S. Blake et al., 2007; Bowlby, 1969). Compassionate relationship-driven music education is vital for children to enrich their emotional competence and strengthen their composition, performance, and connection with self and others through music (ArtsEdSEL, 2021; Edgar et al., 2023). Music education should empower learners to engage fully in the present moment and collectively flourish, as indicated in Figure 3.5, fostering relational meaningfulness (Hendricks, 2023a; Silverman, 2023b).

3.3.2 Social Well-Being

Social development is essential to the child’s holistic growth and can forecast the child’s success (Divoll, 2010; Gooding, 2009). Social development refers to shaping one’s sense of self (L. Smith et al., 2005). The social bond that results from musicking with others is one of the vital benefits of music (Savage et al., 2021). Berry and O’Connor (2010) claim that relationship-driven teaching and learning develops, supports and enhances the child’s social skill development. Social development and well-being rely on constructive teacher relationships (A. R. Anderson et al., 2004; Collins et al., 2017; Maldonado-Carreño & Votruba-Drzal, 2011). Children experiencing compassionate teacher relationships can regulate, express and manage their own emotions more effectively (Berry & O’Connor, 2010; K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006). The child is also emotionally more secure (Baker et al., 2008; O’Connor & McCartney, 2007), exhibits respect and trust towards teachers and peers (Berry & O’Connor, 2010; Slater, 2004) and forms fulfilling and rewarding relationships (A. R. Anderson et al., 2004; Arbeau et al., 2010; Baker, 2006; Baker et al., 2008; Berry & O’Connor, 2010; J. Cohen et al., 2005; Collins et al., 2017; Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004; K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006). Musicking nurtures care, compassion and connection from a young age (Nguyen et al., 2023). Music and positive teacher-child relationships can assist the kind of communication that unites individuals through shared emotion and empathy (Hong et al., 2017; Miell et al., 2005). Cross (2005) confidently asserts that music is a reliable pathway to successful social interaction.

The child's cognitive abilities develop through social interaction (L. Smith et al., 2005; Van der Veer, 2007). Learning is a social process where cognitive development occurs through interaction (B. Blake & Pope, 2008; L. Smith et al., 2005). Vygotsky (1931) explains that for learning to occur, the child needs to experience a concept on a social level first and then psychologically. It is important to note that positive relationships within the learning environment are vital for the child's cognitive development (B. Blake & Pope, 2008).

3.3.3 Psychological Well-Being

The psychological well-being of an individual can be understood as the way that they perceive their flourishing; this state includes self-acceptance, nurturing and positive relationships, fostering personal growth, finding purpose and direction in life, handling responsibilities effectively, and exercising autonomy (Keyes, 2002). A child's psychological development is a social process (Dunveen, 2005). Positive psychological development and school adjustment have been associated with nurturing, caring and compassionate teacher-child relationships (A. R. Anderson et al., 2004; Arbeau et al., 2010; Baker, 2006; Baker et al., 2008; Berry & O'Connor, 2010; Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). The child's psychological well-being embraces accepting self and positive relationships (Keyes, 2002), while the child feels secure in exploring the social landscape (Arbeau et al., 2010). It has been confirmed that children within compassionate and caring teacher-child relationships achieve greater success (Berry & O'Connor, 2010), are more confident while facing challenges (K. C. Gallagher & Mayer, 2006), feel less rejected and bullied (Gooding, 2009), have healthier self-esteem, and are less likely to be depressed (Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004).

3.3.4 Spiritual Well-Being

Connectedness and relationships are often related to spirituality (Eaude, 2006; Grajczonek, 2010; Lee, 2022; McCarthy, 2013). Caring and compassionate relationships result in the child perceiving his world as trustworthy, which, in turn, nourishes the child's spirituality (Hyde, 2003; Sisk, 2016). It is, therefore, essential to note that the individual's spiritual well-being indicates the nature and quality of their relationship with themselves, others, the environment and God (Fisher, 2008; Hay & Nye, 1998; Hyde, 2008; Paloutzian et al., 2012). Research has shown that spiritual well-being is related to the inclusion, collaboration and attention an individual receives (Bellous, 2006; Sisk, 2016). In situations

where a child receives attention and is recognised, and where collaboration occurs, meaning is made that contributes to the child's spiritual well-being (Bellous, 2006). Spiritual well-being embodies awareness, relationship and unity with self and others, fostering compassion and connection (Hay & Nye, 2006; Moffett, 1994; Westenberg, 2017). The child who possesses a disposition for connection and artistic mediums such as music can manifest human spirituality (McCarthy, 2013).

3.3.5 Musical Well-Being

Musical flourishing is possible once a child's psychological needs are met (Hendricks & McPherson, 2023). When music education is grounded in compassion and care, and is focused on teaching the child not only about music but also through music, it creates a possibility for the child as well as the music teacher to thrive and contribute to the well-being of self and others (Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015). The child's relationship with the music teacher is crucial for musical development and well-being (Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; G. E. McPherson et al., 2012). Creativity is closely linked to the individual's health, and positive music encounters foster well-being and self-esteem (Ruismäki et al., 2011).

The exploration of relationship-driven teaching and learning in this chapter has led to a profound understanding of the elements that comprise a compassionate music classroom and the essential qualities of compassionate music teaching. The relationship-driven approach to teaching and learning encompasses various roles, including those of peers, the teacher as a compassionate music instructor, a reflective music educator and a creator of safe spaces who uses culturally relevant pedagogy. This approach significantly emphasises the relationship that forms the foundation of the child's musical journey. The interaction between learners and their music teacher, the connections established with themselves, and the bond they develop with the act of musicking itself are all integral aspects of the relational pedagogy within the music classroom. As a result, it has been observed that such an approach yields a range of positive outcomes for the well-being of the child, encompassing emotional, social, psychological, spiritual and musical dimensions, creating a holistic and nurturing environment for the child to learn and thrive (Figure 3.5).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed literature on relationship-driven teaching and learning in music education, focusing on the dynamic role of the music teacher to foster relationships. The role of the music teacher included the compassionate music teacher (Hendricks, 2018), the reflective music teacher, and the music teacher as a creator of safe spaces in the music classroom. I also explored relationships within this context, encompassing connections with the teacher, peers, self, and the act of musicking. The outcome of relationship-driven teaching was reimagined as fostering holistic well-being, encompassing social, psychological, spiritual, musical, and emotional dimensions. In the next chapter, the study's procedures will be discussed in detail.

PROCEDURES

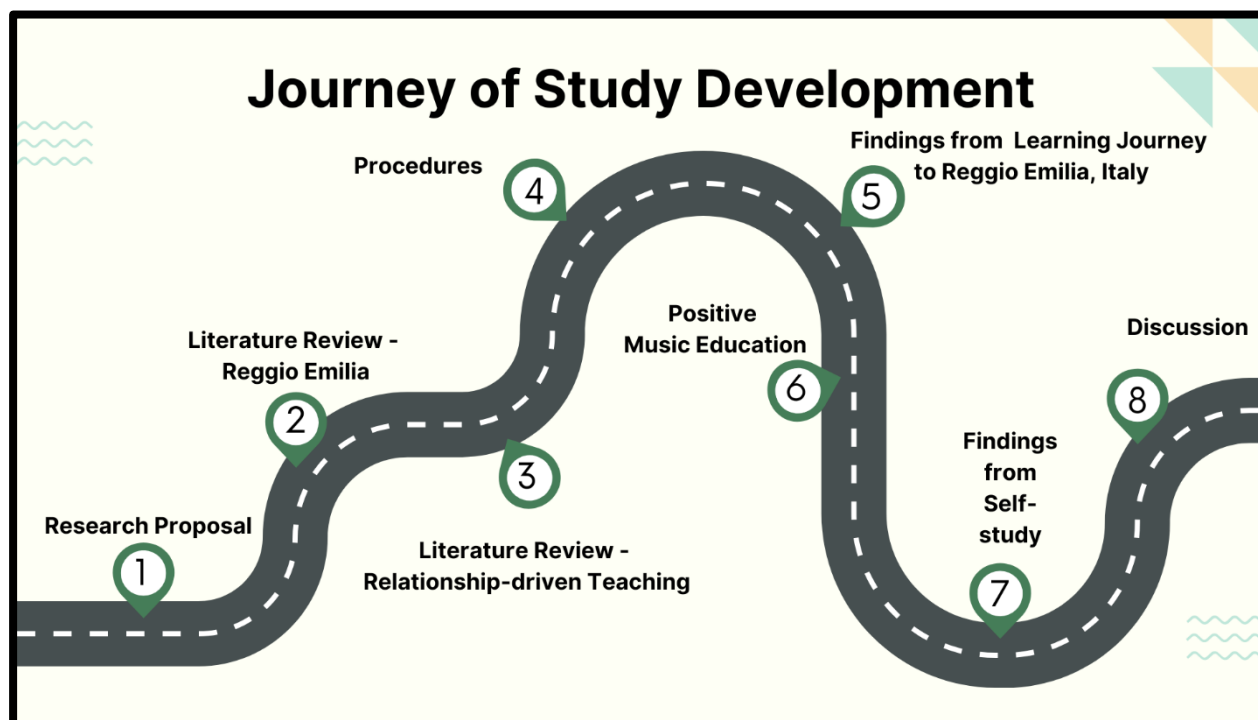


Figure 4.1: Journey of Study Development

The research process (Figure 4.1) was carried out in a way that was both dynamic and iterative throughout this study. Beginning with Chapter 1, which provided an overview of the research project, the investigation then moved on to Chapter 2, which was devoted to providing an in-depth analysis of the Reggio Emilia approach. After that, taking into account the fact that there was a requirement for additional investigation because of the limited literature on the relational aspect, Chapter 3 investigated the literature on relationship-driven education. The procedural features of the self-study were then described in depth in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 highlighted the conclusions that were obtained from a learning journey I undertook in Reggio Emilia, Italy. As the researcher, I started to identify connections with theories and models of positive psychology after analysing the data, from my experiences in Italy, inductively (Saldaña, 2015). In Chapter 6, I undertook the process of abduction, and investigated the topic of PME (positive music education). Abduction guided my investigation of potential meaningful connections between theories and models, enabling me to interpret the data effectively before arriving at a conclusion (Saldaña, 2015). I subsequently engaged in another abduction process to organise the data from my own classroom, in relation to classroom management, as outlined in

Koops's (2018) article on classroom management for early childhood music settings. Following the presentation in Chapter 7 of the results of the self-study that was carried out in the music classroom, Chapter 8 was devoted to a full discussion in which these results were discussed in relation to current scholarly literature. Meaning was continuously sought after and refined throughout the process.

4.1 Introduction

In a self-study, the design includes interconnected stages of research. As the researcher, I am also the "researched" object, so there is a dynamic movement back and forth in comprehending the data and practice (Samaras, 2011). In other words, data collection and analysis commence after identifying the problem or motivation.

This chapter starts by delving into the qualitative roots of this research and explaining the self-study approach. The study participants are introduced, after which the data generation process is clarified. I will then discuss the participants and how critical friends, Reggio Emilia and music education experts were engaged in the study. Finally, the chapter outlines how trustworthiness issues were navigated and the ethical considerations addressed throughout the research.

4.2 Qualitative Roots

This study is rooted in qualitative research methodology and aims to explain my role as a Reggio-inspired teacher in a relationship-driven music class. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) classify self-studies in terms of qualitative research, where researchers are focused on extracting meanings from social phenomena. This study is situated within the social constructivism paradigm. Within this framework, knowledge is understood to be subjective and actively shaped by individuals (Opie, 2004). As the researcher, I delved deeply into the dynamics of relationship-building within the music classroom, exploring the meanings attributed to these relationships. By employing interpretive and descriptive approaches, I captured the complexity of these interactions (Creswell, 2012). Self-studies are characterised by their explorative nature, where knowledge is generated by reflecting on the researcher's practices. I assumed a dual role, as an insider connected with the research practice, and as the self-as-researcher, through dialogue and reflection to understand and develop as a Reggio-inspired music teacher (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009; Samaras, 2011).

4.3 Self-Study Approach

For this study, a self-study approach was used to explicate the meaning of the data. Self-study research entails a personal inquiry situated within one's own unique context, incorporating collaboration with critical friends to emphasise growth and development within a particular setting, while promoting enriched learning through a transparent research approach (Bullock & Bullock, 2019; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009; Samaras, 2011).

LaBoskey (2004b, p. 817) outlined five guidelines for self-study research: “self-initiated and focused; it is improvement-aimed; it is interactive; it includes multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; and, it defines validity as a validation process based in trustworthiness”. This self-study was a personalised situated inquiry, which was located in my music classroom. It was wholly self-initiated and geared toward my own development and improvement as a Reggio-inspired music teacher (Brandenburg & McDonough, 2019).

Theoretical knowledge with practical insight was bridged and interactively explored through this self-study, emphasising my interaction with my critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts, who provided their own perspectives to refine my practice towards fostering relationship-driven practices and also helped me to fulfil my role as a Reggio-inspired music teacher (Brandenburg & McDonough, 2019; J. Loughran, 2007; Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019). The input from critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts enriched my learning journey by prompting deeper reflection (Brandenburg & McDonough, 2019). The critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts will be discussed in more detail in the participant section of this chapter (Refer to 4.5). The emphasis was on my growth and professional development within my teaching context (Bullock & Bullock, 2019; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

4.4 Research Setting

The research setting of this study is the Grade 1 music classroom. The music classroom provided a space where I could understand, reflect and grow as a relationship-driven music teacher (Samaras, 2011). The classroom offers a vibrant and dynamic setting with ample space for movement. The classroom walls are filled with colourful music posters. At the same time, various Orff percussion instruments, djembe drums, an upright piano,

a keyboard, and age-appropriate learning materials are displayed to engage young learners. The Grade 1 learners have three half-hour music lessons per week. This music classroom stimulates curiosity and a sense of exploration.

4.5 Participants

In this self-study, six participants engaged collaboratively to help me reflect and explain my role as a teacher in relationship-driven teaching and learning in Reggio-inspired music. Within this group of participants, the researcher took on a dual role as both the investigator and the subject of inquiry. The study fostered a rich exchange of perspectives and insights, supported by two critical friends who provided invaluable feedback and guidance, along with the expertise of two Reggio Emilia specialists and two education experts. This multidisciplinary team contributed through personal experiences, theoretical knowledge and practical expertise to enrich the research process.

4.5.1 The Researcher

In the context of a self-study, the researcher takes on a unique role as both the researcher and researched subject of the study. In other words, a self-study is characterised by a self-initiated approach, where the researcher autonomously chooses to investigate their practice (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). My practices were researched to understand my position within the research context (Bullock & Bullock, 2019; Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019). I assumed the principal role as the primary participant in this study, a reflexive researcher to question in order to discover my position within the research process (R. Berger, 2015; Finlay, 2002; J. Loughran, 2004; Luttrell, 2019).

While not actively teaching in a Reggio-affiliated school, my immersion in the Reggio Emilia approach has been underway through professional development courses at AREA (Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance). An invaluable experience was my participation in the International Study Tour in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in November 2023. This tour provided 32 hours of professional development and a comprehensive exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach, covering its historical background, the concept of *the hundred languages of children*, analysis of documentation, consideration of children's rights, examination of school dynamics, exploration of educational spaces, and emphasis on parental involvement in the learning process. Beyond theoretical aspects, I visited various Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools in the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, as well as observed

the Reggio Children exhibitions, ReMida (an educational centre utilising recycled materials), and the Reggio Children Documentation and Educational Research Centre located in the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2: The Loris Malaguzzi International Centre

During the self-study, co-participants, critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and educational experts contributed to my reflexive research through their engagement in the discussions, semi-structured interviews and e-mail exchanges (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Chang, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Cole & Knowles, 1998; Hauge, 2021; J. Loughran & Northfield, 1998).

4.5.2 Critical Friends

The critical friends in this self-study served as co-participants who engaged in direct observations and semi-structured interviews. Their significance in this self-study was their ability to collaborate with the researcher in co-constructing knowledge, challenging assumptions and reframing practices (Fuentealba & Russell, 2016). Assuming the role of a critical friend demands dedication, trust and support (Schuck & Russell, 2005). Within the context of this self-study, critical friends undertook observations during Reggio-inspired music lessons and participated in discussions. The careful selection of critical

friends was vital as it influenced the validity of the feedback that I received. My critical friends contributed diverse perspectives and insights. I approached Natasha and Naomi⁵ to form this support network, seeking their commitment as my critical friends. Natasha is known for her incredible relationships with Grade 1 learners. She also has three daughters of her own and has over 20 years of teaching experience. Naomi, with over 30 years of teaching experience and a strong focus on relationship-driven teaching and learning, serves as a school's Headmistress.

4.5.3 Reggio Emilia Experts

The Reggio Emilia experts in this study are co-participants and were involved through e-mails, WhatsApp messages and phone calls. Within the context of this self-study, Reggio Emilia experts supported me with regular communication to check when I have a Reggio-inspired music lesson. I would ask for advice often and get their perspectives on the different content of my lessons. The Reggio Emilia experts were available for discussions. The careful selection of Reggio Emilia experts was vital as it influenced the quality of my lesson content and delivery. These Reggio Emilia experts contributed diverse perspectives on and insights into my teaching practices. I contacted Sharon, an *atelierista*⁶ and a passionate Reggio educator, to join this support network. Sharon has been to Reggio Emilia in Italy twice, and her close family initiated the Reggio alliance in Africa. I also contacted Angela. Angela has been an *atelierista* for over ten years and started a Reggio Emilia blog in 2020. Angela had a young daughter at the time of this study and had visited Reggio Emilia twice.

4.5.4 Music Education Experts

The music education experts were co-participants in the study. Two external experts in music education were involved in my self-study. They were available for weekly discussions and shared their perspectives on my practice, lesson plans, and what they had read in my weekly reflections. I made contact with Helena, who is a seasoned expert with over two decades of experience in tertiary music education. She is a passionate

⁵ All participant names used in the study are pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

⁶ An *Atelierista* is responsible for the *Atelier* or Art studio. This individual plays a pivotal role in nurturing children's creative growth through exposure to *the hundred languages*, while assisting fellow teachers in tasks related to documentation and curriculum (Edwards, 2012).

advocate for the transformative power of music and human connection. Renowned for her dynamic approach and deep commitment to relational learning, she continues to inspire generations of music educators. The second music education expert is Michelle. Michelle, with more than a decade of experience, has been at the forefront of shaping foundation music education, leading multiple initiatives that inspire young learners through music. Their influence extended to both the quality of my lessons and the enrichment of my content (Ortlipp, 2008; Samaras, 2011).

4.6 Data Collection Procedures

A self-study approach requires collecting data from diverse sources to enhance the study's credibility (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Apart from increasing the trustworthiness of my research, as the primary participant and data collector, I decided to gather data from various sources to broaden the scope and explain the teacher's role within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired music classes in more detail. The data consequently included multiple sources, including 1) my personal reflections from a learning journey in Reggio Emilia, Italy; 2) reflexive journal entries on my role as a Reggio-inspired music teacher within a South African educational context; 3) semi-structured interviews involving critical friends; 4) correspondence with experts on the Reggio Emilia approach; and 5) discussions with music education experts (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; J. Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019).

4.6.1 My Personal Reflections from a Learning Journey in Reggio Emilia, Italy

Through professional development courses by the Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance, I have been actively exploring and expanding my knowledge of the Reggio Emilia approach. I collected and reflected on my voice notes, written notes and photos from the International Study Tour in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and through school visits to Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools in Reggio Emilia. Furthermore, I reflected on my experience at the Reggio Children exhibition and the ReMida recycled material exhibition.

4.6.2 Reflexive Journal Entries on my Role as a Reggio-Inspired Music Teacher

Drawing on the perspectives of King and LaRocco (2006) on how journaling enhances reflective thinking, I kept a reflective journal, which served as a personal chronicle, documenting my individual reflections and activities in my Music classroom. Journaling

empowers individuals to articulate their interpretations and assessments of specific events and processes (Göker, 2016). Journaling allows the researcher to participate in an internal dialogue and unveil their inner thinking (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). My journal entries enabled me to reflect on my teaching (Addendum C), while making my thinking and experiences visible to myself and the reader. As I documented and reflected on my experiences, observations and thoughts, I gained a deeper understanding of my practices. I sought feedback and perspectives from my critical friends and the Reggio Emilia experts, which improved and enriched my teaching (Ortlipp, 2008; Samaras, 2011).

4.6.3 Semi-Structured Interviews Involving Critical Friends

After lesson observations from the critical friends, constructive comments and provocative questions emerged during the semi-structured interviews. The questions used for these interviews can be found in Addendum B. Discussions evolved beyond mere interviews. The feedback transformed into dynamic discussions where questions, opinions and ideas regarding my role as a Reggio-inspired music teacher within a relationship-driven context were exchanged (J. Blake & Gibson, 2021). These discussions consequently encouraged me to explore new ways to improve and develop my practice (J. Blake & Gibson, 2021). These discussions were audio recorded and transcribed (Addendum P).

Samaras and Freese (2006) emphasise that self-study extends beyond personal inquiry to also incorporate interactive and interpersonal dimensions. Critical friends played a pivotal role in this context, critiquing my interpretations and contributing their perspectives on situations, experiences and thoughts (Samaras, 2011). I reflected carefully on meetings with my critical friends to enable me to make sense of our discussions.

4.6.4 Discussions with Experts on the Reggio Emilia Approach

I engaged with experts on the Reggio Emilia approach through personal meetings, attendance at various exhibitions, online training sessions, e-mail and WhatsApp correspondence. My approach to self-study extended beyond personal inquiry and embraced the interactive and interpersonal dimension, as self-study research involves regular interactions throughout the research process (Samara & Freese, 2006). Correspondence (Addendum P) with the Reggio Emilia experts enabled me to refine my teaching and lesson content to align with the Reggio Emilia approach. The

correspondence made the development of thoughts and ideas visible to the reader (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

4.6.5 Discussions with Music Education Experts

I engaged in weekly discussions with two anonymous music education experts. These experts actively engaged with my lesson plans and reflections, offering valuable critiques that allowed me to enhance and enrich my teaching approach and lesson content. We engaged in collaborative cycles of lesson design, instruction and reflection, while taking into account the specific needs of the girls in my class. These music education experts gained insight into the dynamics within my class through recorded videos capturing a range of their music-making moments.

4.7 Reflexive Data Analysis

The analysis of data was consistent and ongoing throughout the entirety of the study (Gísladóttir et al., 2019). I analysed the data from my learning journey and then analysed my reflections on my teaching and communications with Reggio Emilia experts, critical friends and anonymous education specialists weekly. The regular and ongoing data analysis allowed me to be subjective as a researcher and develop and improve my lessons and practice (Gough & Madill, 2012).

I used reflexive thematic analysis to delve into, dissect and understand my data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Gleeson, 2011; Langdrige & Hagger-Johnson, 2009). Embracing a reflexive stance, I remained subjective in the data collection process, continuously questioning and probing its significance (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Throughout the analysis, I reflected on my assumptions, expectations, decisions and behaviours, fostering a reflective awareness of my role as a Reggio-inspired, relationship-driven music teacher in shaping the interpretation (Finlay & Gough, 2003).

Recognising that reflexivity is an ongoing process rather than a final destination, I embraced the continuous process of introspection. I acknowledged my assumptions and even took a step back to reflect on how my assumptions shaped my research (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This critical reflection involved actively considering my role as a relationship-driven teacher in a Reggio-inspired music class (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I critically examined my teaching methods, the content and structure of my lessons, reflecting on my motives and the influence of my research (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The researcher's positionality within the research process refers to the researcher's subjective stance shaped by personal background, experiences and beliefs, which influence the research process and outcomes. Teaching music has profound significance for me, as I firmly believe in its transformative power to shape the holistic development of a child. The child engages with music, emotions, creativity, and cognition through music education, fostering a well-rounded learning experience. Central to my approach is cultivating relationships built on compassion and care, recognising that these connections are fundamental in nurturing a child's innate curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. This philosophy resonates deeply with the Reggio Emilia approach, which views the child as capable and resourceful, deserving of respect and agency in their educational journey (Edwards, 2012). Embracing this perspective, I am committed to creating environments where children are empowered to explore, create and express themselves freely through the language of music, fostering a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

Braun and Clarke (2021, p. 6) state that the thematic reflexive analysis process has six phases. These phases are: "Familiarising yourself with the dataset, coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes, refining, defining and naming themes, and writing up".

4.7.1 Data Familiarisation

I deeply immersed myself in the data, engaging in a thorough process of reading, re-reading, making notes, and profoundly pondering, all in pursuit of gaining a comprehensive understanding and uncovering the underlying meanings of the dataset and, subsequently, my experiences and practice (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

4.7.2 Data Coding

Various forms of textual data, including exchanges with Reggio Emilia experts, transcribed semi-structured interviews and discussions with critical friends, discussions with music education experts and weekly reflection logs, were consolidated into two document groups in a single heuristic unit within ATLAS.ti 24 (Frieze, 2014). The first document group included experiences in Italy, whereas the second document group comprised data from my music classroom. After familiarising myself with the data, I systematically worked through the dataset. With reference to my research question, I highlighted relevant and meaningful data items, grouped them and assigned them

descriptive codes in ATLAS.ti 24 (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I assumed the role of the 'consciously curious' researcher, as described by Trainor and Bundon (2020, p. 9), attending to all the different experiences coded in the data and trying to make sense of and interpret the data captured from the experiences. Meaningful parts in the data were assigned only one precise and descriptive code (Braun & Clarke, 2021). My analytical involvement with the dataset developed my awareness and understanding of the data and ensured a richer coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Throughout my data coding process, I continuously compared new data with previously coded data, seeking to interpret the meaning of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Reflecting on my coded data, I sought feedback from my promotor to ensure credibility and thoroughness.

4.7.3 Initial Theme Generation

I met with my promotor for the initial theme generation. Together, we scrutinised every code and asked relevant questions to ensure accuracy and significance. Through ATLAS.ti 24, we generated the initial themes. These themes with similar underlying meanings were identified through codes that could address the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Leavy, 2017; Pinnegar et al., 2020).

4.7.4 Theme Development and Review

The themes developed and evolved throughout the data analysis process, requiring an ongoing review and refinement. As the researcher, I actively constructed the themes through interaction with the data and my promotor (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I had to remain aware of my own assumptions that underpinned my approach while reflecting on the implications of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The process of analysing the data and identifying themes was both creative and dynamic (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

4.7.5 Theme Refining, Defining and Naming

I participated actively in developing themes, reflecting on the research question, and trying to explain the teacher's role in a Reggio-inspired music class (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Subsequently, I repeatedly revisited these themes, scrutinising them to ascertain their depth, significance and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I also analysed the interconnections between themes, guiding their development over time.

4.7.6 Writing Up

To ensure the validity of my findings, I provided detailed explanations and descriptions for each theme, ultimately weaving them into a coherent narrative that addressed the core of my research inquiry (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I was fascinated by delving into the significance of the teacher's role within a music teaching environment inspired by the relationship-focused principles of the Reggio Emilia approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021). My focus was on embracing the complexity and acknowledging the contradictions inherent in the role of the teacher, refraining from the temptation to package the findings neatly into simplistic explanations. Throughout this process, I acknowledged the need to tolerate a certain level of uncertainty (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

4.8 Trustworthiness

Researchers must take into account the aspect of validity and reliability, recognising their influence on the quality of the findings (Golafshani, 2003). This consideration extends to the stages of data collection and analysis. In the context of self-study, the trustworthiness of the findings is essential as one is portraying one's personal practices through sharing and discussion (LaBoskey, 2004a).

I adopted two strategies to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings in this study. Firstly, recognising the intrinsic collaborative nature of self-study, I actively integrated diverse perspectives into the research process (Kosnik, 2001; J. Loughran, 2004; Schuck, 2002). This collaboration enhanced the study's credibility, validity and trustworthiness (Kosnik, 2001; Schuck, 2002; Schuck & Russell, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2016). These collaborations refer to critical friends, experts in the Reggio Emilia approach and educational experts. My critical friends, Reggio Emilia and music education experts critiqued my practices, offered a range of perspectives, and helped me interpret scenarios and situations. Engaging in ongoing discussions with collaborators was pivotal in extracting insights from my practice. Their role extended to promoting and challenging perspectives on practices and values, fostering a holistic view of the data, while subverting preconceived notions (Kroll, 2005; J. Loughran, 2007; Schuck & Russell, 2005). As experienced educators and mentors, these co-participants contributed to the credibility of the study and ensured its validity (Schuck & Russell, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2016).

Secondly, the integrity of this self-study lies in its presentation of genuine experiences within my practice (M. L. Hamilton et al., 2020). I explicitly explained the data collection process to ensure transparency (A. Feldman, 2003). Moreover, a clear account of how the narrative was developed from the data was provided (A. Feldman, 2003). Rich reflections, discussions and dialogue validated the data, grounding it in its context and allowing readers to connect authentically with the data. I offered the reader a holistic view of the self-study process, incorporating both positive and negative aspects to provide a comprehensive perspective (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; A. Feldman, 2003).

Through my reflections, I meticulously detailed my journey of personal and professional development (A. Feldman, 2003). This narrative was carefully crafted to provide readers with a relatable and relevant understanding of my growth (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). With a background in the music classroom, my engagement in this field allowed me to delve deeper into the significance of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This prolonged involvement and collaborative reflections with my promoters enabled us to uncover nuanced layers of meaning within the data (Gísladóttir et al., 2019). My two promoters' comments and probing inquiries were valuable tools for reflection, enriching my understanding and insights derived from my work's practical aspects. Their guidance and constructive feedback spurred alternative explanations and interpretations, enriching the study (Bullock, 2020).

A Statement on AI Use

In the post-plagiarism era, where brain-computer connections, neurotechnology, and artificial intelligence are commonplace in daily life (Eaton, 2023), I sparingly used AI tools such as ChatGPT to paraphrase, combine ideas, refine written content, and offer different points of view to encourage the writing of this thesis. During the writing process, these tools enhanced the clarity of the argument and encouraged different points of view. Eaton (2023) states that artificial intelligence doesn't make people less creative; it makes them more creative. I conducted the study, including the data analysis and the conclusions independently, as I believe that using AI to generate ideas and then present them as your own represents a complete lack of integrity. As this study was about personal relationship-driven teaching and learning, AI would not be able to incorporate all the complexities; as Marks (2022) has noted, AI may never be able to capture some parts of human

intelligence, creativity and relationships. Furthermore, AI was used as a language editor to improve the way ideas were expressed and to broaden the range of thinking.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a vital role in any research involving human participants. The ethical landscape takes on unique nuances in a self-study, where the researcher assumes a more involved role than a neutral outsider. Self-study is the study of self in order to enable practice improvement through reflection (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Kitchen, 2019). In this self-study, I was consequently the researcher and the research subject (Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004).

I focused on my position as a relationship-driven music teacher within Reggio-inspired music lessons, and the data collection predominantly relied on me as the primary source supplemented by insights from critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts. While not a collaborative self-study, negotiating meaning with these experts introduced the concept of "relational ethics", as described by Cuenca (2020, p. 472). Resolving relational ethics involved establishing common ground with critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts, exploring how I could articulate my role in relationship-driven music teaching within Reggio-inspired lessons.

First and foremost, I diligently pursued ethics clearance, which was granted by the North-West University's Ethics Committee, BaSSREC, in line with the university's research regulations (Addendum N). Secondly, I was meticulous in obtaining informed consent from all participants (Addendum M), including the school's Headmistress, critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and music education experts, anticipating no harm to the participants' well-being (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). Seeking consent involved proactive engagement through meetings where the purposes of the research were thoroughly discussed, fostering participant understanding and receptiveness. Participants received consent forms (Addendum M) and comprehensive informational materials outlining the study's objective. Participants willingly permitted future contact, ensuring an ongoing dialogue for inquiries or consultations.

Thirdly, a commitment to confidentiality and anonymity was maintained throughout the study. Informed consent (Addendum M) was given to include the contributions of critical friends, Reggio Emilia experts and Music education experts with the assurances that their

identities would remain undisclosed and their participation treated with strict confidentiality (Samaras, 2011; Sullivan et al., 2016). Using pseudonyms ensured privacy, anonymity and confidentiality across all facets of the research process. Moreover, anonymity was ensured by creating composite characters to safeguard the participants' identities (Muncey, 2010). These composite characters developed from reflections and notes gathered during the study, therefore preventing any possibility of disclosing the participants' identities (Muncey, 2010). Furthermore, the participants were assured and reminded that they could withdraw their involvement during the research process without facing any consequences.

Self-study research also entails an ethical obligation of self-care ethics towards the researcher. I committed to avoiding harm to participants and myself and ensured that the research process would benefit all involved. Given the introspective nature of this self-study, I prioritised my psychological well-being by consulting a psychologist monthly during the data analysis phase (Pinnegar & Murphy, 2019). This proactive approach safeguarded my mental health and contributed to my professional growth as an educator, highlighting the reciprocal benefits of the research endeavour.

4.10 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to outline and elaborate on the study's research design. The chapter provided a comprehensive description of the procedures followed for this self-study. Commencing with an exploration of the qualitative nature of the study, I delved into an examination of how self-study aligns with qualitative research principles. The chapter also introduced the participants and co-participants. Various data collection techniques, as well as reflexive thematic analysis, were discussed. Furthermore, the chapter described the procedures to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings as well as ethical considerations. This chapter provided an outline of the design, implementation, and ethical underpinnings of the self-study. In the next chapter, my research journey to Reggio Emilia, Italy, will be discussed.

MY RESEARCH JOURNEY TO REGGIO EMILIA, ITALY

This chapter is one of two to present the findings of my thesis. The data collection for this chapter took place in Reggio Emilia, drawing from several sources: daily presentations from experienced *atelieristas*⁷ (refer to Addendum A for detailed schedules and content), direct observations during visits to various schools within the town, and in-depth conversations with the *atelieristas* working in these schools. For the analysis, I used the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti 24, which allowed me to systematically code and analyse the collected data, revealing patterns and insights relevant to my research.

It was late autumn of 2023, in the month of November, when I embarked on an enriching International Study Tour (Addendum A) to Reggio Emilia, Italy, where I conducted a self-study investigating the role of the teacher in grade 1 Reggio-inspired music classes. This journey was part of my degree, Doctor of Philosophy in Visual and Performing Arts in Music. The purpose of the trip was to enhance my practice as a class music teacher by immersing myself in the foundational principles of the Reggio Emilia approach. My primary interest lies in the concept of relationality in the Reggio Emilia approach. I consequently sought to deepen my understanding of the teacher's role in fostering relationships within the environment of a musical classroom.

I arrived in Reggio Emilia feeling a mixture of excitement and uncertainty. I found myself in a completely unfamiliar place, not knowing where to go or what to expect next. My Italian was very broken, and I soon realised it was better to converse in English, although I found that many of the locals were not fluent in English. Unlike many other delegates, fortunate enough to have their entire learning journey covered by sponsorships or grants, I had taken a different path. I am deeply grateful to North-West University in South Africa for awarding me a faculty bursary to cover the International Study Group course fees. I also invested personal resources to travel to Italy, fuelled by a profound commitment to enhance my professional practice and a genuine passion for the Reggio Emilia approach.

⁷ The educator responsible for the 'art studio' or *atelier*. This educator aids the children within their creative development and also serves as support to the other educators with documentation and curriculum needs (Edwards, 2012, p. 379).

Travelling alone added to the sense of adventure and apprehension. I did not have the comfort of familiar faces or companions with whom to navigate or share this new experience. The streets of Reggio Emilia were new and foreign, and I had to rely on my determination to make the most of this opportunity (Figure 5.1). Nevertheless, I was eager to immerse myself in the learning environment and connect with other teachers and researchers who shared my passion for the Reggio Emilia approach and relationality in education.

This mostly self-funded journey represented more than mere professional development for me; it demonstrated a personal commitment to growth and learning. Every step I took in Reggio Emilia was a testament to my dedication to bringing back valuable insights and practices to enrich my role as a class music teacher. The uncertainty and solitude I felt upon arrival soon gave way to profound and transformative experiences that would shape my teaching approach significantly.



Figure 5.1: A Street in Reggio Emilia

Upon arriving at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre in Reggio Emilia (Figure 4.2) early that frosty Monday morning, I attended a welcoming presentation by Cristian Fabbi (2023), the president of Reggio Children, which profoundly set the tone for the entire study tour. The central message of this presentation was the idea of the teacher as a vehicle of peace. This concept was inspiring and immediately resonated with me. He suggested that the role of a teacher transcends traditional boundaries, and it became even more evident to me that the role of a teacher is multifaceted and complex. The teacher's responsibilities extend far beyond mere instruction and classroom management. Realising the breadth and depth of the teacher's role within the Reggio Emilia approach was a transformative experience for me. The study tour spanned 32 hours of intensive workshops (Addendum A), during which I delved into various aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach.

I explored the different roles and responsibilities of Reggio Emilia teachers, delved deeper into designing practical learning experiences and environments, and visited schools in the Reggio Emilia district. I was fortunate to visit schools renowned for their strong musical environments, engage in meaningful conversations with local educators, and closely examine their learning documentation. Additionally, I visited several *ateliers*, which provided further insights into the creative processes underpinning the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

I meticulously documented my observations through quick handwritten notes, photographs and voice recordings. Daniela Lanzi (2023b), one of the experienced *pedagogistas* in Reggio Emilia, highlighted in her presentation, *The Values of the Educational Project of the Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools of the Town of Reggio Emilia*, that the Reggio Emilia approach should not be modelled or copied, but serves as crystallising suggestions for contextualising one's teaching situation.

I visited the IOTTI preschool and infant toddler centre and was immediately struck by the inviting and welcoming atmosphere. The school was filled with light and inspiration. One of their projects, *Piazza Risonanze*, focused on the resonances in the *piazza*. The teachers and children imagined the sounds within the *piazza* (Figure 5.2) and described it as engaging in a dialogue with the environment. *Piazza Risonanze* involved voices and architecture, emphasising listening to echoes.



Figure 5.2: *Piazza* (central square), Ernesto Balducci Municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

What particularly caught my attention was the setup of the music space. It was somewhat secluded, almost tucked away. I observed a xylophone, a mbira, rainsticks, a few African percussive instruments, a djembe drum and two recorders. I spoke with the *atelierista* at the IOTTI, with the help of an interpreter, who confirmed that there is no designated time for a music class, such as a music hour. Instead, music was considered one of the many languages in which children could express themselves. While it was clear that young children could explore different timbres, there was no formal music instruction in this space.

After receiving the information about which school each delegate would visit on Tuesday evening, I consulted with one of the organisers to explore my options. From discussions

with other teachers, I learned that the Balducci school had an *atelierista* with a background in music. Realising the potential for deeper insights into music education within the Reggio Emilia schools, I knew I could not miss this opportunity. That evening, I arrived at the Balducci School and was immediately welcomed by an intriguing display: clay figures playing orchestral instruments (Figure 5.3). This sight was captivating and inspiring, sparking a rush of creative thoughts and ideas. My mind was flooded with concepts of provocations, languages and music as I absorbed the children's artistic expressions.

The clay figures were more than just a creative project; they represented the children's musical explorations in a tangible form. Through this activity, the children delved into various aspects of music, such as the different instrument families, sound production, timbre, and the physical postures of musicians as they played their instruments. This project allowed them to engage with music on multiple levels, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of orchestral music.



Figure 5.3: In the Foreground: String Quartet in Clay by 5- to 6-Year-Old Children, Ernesto Balducci Municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

I was fortunate to visit the music studio at the Balducci school, where I was immediately inspired by the wide variety of instruments available for the children to experiment with.

The studio featured an impressive array of musical tools: next to the digital piano stood a double bass, viola, snare drums and a hi-hat (Figure 5.4). There were also several guitars and a beautiful Celtic harp. This diverse collection of instruments showcased the vibrant and immersive music culture within the Balducci School, allowing children to explore various sounds and techniques (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.4: *Atelier*, Ernesto Balducci Municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

My conversation with the *atelierista* was enlightening. He emphasised that, within the Reggio Emilia approach, music is considered one of the many languages children can use to explore and express themselves. However, he pointed out that instead of structured lessons, children are encouraged to engage with music as a form of exploration and expression. They can interact with instruments and musical concepts based on their interests and curiosities. In Figure 5.6, a drawing of the orchestra is visible. The children explored sound production, the correct posture for playing the instruments, and the properties of the instrumentation that they explored.



Figure 5.5: *Ateliers*, Ernesto Balducci Municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

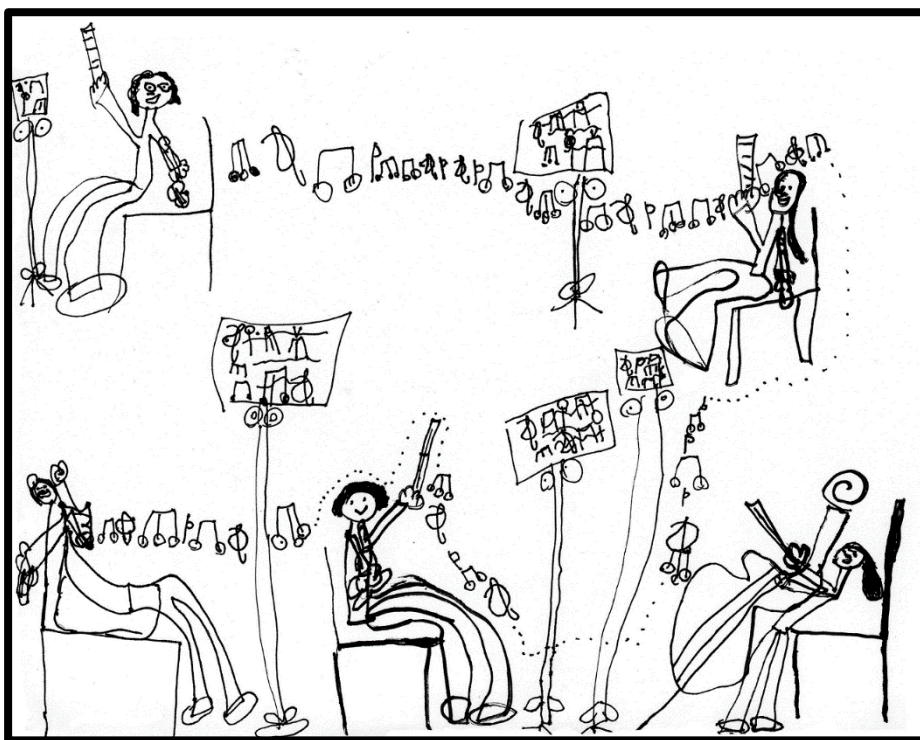


Figure 5.6: Orchestra. Drawing by 5- to 6-Year-Old Children, Ernesto Balducci Municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

Upon returning to South Africa, I undertook a rigorous data analysis process in which I meticulously coded the data collected in Italy. To enhance the study's trustworthiness and validation, my promotor, Professor Liesl van der Merwe, co-coded the data. Through collaborative discussions, we examined my self-study journey and systematically identified, interpreted and organised the various roles of teachers that emerged from the research. Our analysis yielded eight distinct roles of the teacher, which were derived from the data collected in Reggio Emilia, Italy. These eight roles encapsulate the essence of the Reggio-inspired music teacher, as identified through my experiential learning journey in Italy.

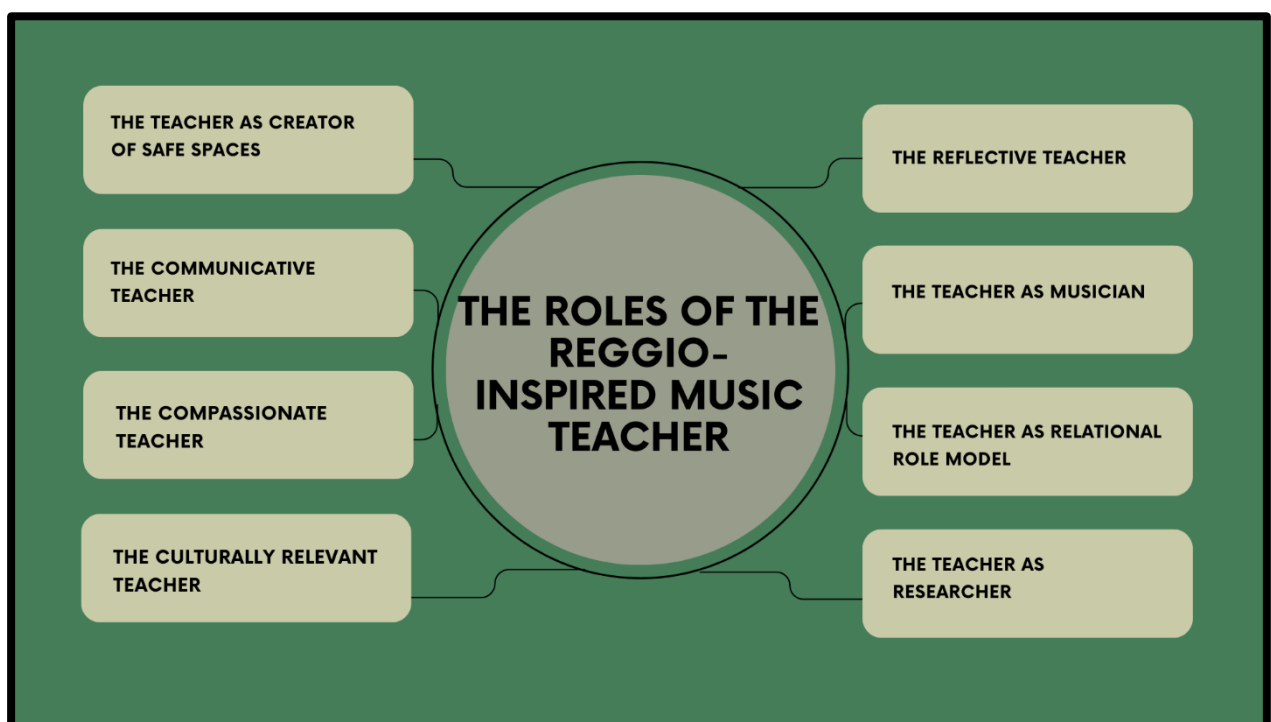


Figure 5.7: The Roles of the Reggio-Inspired Music Teacher

These roles were the teacher as the creator of safe spaces, communicative teacher, compassionate teacher, culturally relevant teacher, reflective teacher, teacher as a musician, teacher as a relational role model, and the teacher as a researcher (Figure 5.7).

5.1 The Teacher as Creator of Safe Spaces

The role of the teacher is to create a safe space where the child feels encouraged to explore, investigate and be brave. The child should be the active protagonist in their

cognitive growth and development (25:44).⁸ Matteo Bini (2023), an experienced *atelierista*, also confirmed in his presentation *Crossing "Thresholds". Re-thinking the Environment to Design Didactics*, that the crucial role of the teacher is to prepare facilitating contexts (25:22). For this to occur, the environment should be both welcoming and stimulating (25:45), as the aesthetics of the space can enhance the pleasure of learning (25:134). The environment should offer various spaces that trigger different cognitive processes in the child (25:80).

The teacher should intentionally take into account and support the child's creative processes, ensuring they are curious, interested, stimulated and guided (25:47; 81; 83). This approach values multidisciplinary, multi-sensory forms and sources of knowledge (25:34; 114). The child's knowledge creation often occurs through making things rather than through verbal responses (25:143). Each of the *100 languages* has expressive capacity and potential, with music being one of these multi-sensory languages through which a child can express knowledge (25:116).

An example of this is a singing project conducted with 5-year-old children across three schools in Reggio Emilia, aimed at metaphorically helping the children find their voice, among other things (25:98). The *piazza* serves as a metaphor for communication and relationships with the environment, with each other, and with movement (25:97).

⁸ The numbers provided correspond to the primary documents in ATLAS.ti, from which the quotes are taken. The first number represents the number of the primary document, while the second number indicates the precise location inside the document where the quotation was coded. In this example the quote is derived from primary document 25 and corresponds to the 44th coded segment within that document.

5.2 The Communicative Teacher

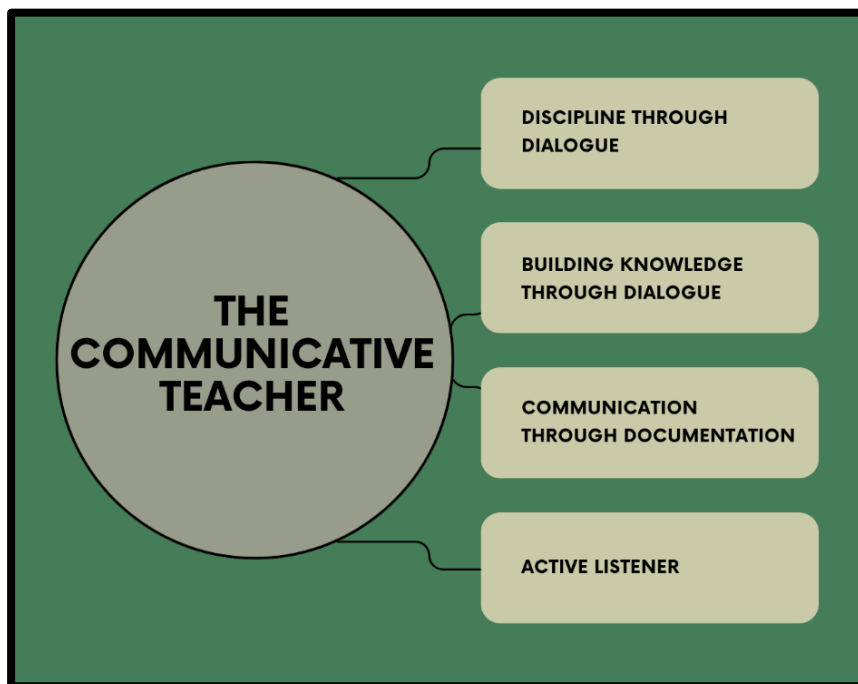


Figure 5.8: The Communicative Teacher

The communicative role of the teacher emerged as an essential skill after discussing behavioural issues in a Reggio Emilia classroom with the experienced *atelieristas* (Figure 5.8). After a question from one of the international students to the *atelieristas* at the IOTTI school after our Monday evening visit, the *atelieristas* emphasised that effective communication between teachers and learners, primarily through class discussions, is vital for setting boundaries and expectations for the children (Figure 5.8; 25:145). This form of dialogue is not merely about conveying rules, but about creating an environment and a community where discipline is rooted in respect (25:146). Respect within this community emerges from what the *atelieristas* referred to as conversations about *cura*, an Italian word that translates to "living with care." These dialogues go beyond mere behaviour management; they instil deep-seated respect for each other, the learning environment and the materials and spaces shared by the learners. By communicating *cura*, the teacher emphasises the importance of caring for one another and the surroundings (25:148).

The communicative teacher also encourages dialogue between learners and between the teacher and the learner, because learning is a dialogue (Figure 5.8; 25:106). Within Reggio Emilia schools, teaching does not occur 'from the front' but is an exchange

between learners, between the teacher and the learner, and even between the learner and the environment (25:32). The presentation entitled *The Culture of the Families* (Lanzi, 2023a) highlighted that the role of the teacher is to encourage dialogue through flexible environments and small group learning (Addendum A; 25:48). Therefore, one of the responsibilities of a communicative teacher is to arrange their classes in a way that will promote social interaction between learners (25:106).

In addition to promoting active engagement from and between learners, the communicative teacher should also invite parents, professionals, teachers and learners to participate in the educational process. In Daniela Lanzi's (2023a) presentation, *The Culture of Families*, she claims that participation in the educational process not only empowers all the role-players, but also offers perspective and creates a supportive community (25:89). The communicative teacher, therefore, does not communicate to convey instruction to the learners, but rather communicates to offer stimulation to the learners (25:109), while recognising that all knowledge is constructed socially (25:111).

The documentation process in the Reggio Emilia class invites the parent to participate in the learning process. An experienced *pedagogista*, Annalisa Rainieri (2023b), said the role of the communicative teacher is to make documentation visible to enable a dialogue between the child and the teacher (Figure 5.8; 25:67); it also allows for interpreting the child's educational experiences and theories (25:79). Documentation is helpful if we stop and reflect, trying to listen, understand and interpret the child's experiences. The communicative teacher, therefore, creates a context for listening, observing how the child organises and produces knowledge (Figure 5.8; 25:39). In addition, the child's creative processes are never interrupted by the communicative teacher, because the teacher is an active listener in the education process (25:81). This active listening is also an essential characteristic of the compassionate teacher.

5.3 The Compassionate Teacher

The second role of the Reggio Emilia teacher that emerged from my data and reflections is that of a compassionate teacher. The compassionate teacher (Figure 5.9) fosters and nurtures the community through ongoing dialogue with learners, parents and fellow teachers. A stronger sense of unity and collaboration is promoted by actively including and encouraging the entire community's participation in educational projects. Additionally, the compassionate teacher serves as a thermostat for the well-being of both learners and

the extended community of parents and caregivers, ensuring that the emotional and social climate are conducive to growth and harmony. The concept of the teacher as the thermostat for well-being was introduced at the beginning of the International Study Tour by Reggio Children President Cristian Fabbi (2023). Reflecting on this statement, I realised that this role requires the teacher to be empathetic and cultivate a caring classroom environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Through these actions, the compassionate teacher not only meets the educational needs of the learners, but also contributes to the overall well-being of the entire school community.

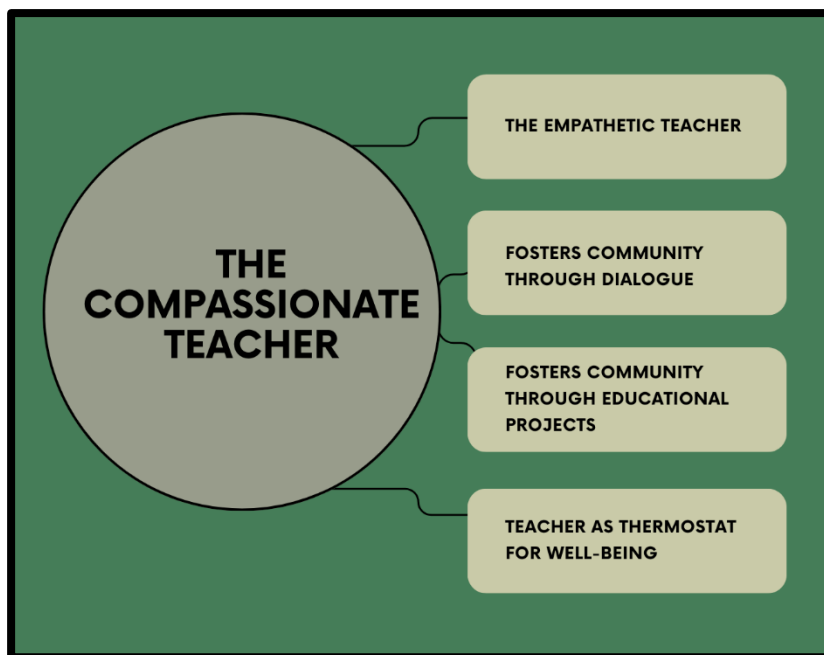


Figure 5.9: The Compassionate Teacher

The compassionate teacher fosters community through dialogue and collaborative educational projects. Through conversations with the *pedagogistas* at the IOTTI preschool, it was evident that family involvement in knowledge creation is promoted to strengthen community bonds (25:51). Parents' skills and competencies are acknowledged and integrated into the daily life of the school (25:52). By designing processes that encourage family participation, the compassionate teacher facilitates collective thinking and strategizing (25:84).

Another role of the compassionate teacher is to act as a thermostat for the community's well-being by upholding and respecting the rights and well-being of the child (25:5). As was reiterated in the welcoming presentation by Reggio Children (Fabbi, 2023), the striving for peace is and should be at the core of every dialogue. In addition, the teacher

must cultivate a democratic environment that includes teaching and modelling effective conflict-resolution strategies (25:8). The compassionate teacher embodies an attitude of care, remaining attentive to each child's individual needs (25:133). This approach aligns with the concept of *cura*, which means "living with care" towards self, others and the environment, fostering empathy and understanding among everyone involved (25:148). By prioritising *cura*, the teacher not only addresses the immediate needs of the children, but also cultivates an empathetic classroom culture where learners learn to care for, support each other and acknowledge each other as capable, regardless of background and culture.

5.4 The Culturally Relevant Teacher

The culturally relevant teacher views the child as capable, positioning the child as the active protagonist of their own development and knowledge creation (25:44) and never interrupting the child's cognitive processes (25:81). Within the Reggio Emilia environment, education is a democratic process where children's rights are paramount, and it is essential to respect the child in all contexts (25:8; 25:11). Teachers are called to construct education and educate for the future, serving as an antidote to wars (25:17).

To achieve this, the dialogue between the environment, the teacher, the parent and the child must include conflict management and resolution (25:10). According to Daniela Lanzi (2023a) in her presentation, *The Culture of Families*, the culturally relevant teacher should have insight into different cultures and classroom situations, modelling the suspension of all judgment (25:87). Daniela Lanzi (2023a) further reiterates that the culturally relevant teacher should also create a supportive community that enables families to participate, strategize and build together (25:43; 84).

The culturally relevant teacher's role is to create a platform for the participation of parents, children and the community. This platform involves fostering participation and embracing differences to build a network (25:50). Through the involvement of a community with diverse competencies, skills and perspectives (25:52), the child is exposed to an enriched learning experience. This ongoing dialogue and community involvement help build the image of their children (25:18), reinforcing education's value to the community (25:14).

The question posed to the international study group was, *How do we position dialogue for democracy? How can we build a more democratic coexistence and a more global idea*

of citizenship? (25:16). As Cristian Fabbi (2023) said, the culturally relevant teacher is a “vehicle for peace, actively working towards creating a more democratic and inclusive educational environment” (25:1).

By creating a supportive community and facilitating participation, the culturally relevant teacher helps to build a more democratic coexistence, contributing to a global idea of citizenship. This role is essential for fostering peace and understanding in a diverse world.

Another way to understand the child's needs and abilities is through reflection.

5.5 The Reflective Teacher

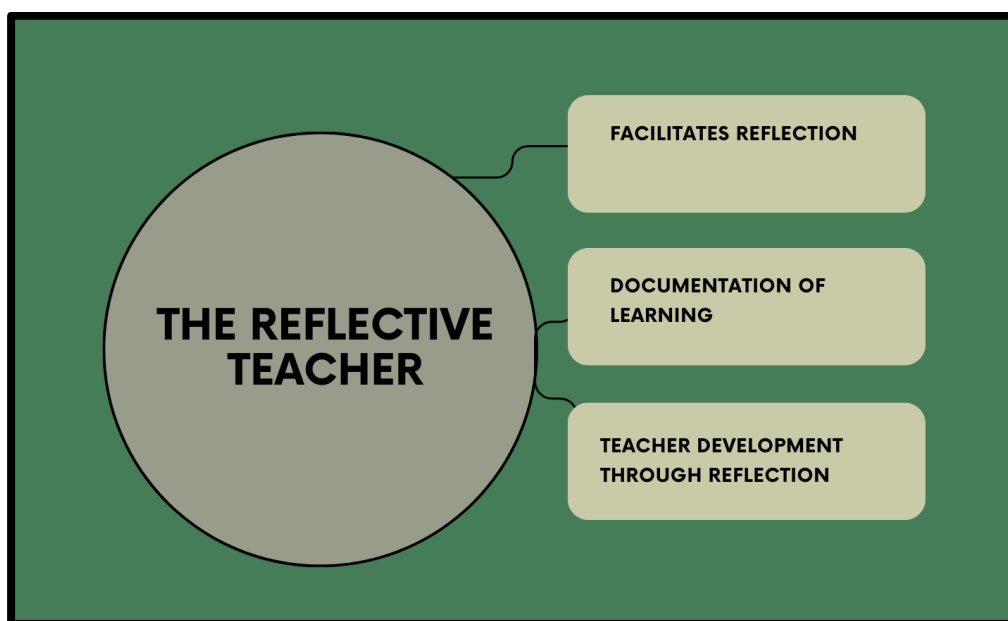


Figure 5.10: The Reflective Teacher

The role of the reflective teacher is to document the child's learning, to facilitate reflection by learners, and to ensure that they develop as a teacher through self-reflection (Figure 5.10). The reflective teacher records the child's processes during knowledge creation rather than after the learning is complete (25:40). Thus, reflection is essential for interpreting the child's knowledge (25:79). Consequently, documentation is a crucial tool for facilitating reflection within the learning process (25:37).

Through dialogue, the teacher invites and facilitates the child's reflection and evaluation of their own knowledge (25:26). It is also important to note that reflection often occurs in partnership with others; exhibitions enable mass reflection, understanding, and the generation of new theories and proposals, resulting in new perspectives (25:33;39).

The reflective teacher also reflects on personal teaching practices. In the presentation *Culture of Families*, Daniela Lanzi (2023a) reiterated that teachers in Reggio Emilia are very committed to collaborating with other teachers to reflect and produce to the best of their abilities (25:86). Annalisa Rainieri (2023a) said in the *Introduction to the Visit of Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools*, weekly discussions and reflections take place between teachers to understand, develop and improve on their practice (25:32).

5.6 The Teacher as Musician

As a music teacher, I investigated the role of the music educator within the Reggio Emilia approach. Every *atelier* and school following the Reggio Emilia approach has its unique personality, shaped by the competencies and skills of the *atelierista* and teachers. Each teacher brings a distinct set of skills, experiences and backgrounds to the school and the *atelier* (25:118). On a question about music education in the Reggio Emilia schools, *pedagogista* Annalisa Rainieri stated that the quality of teaching in Reggio Emilia schools is very high, and teachers must be proficient in a particular area before instructing the children. As a result, music instruction in these schools is relatively limited and there is no dedicated time or place for formal music tuition (25:119; 74; 77).

However, music can serve as a medium for stimulating and inspiring educational projects (25:76). For example, projects that combine architecture and sound, like those that explore echoes in the *piazza* (25:75), or projects involving voices, such as a singing project. During the visit to the Balducci school, the *atelierista* mentioned that there is an Italian phrase that says: "If you can speak, you can sing", but the Reggio Emilia teachers adapted the phrase to: "Even if you can't speak, you can sing".

The element of timbre is explored not only through basic percussion instruments but also through other natural elements such as stones, wood and more (25:75). Children investigate everyday sounds, including the bustling streets with cars and horns (25:99; 149) and explore the different properties of the human voice, such as talking, singing and whispering (25:101). The children's participation in the exploration of sound and timbre is supported through their relationship with the Reggio Emilia teacher.

5.7 The Teacher as a Relational Role Model

The role of the Reggio Emilia teacher is to shape relationships within the group to set the example and standard (25:46). The teacher must build networks for participation by

becoming an active participant in the educational process and inviting other adults to do the same (25:50), thereby positively influencing the daily lives of the learners (25:54). Additionally, Daniela Lanzi (2023a) reiterates in her presentation, *Culture of Families*, that the teacher should highlight the reciprocal relationship of sharing knowledge with other educators (25:132).

Furthermore, the teacher should encourage participation by nurturing relationships and being the relational role model. Engaging with others should foster active involvement (25:60), and the exchange of viewpoints and ideas should further promote participation (25:89). Spaces such as the *piazza* embody and support the pedagogy of relationships, serving as places where groups gather, events occur and social relations develop, thus contributing to the formation of the child's public identity. In these spaces, the child can observe, research, reflect and engage in conflict situations as well as harmonious moments, enhancing the dynamics of relationships (25:78).

5.8 The Teacher as Researcher

As the researcher, the teacher is responsible for the documentation process to aid understanding of the children's cognitive processes. The child's cognitive processes include organising knowledge, doing research and producing work (25:39). Through documentation, the teacher can reflect on and interpret the child's experiences, gaining deeper insights into their learning journey (25:79).

As Annalisa Rainieri (2023b) confirmed, the teacher moves away from being the sole authoritative source of knowledge and engages in learning alongside the children and their families (25:29). In this role, the teacher views learning as a continuous and dynamic exchange with families, children and colleagues (25:30). Consequently, a teacher in Reggio Emilia is deeply involved in professional development and ongoing research (25:57).

In her presentation, *Thinking by Design: Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools as Places of Research: ROADS TO...Imagine, play, build, represent*, Annalisa Rainieri (2023b) said that the teacher in the Reggio Emilia school stands out as the researcher and collaborator who utilises the valuable competencies and skills of parents (25:52), includes the children in decision-making processes, and creates a dialogue and participation within the educational process (25:95). Notably, some Reggio Emilia schools, for instance, the

Balducci school, were co-designed by children, architects, parents, *pedagogistas* and *atelieristas*, reflecting a collaborative approach to the school's design and educational philosophy (25:96).

Conclusion

This account of the roles of the teacher as identified after returning from Reggio Emilia encompasses a comprehensive exploration of their various educational roles, including the teacher as the creator of safe spaces, the communicative teacher, the compassionate teacher, the culturally relevant teacher, the reflective teacher, the teacher as a musician, the teacher as a relational role model and the teacher as a researcher. Each of these roles focuses on different aspects of the Reggio Emilia teacher. Building on these roles of the Reggio-inspired music teacher, the next chapter delves into how positive music education enables the teacher and the learner to flourish.

POSITIVE MUSIC EDUCATION

After analysing the data inductively, I started noticing patterns corresponding to theories and models in positive psychology, namely PERMA (Seligman, 2011; Seligman et al., 2004), self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017), positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001, 2004), and VIA character strengths (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Inductive data analysis is characterised by its emergent features, uncovering and shaping the meaning of the data as it is revealed, free from any predetermined agenda (Saldaña, 2015). This inductive method involves the researcher in an ongoing process of revisiting and refining the data and its interpretation (Saldaña, 2015). Through the data analysis, I generated a large number of codes to try to understand my data set. Using abduction, I investigated potential meaningful connections between theories and models to interpret the data meaningfully before arriving at a conclusion (Halpin & Richard, 2021; Kelle, 1995; Saldaña, 2015). I will discuss these theories and models in the context of the developing field of positive music education (PME). Positive psychology and music education emphasise the importance of fostering strong relationships for effective teaching (Olander & Saarikallio, 2022; Van der Merwe & Erasmus, 2024).

6.1 PERMA Model of Authentic Happiness

Seligman (2011) and Seligman et al. (2004) introduced the PERMA model, which focuses on authentic happiness and flourishing. They identified key indicators of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement (Seligman, 2018). Seligman's (2011) theory promotes flourishing by emphasising these components (Figure 6.1). As a supplement to Seligman's PERMA theory, Croom (2012) proposes that music can enhance well-being. Music can be used to support well-being by enhancing positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement.

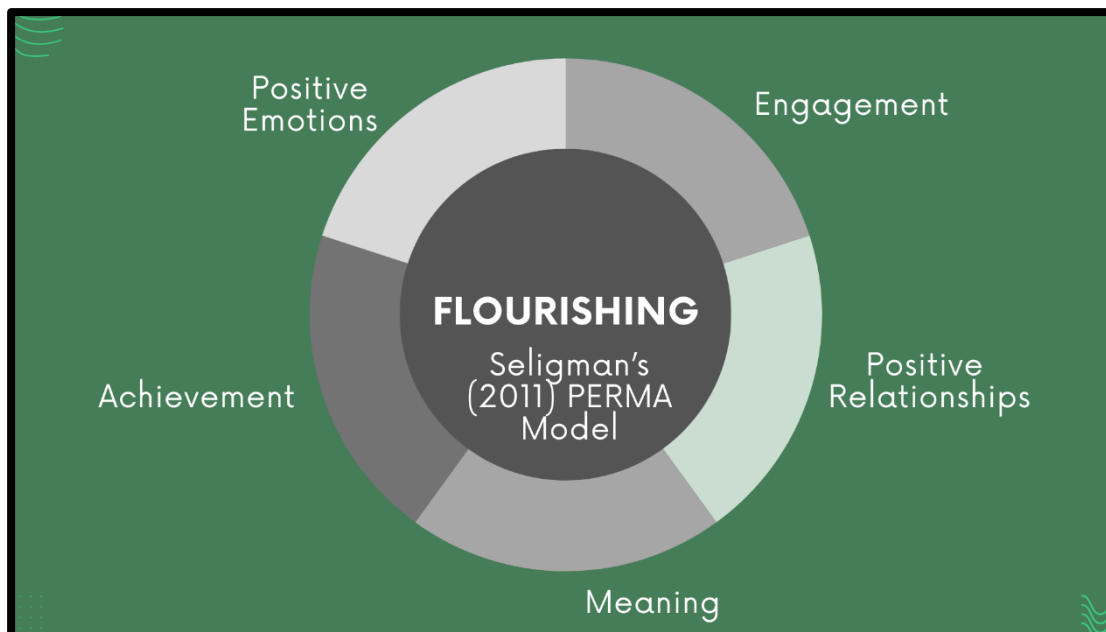


Figure 6.1: PERMA Model (Seligman, 2011)

6.1.1 Positive Emotions

Positive emotions are a vital component of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Similar to Seligman's views, Fredrickson (1998, 2001, 2004), in his broaden-and-build theory, proposes that positive emotions expand our thinking and behaviour. Therefore, positive emotions improve our thoughts and focus and foster creativity and problem-solving. Over time, these positive emotions develop a person's long-term psychological, physical and social resources that enhance well-being (Conway et al., 2013; Fredrickson, 1998, 2001, 2004).

Encouraging positive emotions also fosters an environment conducive to effective music education (Van der Merwe & Erasmus, 2024). Positive emotions improve attention, cognition and action, and cultivate physical, intellectual and social resources (Fredrickson, 1998, 2004). In addition, creativity is enhanced by experiencing positive emotions, such as being recognised by music teachers or parents (Habron-James, 2024).

Positive emotions include various affective states, including pleasure, comfort, peace, gratitude, satisfaction, inspiration, hope, curiosity, and love. Salimpoor et al. (2011) ascertained that music can evoke intense happiness, while Van Goethem and Sloboda (2011) investigated how music affects emotional regulation. They found that it contributes significantly to happiness and a calm disposition. Daily music is used for emotional purposes such as pleasure, mood regulation, relaxation, and enhancing a sense of

identity and belonging (Laukka, 2007). These emotions impact behaviour, and behaviour impacts interactions. When people feel positive emotions, they engage more socially (Mauss et al., 2011) and broaden their circle of trust (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). They are more inclined to create inclusive social groups (Dovidio et al., 1995; Isen et al., 1992) and foster a sense of shared identity, viewing outsiders as part of their group (Dovidio et al., 1998). It is, therefore, essential to note that our emotions influence our interactions and relationships (Croom, 2012). In the study by Asenco et al. (2017), they found that positive emotions were closely linked and enhanced with shared musical experiences. Consequently, positive emotions can lead to positive relationships. Within relationships, emotional regulation is an important skill (Zillmann et al., 1986), and music is an effective tool for building those connections (Croom, 2012).

6.1.2 Engagement

It has been determined that engagement is essential for psychological well-being (Croom, 2015). Similarly, participating in musical activities can contribute to psychological well-being (Croom, 2015). Engagement denotes a state in which an individual is fully immersed and absorbed in a task (Ascenso et al., 2017). Csikszentmihalyi (1991) described this deep state of engagement as 'flow'. During a flow experience, we are entirely focused and engaged in our activity, utilising our best skills (Seligman, 2011). Flow experiences have been linked to higher levels of motivation and creativity (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Strati et al. (2012) also proposed that flow experiences are valuable for learning and growth, because they foster engagement and skill development, and inspire individuals to persist in honing their skills and seeking new challenges. Therefore, active engagement in musicking activities is a precursor for PME and can promote flourishing in life (Bernhard, 2023; Croom, 2012).

6.1.3 Positive Relationships

Music can affect how we interact with others by influencing our emotional states and relationships with others (Croom, 2012). Frijda (1999) confirms this by saying that the way we feel can mould and control the way we connect and relate with other people. Positivity within relationships can manifest through various means, ranging from social support and care to acts of kindness and expressions of love toward others.

Positive relationships in music education are vital for PME (Van der Merwe & Erasmus, 2024). In a study conducted by Schäfer et al. (2013), it was found that people listen to music to control their emotions, to understand themselves better, and to connect with others socially. Koelsch (2013) also suggests that when people play music together, they connect with others, understand each other's feelings, show empathy, communicate, coordinate actions and work together. In PME the teacher must create possibilities for learners to participate, support and encourage others through ensemble playing (Khoo et al., 2023). Positive connections play a significant role in fostering a sense of meaning in life and are fundamental to well-being (Seligman, 2011).

6.1.4 Meaning

Meaning is an essential element for flourishing (Seligman, 2011). Individuals who lead meaningful lives perceive their lives as coherent (Li et al., 2019), consider their lives to be significant (Van Tongeren & Showalter Van Tongering, 2021), and are motivated by having a clear purpose and reason for living (Kumano, 2018). Meaning and purpose precede PME (Van der Merwe & Erasmus, 2024). Meaningful learning experiences motivate learners and have a lasting impact on their learning journey and growth (Wayman, 2005). Frequently participating in musical experiences impacts relationships, achievement, communication, expression and identity, and can help develop positive future habits and behaviours (Cape, 2012).

Furthermore, Cape (2012) discovered that learners found meaning in experiences that addressed fundamental human concerns, such as "feeling a sense of competence and personal agency, finding a place and connecting with others, discovering one's uniqueness, finding common ground, and experiencing communion with others or with a higher power" (p. 313). These issues are crucial to human experience and relate to autonomy, competence and relatedness in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

6.1.5 Achievement

Musical achievement and competence are important conditions for PME (Van der Merwe & Erasmus, 2024). Within a safe and cooperative music environment, all experiences are growth opportunities where learners practise self-compassion and acknowledge the ups and downs of their musical journey (Khoo et al., 2023).

At the same time, the concept of achievement, as described by Seligman (2011), encompasses various aspects such as achieving goals, mastering skills, experiencing success and leading a fulfilling life. Hylton (1981) discovered that individuals can achieve through music without being in a competitive environment. These musical achievements can significantly boost self-esteem, leading to a sense of achievement, success, and pride, enhancing overall well-being.

6.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

SDT emphasises fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Ryan & Martela, 2016). Based on Ryan and Deci's (2002) SDT (Figure 6.2), individuals exhibit an inherent collection of psychological demands. These requirements are fulfilled through interactions with the social context, leading to motivation, performance and well-being regarding personal growth and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008).

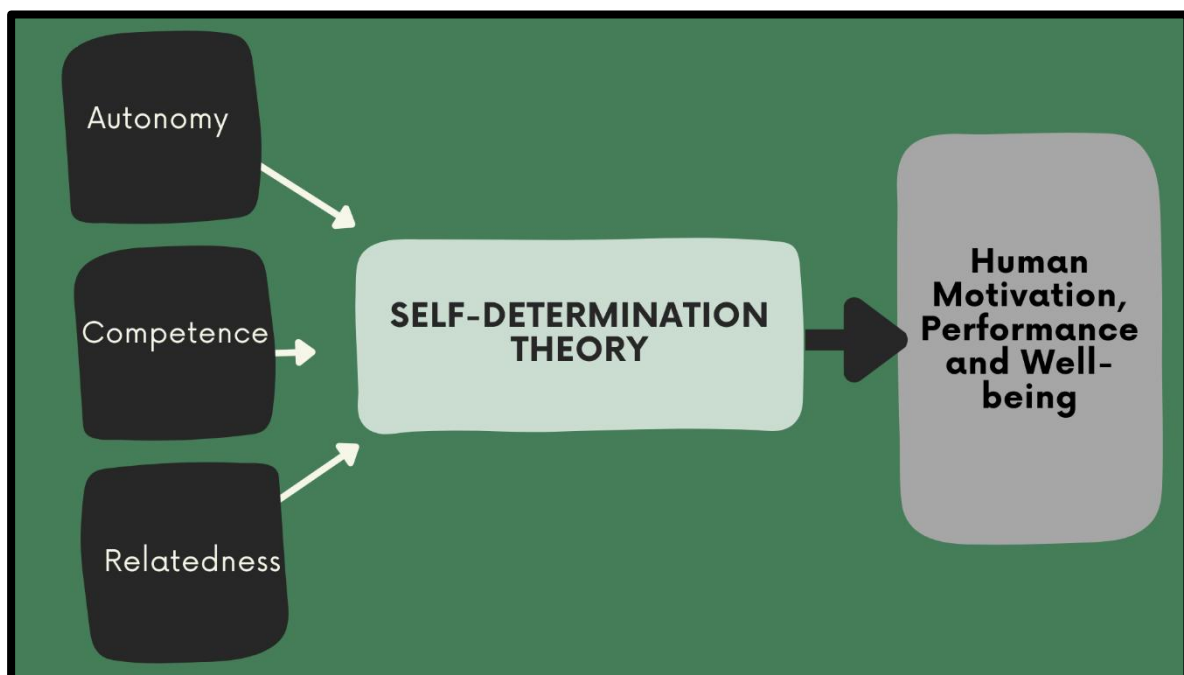


Figure 6.2: Self-Determination Theory (Ryan et al., 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2017)

SDT emphasises that the desire for autonomy needs to be fulfilled for an individual to flourish (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Ryan & Martela, 2016). Autonomy involves feeling a sense of freedom to act in alignment with our values and interests. Safe music-making spaces are established when the learner has the freedom and autonomy in their own musicking to select the activities and musical styles they wish to participate in (Wentink, 2024).

Providing learners with the autonomy and freedom to choose musical activities fosters a sense of competence, thus fulfilling essential needs for well-being as outlined in SDT.

According to SDT, the desire for competence needs to be fulfilled to ensure well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008, 2017; Ryan & Martela, 2016). Competence allows the individual to feel capable. When we feel skilled at something, we are more likely to enjoy it. Furthermore, positive feedback from others and praising ourselves can make us feel more competent and motivated to keep going. Competence and achievement experiences serve as a source of motivation (Evans, 2015), and when combined with the fulfilment of the need for relatedness, they contribute to the individual's overall flourishing (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008).

In SDT, the need for relatedness must be fulfilled for flourishing (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008). When we're in a supportive environment where people care about our interests and activities, we get more intrinsically motivated (Ryan et al., 1994). Music learning often takes place among a multitude of social connections. Hence, the importance of establishing a connection or sense of belonging in music education may be particularly evident (Evans, 2015). A study conducted by Dagaz (2012) highlighted that trust and acceptance are essential components of relatedness, aligning with Hendricks's (2018) view of compassionate music teaching, where trust, empathy, patience, inclusivity, community and authentic connection refer to a relational teaching approach.

6.3 Values in Action Character Strengths

Learners excel when there is resonance with their interests, which acknowledges their character strengths (Bernhard, 2023). According to Van der Merwe and Erasmus (2024), music education must be infused with constructive values for PME to occur. Wagner et al. (2020) discovered a strong correlation between character strengths and different paths towards living a fulfilling life as outlined in the PERMA framework. Character strengths are qualities that are highly valued and believed to play a role in leading a fulfilling life (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In 2004, Peterson and Seligman introduced the Values in Action (VIA) classification of strengths, which is currently one of the most influential character models. The VIA classification includes 24 positive character strengths (Wagner et al., 2020). Following theoretical principles, character strengths are categorised into six fundamental virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Character strengths play a role in achieving many satisfactions that lead to a fulfilling life, benefiting oneself and others (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Given the assumption that character strengths enhance fulfilment, they are also anticipated to contribute to the pursuit of well-being directly (Wagner et al., 2020). The study by Wagner et al. (2020) has established that character strengths are strongly linked with various approaches to a fulfilling life within the PERMA framework.

Conclusion

According to the PERMA model, fostering positive emotions, deep engagement, meaningful relationships and a sense of achievement are essential for promoting learner flourishing in the music classroom. Similarly, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) supports learners by providing autonomy and enhancing their sense of competence, both of which contribute to their overall well-being. The qualities associated with flourishing, particularly character strengths, become evident and are closely linked to well-being within the music classroom. These principles of positive music education resonate deeply with my own teaching experiences. In Chapter 7, I will explain meaningful connections between the theories and models and the findings from my own music classroom.

FINDINGS FROM MY OWN TEACHING

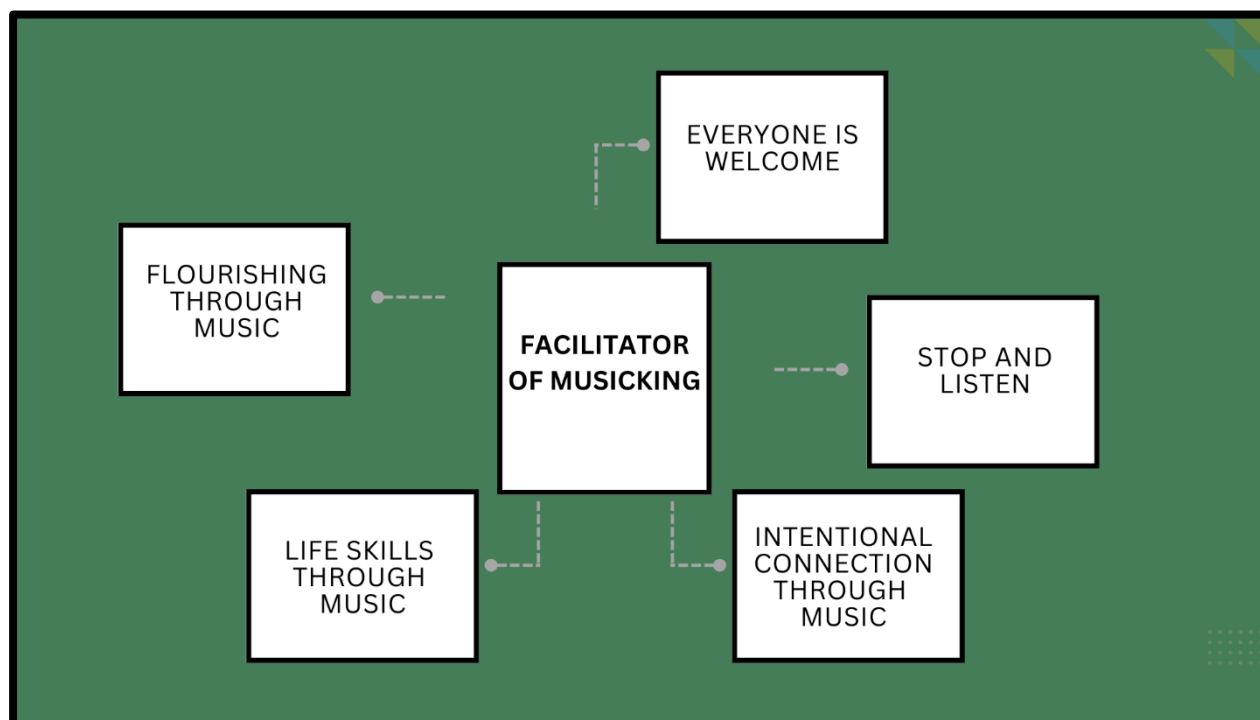


Figure 7.1: The Role of the Teacher within Relationship-driven Teaching and Learning

Reflecting on my learning journey in the music classroom (Addendum O), through data analysis, I've identified six key themes in my relationship-driven teaching approach (Figure 7.1). I discovered that being the **facilitator of musicking** (section 7.1) includes leading through movement and song while teaching music skills. I also learned to embrace diversity and create an environment where **everyone is welcome** (section 7.2). I had to **stop and listen** (section 7.3) to become more compassionate and create a learner-centred environment.

Planning my lessons to make **intentional connections** (section 7.4) between me and the learners, as well as among the learners themselves, became a critical part of my approach while I took on the role of teaching **life skills through music** activities (section 7.5). Through fulfilling these roles, I experienced the learners' **flourishing through musicking** (section 7.6).

7.1 Facilitator of Musicking

In my role of facilitating the learners' musical learning journeys, I had to lead through movement and song, teach music skills, and manage the music classroom.

7.1.1 Lead through Movement and Song

My journey started as a classically trained pianist. I have always been passionate about phrasing in music, the way cadences are structured, expression, interpretation of music, random music history, and the intricate details that make up the art form. With this background in music, I was very excited to teach my first lesson to a group of Grade 1 learners on Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*. My excitement seemed to trigger only a mild interest among my learners. I began to feel a disconnect and could not help but feel somewhat disheartened. Despite my passion, there was no natural resonance between my lessons and the learners in my class – no excitement, no spark. I was frustrated because I wanted them to feel the same love for music that I do, but it just was not happening. This realisation hit me hard. It forced me to rethink my approach and question how I could make these complex musical elements come alive for them.

I started to understand that the answer might lie in letting go of some of the rigid teaching principles I had clung to. If we could dance these elements, sing them and physically embody the music, maybe then they would feel the magic that I do. This realisation led to a challenging shift in my teaching style towards a genuine connection with the learners in my classroom and to make the music real for them. As my learning journey progressed, I started to use movement and song for creative instructions and to learn through play. On 20 March⁹, I noted in my reflection journal (Addendum O) that children need to be approached in a creative way to get them on board. I further reflected that discipline and order emerge through a variety of different pitches, games and movements, and that it is essential for the children to take an active role in shaping and maintaining this discipline (43:67). As the music facilitator, it became clear through this self-study journey that discipline is essential in the classroom but that traditional reprimanding will not serve the purpose. I realised that my conventional reprimands were not practical. I also became

⁹ All date entries in the findings chapter without a specified year refer to 2024.

aware that a punitively-driven discipline in the music classroom hampers the attempts of the teacher to establish an authentic, relationship-driven climate, so I endeavoured to approach the issuing of instructions more creatively. By introducing elements of playfulness and imagination (52:63), I found that learners were prepared to engage and participate more.

I reflected on 3 April (Addendum O): “What I realise is that as a teacher, playfulness is vital [...] and that the lesson is more successful when I approach the girls playfully” (52:63). Using songs (71:1), rhythmic and melodic patterns (81:7) and role-playing – like when we pretend to be fairies (56:2; 56:36) – has helped me manage the classroom while making the lessons more enjoyable. Guiding the learners into formations or activities through music and playful commands has allowed me to strike a balance between structure and creativity, making learning both fun and effective (53:1; 54:2). After the observation of a lesson, Naomi¹⁰, a critical friend, commented on my creative discipline:

At first, there's a sort of uncomfortable feeling because you observe the teacher, who is very much in control, but at the same time, it almost appears like there is an unstructured element to the lesson. But you only start to realise that there is quite a lot of organisation, planning and structure in the lesson when you start to see the children themselves tagging onto what the teacher is doing. It takes them some time to realise that there is a whole point to the teacher's movement and idea (57:1).

In my role as the facilitator of musicking, I focused on creating a structured yet flexible environment where music, movement and imagination were at the core of the activities. I started each lesson by engaging learners with songs like *Make the circle big, big, big* (43:2) (Addendum F) and *Copycat, copycat, can you do this and that?* (54:3) (Addendum G), which immediately drew the learners in and got them physically involved, creating a sense of authentic engagement. These songs helped to establish a shared rhythm and pitch and brought the learners together, fostering a sense of unity in the classroom (44:4; 54:2). I used playful commands within the songs to give the instructions. For example, asking the learners to make the circle larger or smaller became a game reinforcing musical concepts while keeping everyone engaged (43:2). My tone of voice, whether

¹⁰ All names mentioned in the findings chapter are pseudonyms.

louder or quieter, signalled different actions, which made the activities feel exciting (43:42).

I introduced props such as the parachute, which served as physical representations of musical ideas, like using the continuous movement of a parachute to explain the flow of a melody or the pitch of the song going up when the parachute goes up (43:9). Through using items like the parachute, I helped learners understand abstract musical ideas. Storytelling was significant in our lessons, such as our journey to the park, where there were jungle gyms (81:4;6). Through this narrative, we explored musical concepts. For example, we mimicked the ups and downs of a slide, the swings and the jungle gyms with our voices, which helped the learners grasp the idea of melodic contours. Through this playful approach, the learners perceived this lesson as an adventure. I encouraged learners to try different sounds and movements, express themselves creatively, and explore new ideas (81:5). When asked to create sounds representing various playground activities; they felt free to experiment and learn through their own experiences (82:3).

I aimed to balance structure with flexibility. While the activities were playful and seemed unstructured, they always had a clear purpose (57:1). This approach ensured that learning was fun and engaging, but also educational (43:7). By making the lessons interactive and enjoyable (43:18), I was able to connect with the learners and facilitate a deeper understanding of music through the power of play (74:2).

7.1.2 Music Skills

As the music facilitator, I ensured that skills such as listening, making and playing instruments, dancing, singing, composing and improvising, and reading notation were developed through the music activities.

7.1.2.1 Listening Skills

I facilitated active listening in my lessons by guiding the learners to express their emotions and interpretations of *Sunrise* from the Grand Canyon Suite (24 January) and *Carmina Burana* (14 February) through their drawings. Madison, a Grade 1 learner, used colours like pink, orange, yellow and red to depict a sunrise, reflecting the dynamics of the music (38:28). Another learner, Olga, drew a red stick sun, explaining that the music "went up," symbolising the rising sun (38:28). Ashley, on the other hand, drew a picture of herself

with her new Grade 1 teacher (Figure 7.2), explaining that the music made her think of walking in the garden with her teacher, because it sounded kind and calm (38:10).



Figure 7.2: Ashley's Picture

To further enhance the learners' listening skills, I incorporated physical activities, starting with the class keeping a steady beat on their knees (81:24). I then introduced Jason Mraz's *Have It All*. I kept the beat going. After they got used to the invisible beat, I allowed them to change direction by pointing, making eye contact and clapping in the opposite direction. Eventually, I introduced a ball to pass on the beat (81:24).

7.1.2.2 Making and Playing Percussion Instruments

I facilitated knowledge creation and experience with instrumentation by encouraging the learners to explore and create their own percussion instruments using recycled materials found in the classroom (13 March). I created a rich environment with various materials, including polystyrene, kitchen utensils, lids and different textures. Learners experimented with pitched percussion instruments, discovering how varying liquid levels produced different sounds (40:4) and also the scraping (40:13), shaking (40:14;27) and banging of ordinary items (40:15).

As the facilitator, I came to see how crucial it is to prioritise dialogue and exploration between teacher, learner and materials. It was not easy, but eventually, through my journey with the Reggio Emilia approach, I realised that viewing each child as capable,

creative and musical was essential. This change in my perspective helped me support the learners as active participants in their learning journey. I was able to inspire creative thinking, which was evident when Tisha even pointed out that shoes could be used as percussion instruments, demonstrating by scraping the soles of her shoes with the sparkly talking stick (43:28). Ziva quickly followed suit, taking off her school shoes and clapping them together (43:28). Through these hands-on activities, the learners gained practical knowledge and experience with instrumentation, exploring how different materials and techniques could produce a variety of sounds.

7.1.2.3 Dancing

To facilitate dancing and movement in the music classroom, I had to deeply reflect on the active listening lessons on 24 January and 14 February (Addendum O). I realised that dancing is an expressive form that the learners enjoy using. After I had encouraged the learners to express their emotions visually only through drawing, I observed that the learners wanted to use their bodies to communicate and express the feelings that they experienced with the music (41:15). Following my observation and the feedback from music education expert, Helena, who suggested that I use the children's excitement and energy to move to the beat (38:4), I incorporated more movement and dancing activities, and encouraged the learners to create their own dance moves and actions in the classroom activities. For example, Zara wanted to add more dancing moves to our *Hello song* (52:11), while Amy suggested adding a boogie move (52:11).

I fostered an environment where learners were actively inventing their dance moves. When my learning journey started, I saw movement and games in my music classroom solely as incentives for good behaviour. Still, as this journey progressed, I began to understand that incorporating dance into the lesson was a way learners expressed themselves. As they reflected on the song, the learners continued inventing and sharing different moves (56:15). I also acknowledged and celebrated each learner's unique preferences in dancing. Aurora enjoyed making her scarf shake (56:13), Emily loved dancing and standing up (56:13), and Hadley enjoyed spinning around (56:13). By creating a supportive environment where learners felt encouraged to experiment and share their dance moves, I helped them express themselves creatively and connect more deeply with the music.

7.1.2.4 Singing

As the facilitator of musicking, I made singing the cornerstone of all our activities and music games in my classroom. I integrated singing contours creatively; for example, I used the parachute's movement to represent the song's pitch. Learners were able to recognise pitch; for instance, Amy mentioned how singing "up" made the parachute rise and singing "down" made it fall, which helped us follow the flow of the music (43:26).

7.1.2.5 Composing and Improvising

As a lifelong learner, I always seek to improve my own practice. My mentors, during my time of reading for a Master's degree, consistently emphasised the importance of incorporating a range of music skills – singing, listening, rhythmic movement, playing instruments, creating and reading music notation and improvising – into each lesson to create a more holistic and well-rounded learning experience. I was introduced to Anderson and Krathwohl's book *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing* (2001). Since my experience with this taxonomy, my goal in most music lessons has been to reach the pinnacle of thought processes through creating (Addendum K). I endeavoured to ensure that the child is able to remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and ultimately create (Addendum K). The taxonomy influenced how I designed my lesson plans, and I always made a solid effort to get the child to ultimately create music. Therefore, I encouraged both composition and improvisation in my music lessons.

On 3 April (Addendum O), I made the music concept of 'call and response' vivid and engaging for the learners through the metaphor of the tawny owl. They quickly grasped the idea and eagerly contributed their own calls and responses. This approach captivated their interest and allowed them to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of composition and improvisation. After the activity, I reflected on the learning that occurred in my music room: "I found that making a music concept vivid worked as they were fascinated but immediately understood it [...] The girls' creativity reminds me of Anderson and Krathwohl's taxonomy, where the children create to show their understanding and knowledge acquisition" (52:32;33).

7.1.2.6 Reading Notation

After inspirational conversations with my critical friend Angela on how to introduce the Reggio Emilia approach into a music lesson, she introduced me to Hervé Tullet's book

Say Zoop (2017). I was so excited about all the music-learning possibilities. Not only did I enjoy the entertaining way in which this book was created, but I also thought there was a lot of potential to apply the concepts in a musical context. I facilitated the learners' understanding of musical notation through designing and implementing engaging activities, such as using coloured dots¹¹ to represent different musical elements such as ascending and descending contours (70:4), dynamics (70:9; 71:14), expression (70:10;12), and also the use of jungle gyms¹² to make the contours visual (81:5). These activities helped learners connect notation with musical concepts. I encouraged creativity by allowing learners to create their own songs, visual representations of melodies and musical jungle gyms, making the learning process more meaningful and enjoyable for them.

7.1.3 Classroom Management

I have always struggled with classroom management. Looking back at my teaching journey, I feel embarrassed at how I tried to manage my classroom in the past. I lacked foresight and a strategic approach towards classroom management. My approach was largely reactive and, upon reflection, somewhat punitive in nature. It was not an effective means of managing the classroom, particularly in terms of learners' self-discipline. I used to keep learners in class during breaks when they did not participate, thinking it was the only way to maintain order. But deep down, I knew this approach was not working – it was, indeed, punitive, and I could see it was not fostering the kind of engagement or respect I wanted in my classroom. Only after reflecting on Christopher Small's book *Musicking* (1998) did I come to realise that every individual has a preferred way to participate; there is simply no one-size-fits-all approach.

Revisiting my earlier years of teaching, I approached movement and games in my music classroom only as rewards, with singing as the core of the music lesson. However, as

¹¹ Musical notation was explored through activities using coloured dots to represent musical elements. The dots would move up and down to illustrate contours, grow larger for increasing dynamics, and incorporate facial expressions to illustrate musical expressions.

¹² In this activity, the physical motions of the jungle gyms, slides, and swings were used to illustrate the concept of melodic contours. By mimicking these movements with their voices, the learners were able to grasp the rise and fall of melodies in a tangible, engaging way.

time went on, I started to realise that more movement actually had a positive impact on behaviour and classroom management. My approach to teaching shifted from being reactive to being proactive. In managing the music classroom, I focused on balancing familiarity and novelty to keep learners engaged. I communicated expectations clearly and designed music activities that were engaging. Thoughtful musical transitions between activities helped maintain momentum and kept learners engaged. Through mindfulness, I tried to keep the learners present. I was setting up my classroom environment to stimulate and support the learners' engagement and encourage them to explore and express themselves.

7.1.3.1 Balance Familiarity and Novelty

I balanced familiarity and novelty in the music classroom to keep learners engaged. In introducing new concepts, I always tried to build on the learner's previous knowledge to make them feel confident yet excited (70:1). In the interview with Naomi, a critical friend, she stated: "They [the children] thought that the lesson would go in one direction, but they were very excited about the lesson content, because it seemed like whatever was going to take place was quite unpredictable but safely unpredictable" (57:17). Helena, a music education expert, described this balance of familiarity and novelty when she said it is a move from the known to the unknown (66:5).

7.1.3.2 Clear Communication of Expectations

By clearly communicating expectations, I provided a structure that helped learners understand the goals of each lesson. I endeavoured to consistently provide learners with specific instructions and time frames. I also adapted my instructions based on real-time observations; for instance, when I noticed that my initial directions were somewhat unclear and learners were creating too many dots on their papers, I promptly clarified the task by specifying that each group should make only eight dots (71:5).

Instead of verbal instructions, I often used singing to signal the start of new activities. I reflected on 20 March (Addendum O) that I found that starting to sing to introduce a new activity was very effective. I added that I think a music teacher should limit the amount of speaking as much as possible and integrate songs as introductions for new activities (43:65). I started experimenting with singing my instructions instead of just speaking them only when I felt energised and enthusiastic about my lesson and the learners in my

classroom. To my surprise, this approach made a noticeable difference. The classroom atmosphere improved and discipline became more manageable. This was a pivotal moment for me, as I realised that incorporating movement and singing more naturally into my teaching could foster a more positive and organised learning environment. This approach of using singing for the instructions helped to guide the learners from one task to another, while keeping them engaged and focused. Additionally, I used musical prompts such as counting and singing to manage transitions (71:1) by limiting verbal instructions and integrating music into transitions. In this way, I was able to create a more engaged classroom experience.

7.1.3.3 Engaging Activities

To design engaging, creative and relevant activities, I focused on creating interactive experiences. I introduced fun songs and games, like *Rig-a-jig-jig* (ADDENDUM I), to engage the learners (56:38). I also integrated handing out props, such as ribbon scarves, into the activities to keep the momentum going without wasting time in between activities (56:38). I introduced creative resources like the book *Say Zoop* (Tullet, 2017), which engaged the learners by its interactive and visually stimulating nature (70:1). By using this book, I was able to introduce musical concepts like *accelerando*, *ritardando*, *crescendo*, *decrescendo*, *staccato* and *legato* visually and engagingly. This interactive activity allowed the learners to illustrate dynamic and tempo changes (70:1; 71:3), thereby reinforcing their understanding of the concepts.

7.1.3.4 Thoughtful Transitions

Thoughtful transitions between music activities helped keep the momentum going, while keeping learners focused. I found that incorporating musical cues into transitions helped maintain engagement in the classroom. For example, when the learners were singing the *Hello song*, I informed the girls in advance through song and hand signs that there would be only two more actions before transitioning to a new activity, helping them prepare for the change (52:42). During transitions, I used countdowns (56:5), such as singing down from five to one to keep the momentum and to ensure learners were ready for the next activity.

Throughout my learning journey, I found that when learners have difficulty with transitions between activities, there are signs such as restlessness, uncertainty or resistance to

change. Without smooth transitions, it would take me a while to refocus the learners, because they seem unclear about what comes next, or they express frustration and anxiety. Some learners might remain focused on the previous task, seeking clarification or reassurance, while others may become distracted or act out. This behaviour was evident on 24 January (Addendum O) when Julie acted out because she did not finish her drawing after listening to *Sunrise*. Retrospectively, if I had given her a heads-up to prepare her for the end of the song, she might have shown a lot less frustration and anxiety, and might not have acted out.

7.1.3.5 Mindfulness

In my first year of teaching about ten years ago, I was gently guided by a medical practitioner towards a diagnosis of generalised anxiety disorder (GAD). I was an anxious wreck in the classroom and believed that controlling every aspect of the classroom was the only way to succeed. My control over the learners would ultimately lead to sound results, or so I thought. This belief led to a lack of empathy and flexibility, and it often made the classroom a tense environment. Through my own journey of managing my anxiety, I was introduced to breathing exercises to become mindful of myself, my emotions and my surroundings. I found that this heightened mindfulness made me exist in the moment and I was able to manage my stress and anxiety. Managing my anxiety was beneficial for my emotional responses, as I reacted thoughtfully rather than impulsively. Through mindful breathing, my emotional regulation improved, and I could focus and concentrate better. I became more compassionate towards myself and, consequently, towards others. As I found I could address my anxiety with mindfulness, I encouraged mindfulness in the learners by integrating activities that enhanced their awareness of being present. Helena (42:40), a music education expert, confirmed that mindfulness is an element of self-compassion. I endeavoured to include mindfulness through active listening (24 January; 14 February). I also guided the learners with breathing exercises to help them focus (41:2). By incorporating visual and sensory elements, such as the parachute activity where learners matched their movements to the music, I promoted their physical and mental engagement (3 March).

I designed activities that required learners to be attentive to their peers, such as working in pairs or groups, as in the copycat game (4 April). These music activities not only enhanced the learners' mindfulness, but also encouraged them to be more aware of their

own actions and those of their peers, ultimately creating a more mindful classroom environment.

7.1.3.6 Stimulating Classroom

Through my exposure to the Reggio Emilia approach, I have learned that a stimulating environment is vital in helping children focus and that the nature of the connection between a child and their environment plays an essential role in the way they learn. The environment was designed to be engaging and full of opportunities for exploration and interaction, while encouraging curiosity. I have, therefore, attempted to manage the classroom through creating a stimulating environment by setting up an engaging space that fosters creativity and exploration. I found this to be effective; for instance, when the learners had to design their recycled percussion instruments, I made sure to put out a variety of materials, allowing the learners to freely explore and experiment with different options (40:17). By preparing this interactive setting, I helped the learners remain excited and involved in the music lesson (54:25). The atmosphere I cultivated was, therefore, one where the learners felt inspired to share their ideas and collaborate in a space where they felt welcome (54:25).

7.2 Everyone is Welcome

When my learning journey started, I had a strong desire for unity in the classroom. I wanted everyone to move together in unity. Personally, the lesson seemed successful when the learners did what I said and when I said it, and everyone participated the way I wanted. This is also known as the traditional “command and conquer” approach to teaching. However, I quickly learned that this was not possible, nor was it respectful nor inclusive. I remember one learner in my early years of teaching, Jemma, who seemed entirely overwhelmed by this rigid music environment that I insisted on. She started screaming and throwing instruments at me. I was so scared (and completely uneducated about how to deal with this situation), but in retrospect, I realised she was completely overstimulated. Still, at that moment, all I could think about was how chaotic it felt and how petrified I was. I realised that something had to change, because the learners in my classroom were not enjoying music and, frankly, I was not enjoying it either. For me, the worst part was admitting that I had no positive impact on these young learners. I had to reflect on what was happening. I wanted things done my way and when I could not control the situation, I resorted to calling the class teacher or putting the child on time-out. But

looking back, I realise those learners never really learned to love music, and that was entirely my fault. They were excluded from the learning situation because I did not know how to include them. What a painful realisation that was for me! This was a watershed moment that marked a significant point in my development as a teacher.

I had to confront the fact that my need for control was preventing some children from experiencing the joy of music. It was a painful struggle, but it taught me the importance of genuinely embracing diversity and flexibility and finding ways to make all learners feel welcome in my classroom. For the learners to feel welcome means that each learner has to feel a true sense of belonging first. The reflections in *My Journey with Julie* in Addendum D illustrate my personal and professional journey of understanding, accommodating and including everyone in my music classroom. It describes a mix of hopelessness, exhaustion and determination to create an inclusive environment where the needs of the individual as well as the group are met. My journey towards a place where everyone is welcome in my music classroom started with an understanding and awareness of the learners in my classroom and how to adapt and be flexible to accommodate and encourage learners, while supporting and building a supportive environment. I learned to become dedicated to understanding and embracing diversity through reflection and collaboration with colleagues (Figure 7.3).



Figure 7.3: Everyone is Welcome

One of the turning points in my learning journey towards creating a space where everyone is welcome (Figure 7.3) was through gaining a deeper understanding and awareness of neurodiversity, especially Julie's ADHD. Through my own observations, reflections and conversations with colleagues and Julie's teachers, I discovered the challenges and opportunities associated with ADHD.

3 April: I honestly feel exhausted and hopeless with Julie some days. I realise that she has ADHD, but I feel like she desperately wants to be the centre of attention. I am trying hard to validate her, but she is playing with me as if she enjoys interrupting [...] I have no idea how to improve it, but I find it challenging to keep Julie focused and happy, while trying to win over the other girls. A class of approximately 23 girls can be a handful. I am balancing keeping the music space safe and brave without losing the whole class of girls.

8 May: From observing Julie, I think she was utterly overwhelmed by the sounds (loud noises) in the music class. I feel very proud of her for getting up and getting the pop-up bracelet. She took control and self-regulated.

The two journal entries above clearly show my development from frustration to feeling proud of Julie. After a conversation where I shared my frustrations with Helena, a music education expert, she suggested that knowing more about Julie might help me to know which strategies to use in my class to support her (42:42). I began a journey of exploring and deepening my understanding of neurodiversity. I learned to be more flexible in my lessons, to adapt lessons and the need to be creative to keep Julie engaged while not losing the whole class. On 20 March, I started to explore different ways to support and help Julie to regulate. I implemented sensory toys like the pop-up bracelet (Addendum D; 20 March) and the rose quartz stone (Addendum D; 16 May). I also tried to keep her close to me to see when she needed regulation. I implemented sensory-friendly activities, such as asking Julie to design a percussion instrument out of recycled materials to engage her.

"I want you to design your own percussion instrument with recycled stuff you can find in the class, but I want you to do it with a friend". The girls were cheering, and they were so excited [...] Julie and Ally (said), "We made a drum, we put like some Christmas decorations on and some nice gorgeous black stars and we even made some rock and roll pictures on the drum and then we coloured it in blue... it was made out of a toilet paper roll and we shake our heads on it...." Julie started giggling out of her tummy. She came to school today without any socks with her brown baby doll shoes [...] (40:23).

As the lessons progressed, I noticed that Julie liked interactive activities where she could engage with her friend, Ally, such as when they designed recycled percussion instruments (13 March) and created *crescendos* and *decrescendos* with dots¹³ (8 May). They also made their melodic contour jungle gyms (16 May). I found that Ally was good for Julie. I also realised that making her work in a group with more than two learners and also with other children would not support her ability to focus or engage effectively. While facilitating the class, I started focusing on offering Julie emotional support by actively listening to her, applying the pedagogy of listening, and always keeping her near me to check if she was coping (20 March; 15 May). On 15 May, Julie came to sit on my lap without asking permission. She was very comfortable and clearly needed to feel my love and my approval.

Helena, a music education expert, encouraged me to listen with my ears, heart, mind and body (66:4). I tried to listen to her body language, facial expressions, unspoken words and what she told me. I even took Julie aside or outside at times to give her the opportunity to talk while I listened (3 April). In this growing relationship, I realised that Julie wanted to be heard and acknowledged (3 April; 9 May). I also realised she enjoyed special responsibilities such as handing out pencils and collecting papers (8 May).

Central to my journey was fostering a culture of collaboration and support in my music classroom. I encouraged interaction, communication and understanding between the learners. I also showed empathy towards learners. When Julie comforted a classmate using a pop-up bracelet (as described in the journal entry of 30 March), she enhanced the empathy and mutual respect among the learners and demonstrated the empathy she had experienced from me during our time in the music classroom.

Despite the challenges of managing disruptive behaviour and overstimulation during my music lessons, I was adamant about creating a positive learning environment for everyone. Navigating Julie's emotional ups and downs challenged me to show greater empathy. I learned to respond with more patience and understanding during moments of distress, such as sensory overload and emotional outbursts. Building a trusting relationship with Julie became integral to creating a safe space where she felt accepted

¹³ Musical notation was explored using coloured dots to represent contours, dynamics and expression, with dots moving, changing size, and displaying faces to visually connect learners with the music.

and valued. This relationship between Julie and me became the catalyst through which Julie may have achieved some degree of self-regulation. On 3 April, after Julie ran out of the music classroom, I went after her, asking her to come with me and assuring her that I really wanted her to be part of my lesson. I told her that I needed her to come and have fun in the music classroom. At this point, I saw a little smile emerge and she took my hand.

I embraced the diversity and even disruption in my classroom and created a sense of belonging by including Julie and allowing her to regulate herself (20 March). I was committed to continuously improving and learning to accommodate and encourage learners like Julie in my classroom (13 March). This journey towards inclusivity in the music classroom led to my developing proactive strategies to foster inclusivity and support. These strategies included understanding and awareness of the learners in my classroom by meeting teachers and consulting with colleagues (13 March). I also learned how to adapt and be flexible to accommodate and encourage learners, such as allowing Julie agency and creativity (13 March; 8 May) while supporting and building a supportive environment through regulation (20 March) and active listening (9 May). I always tried to keep Julie as close to me as possible to acknowledge her (10 April) and help her self-regulate (20 March). I learned to be dedicated to understanding and embracing diversity through reflection and collaboration with colleagues in music education.

7.3 Stop and Listen

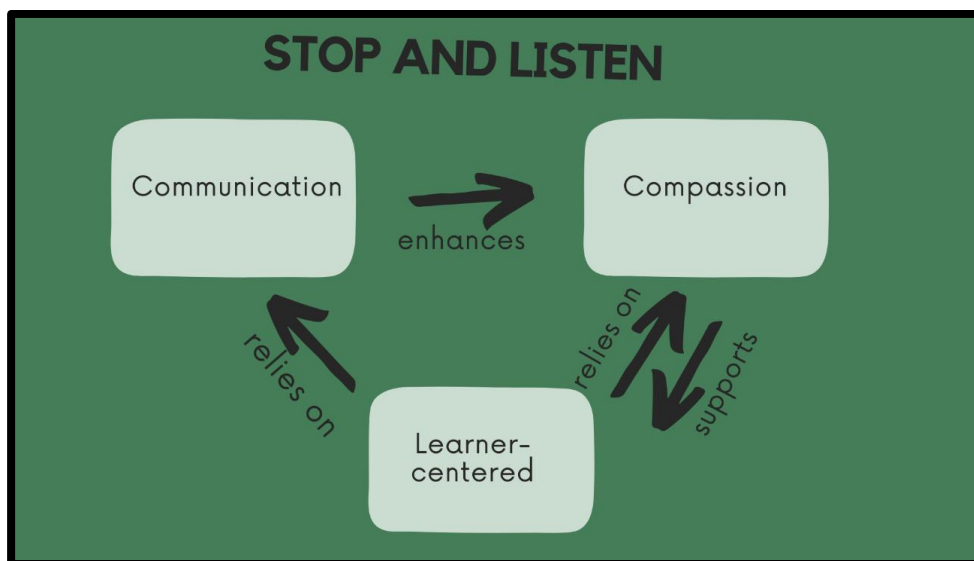


Figure 7.4: Stop and Listen

Through stopping and listening in the classroom, I realised that communication, compassion and a learner-centred environment formed an integrated framework where communication enhances compassion. Compassion supports a learner-centred outlook by placing the needs and well-being of the learner at the forefront of the learning process. A learner-centred approach, which relies on communication and empathy, involves understanding and responding to each learner's unique needs and emotions (Figure 7.4). At the start of my journey as a music teacher, I was far from being learner-centred. I focused on following the curriculum and lesson plans to the letter, with little room for play or flexibility. I believed that structure and assessment were the keys to success, so I spent a lot of time creating quizzes to measure the learners' progress. But the most embarrassing part for me now was what I did after marking those tests – I would ask the learners to stand up based on their scores, starting with those who got 10/10 down to those who scored 1/10. I thought it was a way to motivate them, but looking back, I realise it was completely disrespectful and utterly humiliating. I was introduced to the Reggio Emilia approach in 2015 by my Headmistress at the private school in Johannesburg, South Africa, where I had been appointed. The Reggio Emilia approach and its deep respect for relationships and the environment profoundly influenced my teaching and learning journey. The emphasis on the relationship and the negotiation between teacher and learner shaped my learner-centred classroom. I came to realise that viewing the child as capable, creative and inherently musical is essential, as it acknowledges the child as a capable creator in their own learning process. The observations of my lesson by my critical friend Naomi (22 April) highlight how I fostered an inclusive and inviting environment by being observant and responsive to the body language and needs of the learners in my class.

I think it's also about just the teacher being observant regarding the body language and movement of children around, and when and where possible to try and bring herself to that space where the learning environment becomes more inclusive and more inviting (Naomi, 57:10). Naomi then adds:

I also think that the teacher is quite aware of the relational aspect of the children. You can see that she's busy trying to teach 90% of the children at once. Then suddenly, she picks up there is an outsider or an outlier and is able to draw her into the lesson without necessarily having any form of conversation, but perhaps by the fact that there is a pre-existing relationship as well. So it's almost as if the teacher's drawing on pre-existing relationships established over time and drawing

on that to the lesson's advantage to enhance the learning experience for everybody concerned (57:4).

In Naomi's observation, it is evident that I created an inclusive learning experience by being attentive and responsive to the learners' body language in my classroom and relying on existing relationships that I had previously built. I recognised when learners like Yola (52:62) needed additional emotional support, or when a learner like Sandra felt excluded (56:4). I attempted to use my relationship with the learners to create a more supportive environment where I understood the individual needs of the learners.

Yola was sitting in the corner crying and had been crying for the last few lessons. I took her outside the class to console her, and she murmured so much that I struggled to hear her. She just wanted to hug me. She said she misses her mommy. "Can I be your music mommy?" I asked her (70:7).

In this reflection, I demonstrated compassion by responding to Yola, who was crying and missing her mother (Addendum O). I took Yola outside to console her, offering to be her "music mommy". By showing empathy, I could build a trusting relationship. Through this empathy, I addressed Yola's immediate emotional needs and contributed to a more positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. As a teacher who is communicative, compassionate and learner-centred, I prioritised stopping and listening, while being attentive to the learners' body language (56:4), actively engaging in meaningful conversations (70:7), showing empathy and adapting my lessons based on the needs and interests of the learners (82:5).

I wanted to ensure that I create a dynamic and supportive learning environment where learners are engaged, acknowledged, understood and empowered. After Natasha, a critical friend, observed a music lesson, she noted: "You acknowledge everything they were saying, you actually responded to their thoughts and ideas, you complimented and acknowledged, and I think that made them feel like their involvement was meaningful and they contributed" (46:13). I reflect on my journey towards becoming a more communicative teacher. I employed several strategies to enhance verbal and non-verbal communication between the learners in my classroom.

7.3.1 Communicative

After my first lesson with the new learners in Grade 1, I reflected on how nervous I felt about the lesson and how unsure I felt about the learners finding a connection with the

music, the music room, or me. I felt scared because I was worried that the learners would not engage (Addendum O). With my own anxiety about a non-connection between the learners, between me and the learners, and the learners with the music, I started integrating musical games and activities into my lessons. I tried to focus on the relationship between the learners themselves and between me and the learners. All the musical games I incorporated into my lessons included some form of communication. Some activities required verbal communication, while a few of the musical games and activities required non-verbal communication, such as eye contact and body language (81:24). I incorporated activities such as clapping games and ball-passing games, where the girls had to turn their bodies towards the person with whom they were communicating while making eye contact. *The parachute song* (Addendum E) also encouraged the learners to communicate non-verbally, maintaining eye contact and respecting each other (81:25). On 20 March, the entry in my reflective journal was:

While singing the song [*The Parachute Goes Up and Down*], one girl had to communicate with someone across from her in the circle to swop places when the parachute was up, but the catch was they weren't allowed to use their voices because their voices had to sing the song.

The learners had to learn to communicate without using their voices, which required creativity from both the learners and me as the teacher. Although explaining non-verbal communication is somewhat of an abstract idea and a challenge to understand, I found that these non-verbal activities developed an understanding of non-verbal cues and aided the learners to be more cooperative and respectful towards their classmates. I designed these activities to make non-verbal communication more intentional. I had to ensure the learners were engaged and having fun to maintain their interest. Implementing and encouraging non-verbal communication was challenging but rewarding (43:31). The non-verbal communication between the learners improved as they were exposed to these activities in my music classroom (Addendum O).

Throughout my teaching, I was committed to active listening to build stronger relationships with the learners in my class (83:2). I had to be attentive to their needs and feedback to create a more supportive learning environment. I tried to proactively manage the dynamics of the groups to avoid unnecessary conflict. For instance, in my music lesson on 8 May 2023 (Addendum O), the girls had to choose one colour to represent their group to create *crescendos* and *decrescendos* with various-sized dots. I learned that

letting a group of learners choose their own different coloured pencils could be contentious, so I distributed the coloured pencils to prevent conflict so that the dynamics in the classroom remained cooperative and harmonious. This example made me realise that active listening is not only what is said; it can also be reading the group dynamics and the learners' body language.

On February 14, I jotted down: "We moved into a circle, and I suddenly thought, with everyone being so eager [to share], maybe I should use a device to indicate that the girls should take turns to talk. What a genius move! No one shouted out!" (41:7). I focused on leading by example, showing the learners what was expected rather than telling them (40:42). This method was effective, as seen in my journal entry above when I used a talking stick during reflection time to allocate speaking turns. Learners were able to take turns speaking without anyone interrupting. Using the talking stick also illustrated the importance of balancing speaking and listening (41:10). This approach promoted respect for the speaker and encouraged attentive listening.

As I explored Hervé Tullet's book, *Say Zoop* (2017), I was genuinely inspired by the rich array of musical possibilities it offered. My excitement grew as I saw how well it aligned with my focus on relational teaching and non-verbal communication. I employed abstract activities such as using dots that communicate through expressions such as 'oh' and 'ah' to foster interaction and communication in different and imaginative ways (70:10;12). I had to encourage the girls to explore and express themselves non-verbally, which was challenging and new for them. I noticed that I needed to reword and even model some instructions to enable better understanding (42:34). I found that clear and effective communication was crucial for the success of the activities. These activities gave my learners unique opportunities to explore aspects of communication and expression. I also found that my conflict negotiation and accommodation skills developed.

The girls found it hard to work together because it was hard to find a size 'oh' that they both liked. They suggested they should not work together during group activities to avoid conflict. I calmly told them that they needed to be able to compromise to make it work. I added, "What if you were the last two people left on Earth, and you need to save it?" To compromise, you must take turns; the one chooses the colour, and the next person makes the first dot (71:11).

As also described in the situation above, the challenge in a social learning environment is the conflicts that can arise. In an interview with Naomi (29 May), she described the social learning context in my music classroom:

In terms of how children learn, or human beings learn, or how they interact with one another, I think that a large part of it is around negotiating or negotiation. And often, for want of a better word, it's the negotiation of conflict situations. So, the children need to reach a compromise where they can accommodate one another, accommodate one another's different levels of skill, and perhaps even compensate for somebody else's lack of skill. Particularly if they're partnering up and starting to dance with one another, and then they realise that it can sometimes be quite difficult to mirror and cooperate, especially if someone has a slightly more advanced take. So I think that the social-emotional or the social aspect of learning is around just understanding that you can negotiate. And part of that negotiation is to compromise. And in order to compromise, you've sometimes got to be quite accommodating as well. So, without them necessarily knowing, there's a lot of accommodating going on to reach a compromise (57:8).

Naomi's observations encapsulate the social learning aspect of my development. Through the music activities in my classroom, I had to facilitate social learning between the learners, where they learned to negotiate, compromise and accommodate each other's skills and abilities. My role was to ask the right questions, model the correct behaviour, and guide them through conflict situations. This social learning aspect involves understanding and accommodation, which is fundamental to effective communication.

7.3.2 Compassionate

From being a rigid teacher, I have developed a deep sense of compassion, striving to create an environment where every learner feels valued, supported and understood. Ensuring the inclusion and participation of all the learners was not always an easy task. Hadley was hesitant to participate in all the activities; this meant that I had to actively involve her by gently taking her hand and leading her to participate (81:2). I always try to make everyone feel included as I see my role is to nurture a sense of belonging, ensuring every child feels part of the group (83:1). Michelle, a music education expert, observed that my strong relationships with the girls allowed me to understand their feelings and adapt the lessons compassionately, ensuring they still felt the activities were fun and playful. She said:

Because you have good relationships with the girls, you know how they feel because they tell you, and you are tuned in. Therefore, you can adapt the lesson with compassion to still give them the feeling of fun and playfulness and involvement, despite illness and feeling a bit off (82:5).

Especially with an entire class of learners, I found it challenging to manage the emotional stress of one child while trying to keep the rest of the class interested. Yola frequently cried and missed her mother, which required me to provide emotional support. I learned that sometimes it is best to remove the emotion from the classroom, so I took Yola outside to comfort her and addressed the situation there. When learners like Sandra were sulking, I included them (81:1). In my reflection journal, I wrote about Sandra sulking again and how I tried to include her by asking her to come and stand next to me in the circle (81:1). This moment with Sandra shows my intention to include every learner in my activities.

I also showed compassion and empathy, especially when the learners realised they made mistakes. Julie was upset when the activity ended too soon and shouted that her ideas were gone. I reassured her that she could come back anytime to finish (38:21). My reassurance calmed her. I demonstrated my understanding. I also assured Hadley that when she mentioned making "two accidents," there were no mistakes in my classroom, only opportunities to learn and try again (38:32). I tried to make the girls feel emotionally safe in my music lessons by continuously observing and responding to their needs. In my reflective entry on 24 January, I noted that the girls were keen to share their experiences, indicating they felt safe and free from being judged (38:33). Learners not only shared their experiences, but also their emotions.

Lola opened up and shared that she felt sad in her heart (42:31). Her willingness to share her sadness further demonstrated the trusting relationships I had built with my learners. It is true that I was not always compassionate; as I mentioned before, I was highly anxious, which led to my rigid and unforgiving teaching style. I was liberated when I met my current promoters, who changed my perspective. They inspired me to be a better person, not just academically but personally as well. Their approach was rooted in compassion, and it was through them that my journey toward compassionate teaching truly started. Their insistence made me devour Karin Hendricks's book *Compassionate Music Teaching* (2018). Through many personal and academic conversations, I have found ways to be more compassionate, and my teaching style has changed and evolved towards greater compassion and empathy. Through my compassionate teaching journey,

I tried to foster a sense of belonging among all the learners and ensure no one felt left out or neglected. Natasha, my critical friend, observed a lesson and stated that I acknowledged the children and responded to their thoughts and ideas while complimenting and acknowledging them. She said that I made every child feel like they had contributed and that involvement was meaningful (46:13).

I had created a classroom environment where everyone felt needed. I also observed the learners' body language, making my classroom inclusive and inviting. In an interview, Naomi noted that I brought myself to the learner's level, involving those who felt left out by drawing them into the lesson. This inclusivity was evident when I grabbed Hadley's hand during a scarf dance, working one-on-one to make the activity fun and exciting for her (56:29). Through these experiences, I have become a compassionate teacher, continuously striving to create an inclusive, supportive and empathetic learning environment for all my learners.

7.3.3 Learner-Centred

Through my exposure to the Reggio Emilia approach, I have discovered that seeing each child as capable is vital, because it recognises them as the ones driving their own learning. Although my teaching style used to be predominantly teacher-centred, I shifted to learner-centred teaching. I created a learner-centred music classroom by facilitating group dynamics, embracing group work, encouraging the learners' creative expression and promoting independence. In the learner-centred music classroom, I adopted the role of facilitator, especially in addressing group dynamic issues. Instead of directly resolving conflicts, I asked questions that could lead to conflict resolution. I needed to facilitate, empower and give the girls the voice to manage and resolve their conflicts independently.

When Jenny took over in her group without considering the feelings or input of her group, I asked the learners how they could compromise to make everyone in the group happy. Cath replied that everyone needs to take turns (71:29). Observing this moment, I realised that for the learners to resolve their conflict, I often had to stand back instead of taking control. I only needed to facilitate the learners' attempts to find solutions to their conflict situations, or to ensure that they were working collaboratively in groups.

In my reflection on 13 March (Addendum O), I wrote: "I thought it was chaos at the beginning, but I felt it was rewarding towards the end. Seeing how the girls were so

creative and had such unique ideas was rewarding". My biggest challenge in the learner-centred classroom was accepting a bit of loss of control in my classroom (40:19), because I enjoy being in control of the environment. Helena understood my personal dilemma, but supported the notion of a learner-centred environment when she suggested that letting go of control is often how you create a more cooperative environment (40:49). In my evolving role as a learner-centred music teacher, the noisy sharing of ideas became a beautiful sound in my ears (52:29). By encouraging learners to work in collaborative groups, I created a more cooperative environment (40:35), where the learners contributed more creatively. Michelle, a music education expert, noted that such cooperation strengthens relational pedagogy (83:9).

In our *Hello song* (Addendum H), I encouraged the girls to create their own moves for the validation song. In the validation song, learners were given the freedom to choose their preferred greeting, such as a hug, a high five, a wave or a wiggle. This activity was designed to empower the learners to make decisions in the music classroom. It also allowed them to choose an action that resonated with their personality and made them feel validated. I reflected at the beginning of April: "It was beautiful to see how the girls were still busy creating moves for the *Hello song* during reflection time. They were enjoying the song and maybe reflecting on their own validation language" (52:29). As a learner-centred teacher, I strove to empower learners by creating a relationship-driven classroom. Naomi noted that this approach fosters a sense of independence that contrasts with traditional classrooms where learners might feel passive. I enabled agency and empowerment by providing a free space for movement and expression. This learner-centred approach promotes learners' engagement and participation, and enhances confidence and independence (57:16). By focusing on these aspects, I created a learner-centred music classroom that values each learner's voice, fosters creativity and nurtures independence.

7.4 Intentional Connection through Music

For me, the intentional connection that I tried to establish was between myself and the learners, between learner and learner, and between the music and materials and the learners. I tried to focus every hello song in my lessons on intentionally connecting, making eye contact, saying *yebo*, and giving high fives. Natasha commented that

intentional connection was evident through my one-on-one comments or the *yebo*¹⁴ song, where I made eye contact and connected to every child individually (46:4). Helena (38:17), music education expert, also suggested after reflecting on my first lesson that movement is ideal for building relationships. Taking Helena's advice, I intentionally set up my classroom to accommodate this. I structured my lessons to encourage connection between learners through activities such as dances, singing, movement and working in collaboration with other learners.

I noticed that the learners loved making eye contact with each other through song and dance. My music lessons became more intentional, where establishing the connection between the learners was the priority (43:30). In an interview, my critical friend Natasha stated:

In terms of relationships in the classroom, the first thing I think about is that little activity that you did in the beginning. That activity really made a connection, the *yebo* one [...] having a relationship-driven philosophy is important and that little activity was so small, but if you reach a few kids each time, I think it's really important (46:1).

I carefully planned lessons, such as the lesson where the learners had to design percussion instruments from recycled material to feel a connection with the material and manipulate the sound elements. I also designed and planned for a connection between learners as they experimented, planned and designed their instruments. On 13 March, I jotted down in my reflection journal that I felt like the relational element within the lesson was successful. It was evident that there was a relationship between peers, teacher and child, and materials that were manipulated into percussion instruments (40:38). This observation shows a complete shift from my first lesson, where the only relationship that existed was between me and Haydn's *Surprise Symphony* (refer to 7.1.1), to a relationship between me and the learners, among learners and with the materials. In another lesson where I designed and planned for intentional connections, the learners had to listen to music and reflect with a partner on how the music made them feel or what they experienced (14 February). This activity had a twofold purpose: I wanted each

¹⁴ The learners were encouraged to walk around the class. They took three steps while counting (1,2,3) and the pointed to someone close to them, made eye contact and said *yebo* (on the fourth beat). After greeting someone with a *yebo*, the learners took another three steps and said another *yebo*. This activity was repeated for several times.

learner to feel the connection with the music, and experience either an emotion or formulate a narrative. The second part of the activity was to share this experience with a friend. Sharing with a friend was intended to create an emotional and intellectual connection with a fellow learner. Following the activity, I reflected:

I think that it is evident that every person has their own unique experience with the music [...] This lesson was more focused on the relational aspect. The girls got to share their experiences with each other, and then we shared them with the rest of the class (42:30).

During our contact time, I tried to gain an understanding of the interests and backgrounds of the learners in my music class. I really wanted to have a relationship with every child in my class. However, I found this challenging because of time limits and learning outcomes that had to be met. Small pockets of time became available when I could reach out to a specific learner, like when I discovered it was Oakley's birthday. I tried to make her feel special by affording her that little extra attention when the whole class sang for her, and we celebrated her (56:57).

Even though the time was limited and classes had about 25 learners to acknowledge, which made bonding with the learners individually a bit more challenging, I tried to reach out to them, including them and ensure they felt like they belonged and had fun. After I grabbed Hadley's hand to include her and let her be my partner in the scarf dance, she said that she was feeling better and that she had fun. She added that she loved being part of the dance and doing it with someone. She stated that it made her feel happy (56:27). My reflection following the lesson on 10 April (Addendum O) was:

As I tried to read into the situation, Hadley felt like she was part of the lesson, probably for the first time. She strikes me as one who sulks because she will not participate unless someone takes her by the hand and lures her in. The most surprising is that Hadley enjoyed participating. I especially enjoyed it when Hadley shared that she loved "spinning around and making my scarf jump up and down" (56:30).

With my desire to create an intentional connection between the learners and me and between the learners themselves, I had to create an environment where all the learners felt they could express themselves and where their expressions were respected. Within a collaborative setting, a challenge is to balance the different personalities, giving the withdrawn child more opportunities and ensuring the domineering child shares more. The

following observations were a week apart, and the girls had to create pieces with 'ohs' and 'ahs' (8 May).

Jenny didn't find a friend. She always picks Molly so that she can domineer her. Molly stood up for herself and said she wanted to go with someone else today. I had to support the idea of girls choosing different partners, especially in domineering partnerships where they couldn't make any decisions for themselves. I was so proud of Molly for speaking up (71:25) (Addendum O). One week later, I went to Jenny, Bailey, and Amber's group, and they took turns creating. "Well done, Jenny, I am so proud of you", I whispered to her (81:20).

The dynamics in Jenny's group indicated positive growth. Jenny's connection and interaction with her group became more cooperative and respectful. Therefore, collaborative activities created connections. Following the activities in each lesson, the learners had to reflect on how they enjoyed the activity, the challenges and their experiences working in a group, and they had the opportunity to present their work. After my interview with Natasha, she reiterated that she thought the moment of sharing was also part of the attempt to create intentional connections that ran through my lessons. She said, "I think also giving each child a chance to present their little idea, I mean, that does make that connection. You are speaking directly to each of them, and you have that one-on-one moment with every child" (46:5).

As part of my ever-evolving role as a relationship-driven music teacher, I married a profoundly compassionate educator who taught me that relationships are at the heart of everything meaningful in life. I used to be envious of how he was able to change young lives just by being compassionate, gentle and understanding. Through a lot of reflection, hard work and focus on intentional compassion and understanding, I shifted my role to one of nurturing and being compassionate. Through my reflections and interviews with critical friends (Addendum B; Addendum O), it became clear that I intentionally set up my classroom to foster meaningful connections between learners. I carefully structured my lessons by teaching life skills through music to encourage learners to connect with the music and share these experiences with a friend to deepen interpersonal connections. Through teaching life skills through music, I tried to understand my learners' interests and backgrounds to enable me to create an environment where every learner felt empowered to express themselves and where their expressions were respected.

7.5 Life Skills through Music

As a relationship-driven music teacher, I teach life skills through music, dance and song. These life skills include interpersonal skills, self-awareness and thinking skills. Interpersonal skills are the range of abilities we use to communicate with others.

7.5.1 Interpersonal Skills

In my music lessons, I tried to teach the learners to listen more attentively to their peers and to me as the facilitator of musicking, when I was talking. Music education expert Michelle encouraged me to incorporate more listening into my lessons when she pointed out that listening is such an essential component for strengthening relationships (83:2). In order to strengthen the relationships between the learners and between me and the learners, I actively promoted and encouraged more listening. The talking stick was a very effective tool for promoting attentive listening. The talking stick served the purpose of visually separating talking and listening. The talking stick tool enabled the learners to experience communication in a two-fold process (42:28). They had to listen to the person holding the stick, and everyone else had to listen when it was their turn to talk. The highlight of using the talking stick was to see how seriously each learner took this process (71:16). I reflected that: "Cath regulates discipline and communication in the classroom by looking for the talking stick and handing it to the person sharing" (56:61).

Another aspect that aligned with talking and listening was leading and following. Some learners had the opportunity to take charge of our music lessons when they had never taken on a leadership role before (54:14). Music-making was fertile ground for practising leadership skills, such as making up different moves for everyone to copy (4 April). Julie and Molly, as only children, have never had the opportunity to lead. Both these girls enjoyed the responsibility. Julie exclaimed: "I was very good being in charge (54:14), while Molly responded, "I loved being in charge" (54:13). Music also created the environment for younger siblings, such as Oakley, to take charge in situations. She said that her sister never copies her because she is much older than her. She said excitedly that today everyone copied her actions and that she loved being in charge (54:15).

As part of developing interpersonal skills, showing empathy to other learners was important. In my journey as a relationship-driven teacher, Julie played a significant role in showing empathy in my classroom. As trying as it was at times, the empathy that I showed

to Julie affected the other learners (70:14; 81:10). Days when someone was having a bad day, the other learners would follow my actions of handing a regulation tool or giving hugs. I reflected on 10 April (Addendum O): “In the meantime, Julie is licking the girls, causing complete chaos. Cath saw the need and got the fidget toy on the piano, she handed it to Julie” (56:51). On 10 April, Sage reported that Yola was in a bad mood. She was somewhat concerned (56:53), and when Cath saw Julie was not coping or regulating, she handed her the fidget toy (56:61). Julie started spinning on the floor when Oakley searched for the pop bracelet to help Julie regulate (81:14).

Resolving conflicts calmly was a necessary part of interpersonal life skills. Calmly resolving conflicts was reliant on a safe music environment. I, therefore, had to create a music environment where no one felt judged, and it was acceptable to reflect and express concerns. Jenny shared with me that she realised she is bossy. She shared that: “It is because I never share, and I don’t take turns” (81:16). Jenny’s realisation ultimately led her to “try and share and give everyone a turn to participate in the group” (81:16). Through Jenny’s journey to share, Molly also used this safe space to stand up for herself and make her own decisions (83:6).

Another interpersonal life skill that I witnessed in the music classroom was the ability to make new friendships. Sandra felt conflicted and somewhat lonely. Through the dancing activities in the music classroom, she had the opportunity to form new friendships (56:26). Helena also commented on the power of music activities to build new relationships (61:6). On 10 April (Addendum O); I jotted down in my reflection journal:

I felt the power of music without sounding like a cliché today. There were tangible friendship issues as the girls walked in, and they walked out in a good space. Music had the power to transform Sandra’s mood and the status and quality of her friendship. Music and dancing enabled her to make a new friend. Using music to dance transformed not just Sandra but everyone’s mood in the class (56:28).

Understanding non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and body language, was emphasised through the music activities. As mentioned, non-verbal communication skills were practised through musical activities such as parachute songs (20 March) and clapping games (17 May). These skills helped me build positive relationships and navigate social situations smoothly.

7.5.2 Self-Awareness

As part of teaching life skills through music, the learners had to become aware of their own feelings and behaviours during music activities. They had to reflect on their emotions through active listening to music, like *Sunrise* from the Grand Canyon Suite, and share their views with the rest of the class (24 January). Music education expert, Michelle, suggested that the learners first draw what they feel to allow for the development of intrapersonal intelligence, before sharing with a friend and myself as the teacher (41:18). In the following lesson, I let the learners listen to *Carmina Burana* (14 February). The learners had to draw and reflect on how the music influenced their mood before sharing it with a peer and the rest of the learners. Following the listening activity, I reflected on how I thought this listening experience was effective. I wrote that the learners could experience emotions while presenting their feelings visually and that I believed that the listening activity awakened an emotional state in the child that was triggered through the music (38:24). I found it profound that the music provided an opportunity for every individual to ascribe personal meaning, creating a deeper self-awareness for every learner in my music classroom. I stated that I thought it was evident that every learner had their own unique experience with the music (42:8). I created a space where the learners reflected on their emotions and experience of the music with their peers. Through facilitation, I found that sharing and comparing their reflections with their partners led to a deeper awareness of self.

7.5.3 Thinking Skills

Thinking skills were another life skill that was presented through music activities. Thinking skills involve connecting different ideas, creative thinking and collaborating with others. On 24 January, the learners listened to and reflected on their emotions during *Sunrise* from the Grand Canyon Suite. I was pretty amazed at how Ashley connected the music, her feelings and her relationship with her new class teacher (38:17). She was the only child who connected the music with an emotion and a relationship, which I found quite profound. She proclaimed that the music made her think of Miss T and her walking in the garden. She felt that Miss T was kind to her and that the kind and calm music reminded her of her special teacher (38:10). On 8 May, when the learners had to create *crescendos* and *decrescendos* with varied-sized dots, I observed their thinking skills through careful group negotiation, creativity and collaboration between friends (71:14;33).

7.6 Flourishing Through Music

As a relationship-driven music teacher, I facilitated personal flourishing in my lessons. During data analysis, I noticed patterns in the data: the flourishing codes could be categorised using the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011; Seligman et al., 2004), Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002, 2017, 2017; Ryan & Martela, 2016) and 24 VIA character strengths (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004) as theoretical lenses. These theoretical lenses were not applied from the outset, but only once all the data had been coded did I use these theories to move the code list from a descriptive to a conceptual level. This was not an inductive nor a deductive but rather an abductive approach. I used abduction to explore possible meaningful links between theories and models to help me interpret the data effectively before reaching any conclusions.

7.6.1 Cultivating PERMA in my Music Classroom

After noticing how much the learners flourished in my music classroom, I used the PERMA model to analyse and categorise their positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement, which I observed during the music activities.

7.6.1.1 Positive Emotions

Because of my rigidity and lack of empathy at the beginning of my learning journey, instead of fostering positive emotions, I created a tense and stressful environment (refer to 7.1.3.5). To become a relationship-driven teacher, I tried to cultivate positive emotions, as this is essential for the learner to flourish. I tried to create an uplifting environment through fun songs, musical games, movement and dance. I relied on the integration of playful activities to make music fun. In quite a few instances, I could feel the learners' enjoyment, their smiles and their silent desire that the activity would never end (40:43; 81:27).

I encouraged my learners to think creatively and express themselves through singing, movement, and dancing, as well as through the weekly music activities. I enjoyed observing Tisha and how creative she was after still being intrigued by making percussion instruments out of everyday objects; a week after our percussion lesson, she would interrupt to add another percussive sound (20 March). Helena expressed that the activity stimulated the learners' creativity and that joyful, positive emotions help the child to be more creative (43:34).

As a relationship-driven teacher, I tried to promote collaboration and social interaction in my music class to create a positive environment. The social interaction in hello songs made the learners “feel warm on the inside” (52:53) and “loved” (52:55). With the copycat game (10 April), there were giggles all around (56:41). Learners like Tina felt excited to see what actions her partner would make up in the copycat game (56:15). I facilitated positive emotions by incorporating mindfulness into my music lessons (14 February). As activities in my lessons, learners listened to calming music and reflected on their feelings (24 January; 14 February). I also guided the learners through breathing exercises (14 February). In the first music lesson on 24 January, when the learners listened to *Sunrise* from the Grand Canyon Suite, positive emotions were evoked. At some stage, I was concerned, as per my reflection:

I felt like this class had missed the point entirely. I heard more stories about princesses and castles than sunrises. Maybe the princess theme is the feeling of empowerment? Perhaps the increasing dynamics and intensity of the music contributed to the sense of self-worth, the empowerment of the individual and the feeling of grandeur (38:34).

I concluded my reflection with the following comment: “For now, I am interpreting that the music made them feel grand, unique, special and extraordinary” (38:37). In this reflection, I felt confused that the overall imagery of the music was castles and princesses. Still pondering, I realised that princesses and castles make 6-year-old girls happy. I have therefore created a space where the learners felt “grand, unique, special and extraordinary” (38:37). They could experience happiness as a positive emotion while listening to music (38:34). As the girls actively listened to music like *Sunrise* from the Grand Canyon Suite or *Carmina Burana*, some learners felt “calm” and “relaxed” (38:8; 42:27; 52:16), while other learners such as Luna and Carla experienced such overwhelming positive emotions that they wanted to get up and dance (42:36). Rosa and Sandra reflected on the music lesson on 3 April and compared how they felt emotionally to a “full bucket” (52:17; 12:17). The *Hello song* (3 April), also impacted positively on the learners' emotions (52:53; 55:58).

As the music facilitator who aids the children in flourishing, I always try to model and demonstrate positive emotions. I was enthusiastic every time I saw the girls. My enthusiasm was evident in always arriving at their classes promptly and walking the girls to my classroom in some imaginative way, either a train (3 April), marching (3 April) or

flying fairies (10 April). I also incorporated humour where it was appropriate (8 May). Annie described her experience with the parachute game as “refreshing” (52:57), because she loved the humour in signalling to a friend by pulling a funny face. Bailey also remarked that laughing with her friend makes her happy (54:21). Creating an environment where learners can laugh together brings positive emotions.

On 13 March, Helena suggested that I integrate reflections as part of the music activity to provide a more extensive level of guidance to learners. I took her advice and resorted to reflection time following the music activities. I tried to steer the girls toward reflecting on their successes and the positive feelings that went hand in hand with their tasks, for instance, telling Hadley that her work was great as long as she tried. I aimed to encourage her efforts and reinforce her confidence (24 January). I also found that once the girls got used to the talking stick, there were positive emotions regarding the fact that learners could share while their friends listened. Having her friends listen while she shared made Jenny “happy” (54:20). In all my encounters in the music classroom, I aimed to promote positive emotions to make music joyful and enriching.

7.6.1.2 Engagement

To cultivate engagement in the music classroom, I tried to incorporate varied activities to keep the learners interested and involved. These activities always included singing, but this alternated between moving (4 April; 10 April), including props like the parachute (20 March), balls (17 May; 20 March) and scarves (10 April), active listening (24 January), creating (8 May; 9 May), designing instruments (13 March), experimenting with the sounds of percussion instruments made from recycled material (13 March), expressing melodic contours through voices (8 May; 9 May) and tones for the jungle gyms (15 May). I was deliberate in trying to introduce a new concept weekly.

I tried to keep the learners engaged by providing creative freedom and encouraging them to take the lead, as discussed in the learner-centred classroom (section 7.3.3). On 4 April, when the learners created their moves for the copycat game, I was aware of their engagement. I reflected after the lesson that I enjoyed seeing the girls excited to participate and engage in the music lessons. It made me feel like I gave them the skills and materials they needed to create their knowledge socially. I noted that it was apparent that they loved working together (54:25).

Through these collaborations in the music classrooms, the learners felt engaged. I attempted to give the learners a sense of ownership, and it seemed to work. After demonstrating the copycat game, I saw that the learners were set to work very eagerly. I noticed that every child was wholly engaged in their group work, and some girls tried to make more challenging actions for the rest to copy (54:7). This reflection indicates the commitment and engagement of the learners in this musical activity. Following the activities in the classroom, I challenged every learner to share and reflect on their experiences and learning. I allowed all the learners to take turns with the talking stick and reflect in front of all the learners to encourage their engagement and motivation. Natasha commented that the learners were desperate to share their ideas (46:9). She further said that she thought because they were bonding with each other and with the music teacher, it motivated them; they wanted to take part, and they were desperate to share their ideas (46:9).

I planned all the activities in the music classroom to be cooperative and collaborative because I believe that collaboration and social learning help develop communication between learners, enabling them to motivate one another. Through my regular reflection and feedback opportunities, learners felt encouraged, and they wanted to share what they had learned with one another (Natasha, 46:9).

7.6.1.3 Positive Relationships

Since my motive was to create a relational space for the learners, the most critical part was to build strong relationships in the classroom, as this creates a positive atmosphere where learners experience positive emotions and feel safe engaging. I attempted to create a setting where learners could learn socially through music while having fun. I reflected after the lesson (20 March) that every single child participated and enjoyed social learning with their friends through music and movement (43:10).

Enjoyment and social learning promoted positive relationships in my music classroom. These positive relationships are also pivotal to flourishing in the music room. As the facilitator of musicking, I endeavoured to build trust by showing interest in the learners' lives and also in their learning. I tried to gain trust by being approachable and listening to and supporting the learners (52:62; 56:4). To build stronger relationships, I often provided emotional support where conflicts arose. I was frequently the voice of reason in negotiation situations (71:29; 81:16), and these conflict situations were resolved

instantaneously. It was evident that there was a positive relationship between me and the learners, as the girls often came up to me for a hug and a "You're the best, Mrs Quinn" (43:5).

Since I knew how meaningful positive relationships are for one to flourish, I promoted and developed relationships in my music activities by introducing and facilitating collaborative learning. I modelled respect and kindness to set the tone for how learners interact with others. In activities such as the validation song (3 April), respect and kindness were incorporated. Helena commented after reflecting on the lesson that the learners learn to care about others and give love to each other (61:9). Respect in relationships also includes listening when others are sharing, so I introduced the talking stick as it promotes positive communication and builds respect. On 17 May, when the girls kept the beat by passing the ball to their friends, I could see enjoyment, but I also saw the valuable component of respect in communication built into the lesson. The learners had to concentrate on passing the ball respectfully, making eye contact with the learner they received the ball from, and then again making eye contact with the learner they passed the ball to. I reflected that the activity had valuable communication and relational lessons, such as respect and non-verbal communication (81:31). Through this learning journey, I found that respect serves as the foundation of positive relationships. When the girls designed their melodic contour jungle gyms, Cath exclaimed that they were working together nicely, because Annie was talking so nicely to her (81:28). Communicating with respect influenced Cath and Annie's teamwork, making it enjoyable for them (81:28). Passing the ball respectfully made Ziva understand her friend (81:30). These observations illustrate the positive relationships that developed through music activities, creating conditions for personal flourishing.

7.6.1.4 Meaning

I tried to create meaning for the learners during the music activities by connecting learning experiences to personal experiences. For instance, in the activity on 9 May, the different coloured dots created an opportunity for the learners to express their own emotions and interactions through graphics and non-verbal communication (Figure 7.5). Learners were able to express emotions ranging from happiness to anger, as seen in Figure 7.5. In Figure 7.6, the dots represented anger but were addressing their disagreements, which ultimately resulted in 'happy dots' (Figure 7.6).

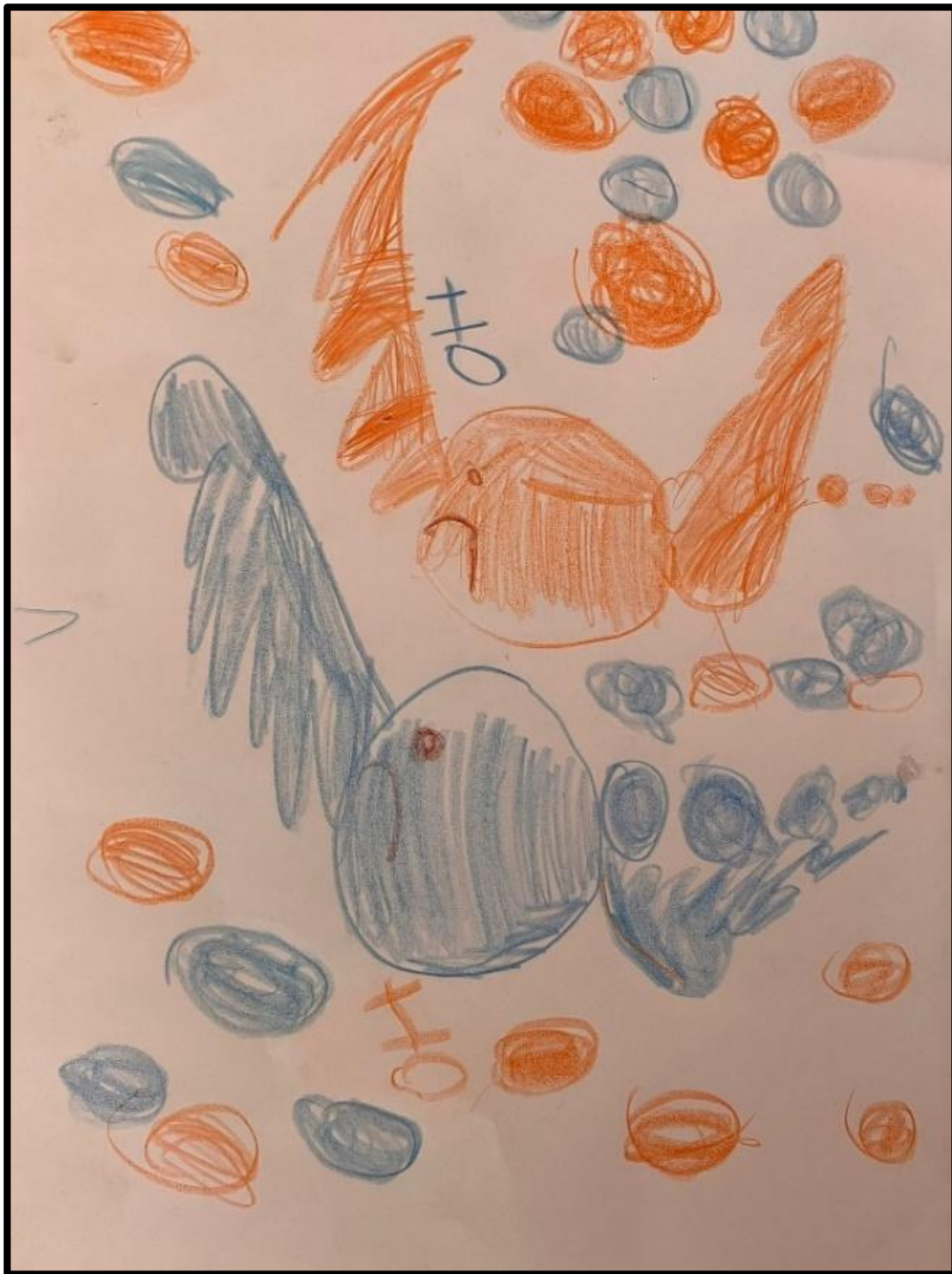


Figure 7.5: Dots Representing Anger

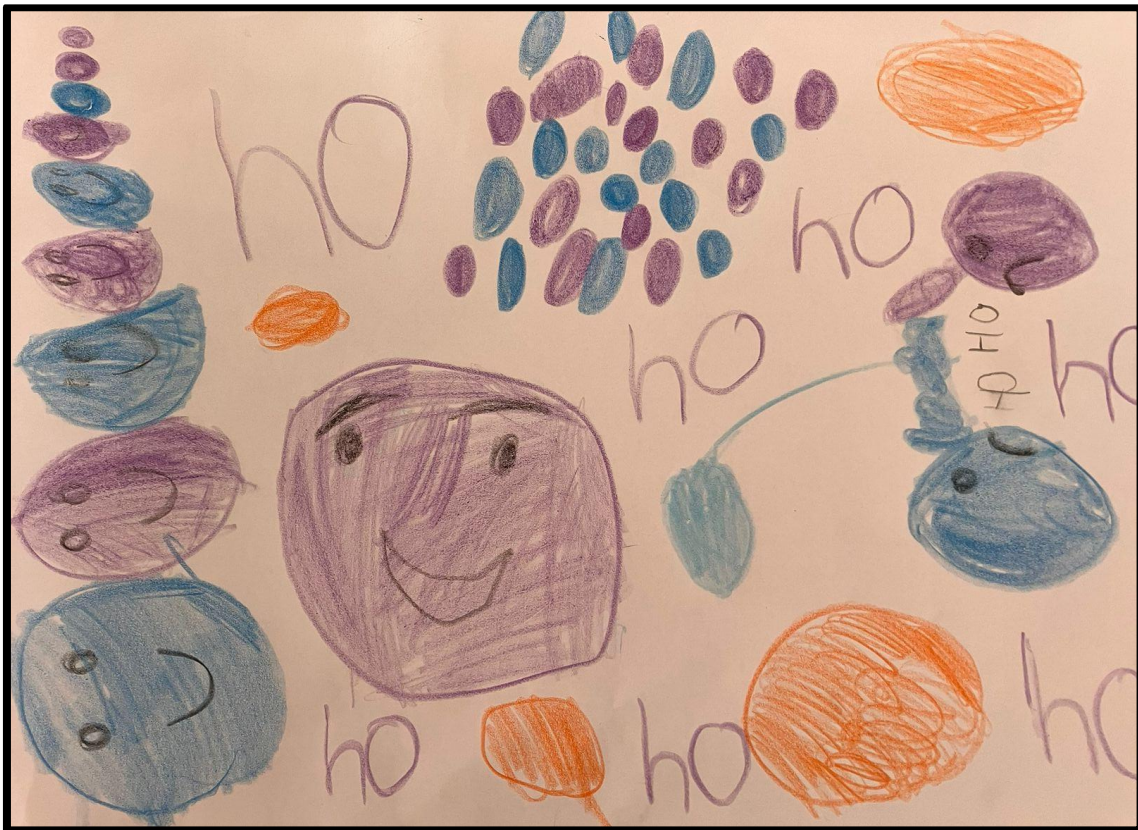


Figure 7.6: Addressing Disagreements

Listening to music and connecting the music to emotions creates meaning and impact (20 January; 14 February). After the learners listened to *Sunrise* from the Grand Canyon Suite and *Carmina Burana*, I encouraged storytelling by using music as a tool. The learners expressed personal narratives and reflected on what makes them feel happy and safe, and what scares them. When we reflected on these narratives and how the music influenced and evoked emotions, I assisted the learners in understanding the power of the music. Natasha reflected that the relationships in the classroom empowered the learners. She said that connection generates self-confidence, gives them the confidence to share, and makes them feel important enough to take part (46:14).

Upon hearing Natasha's comment, I reflected on what occurred to me: for children to have self-confidence and share, they must perceive their contribution as meaningful. Thus, reflection after music activities created a space to grow confidence and a sense of purpose and meaning. Through listening to music and creating their own movements (4 April), I created opportunities for the learners to explore and express themselves uniquely. Designing a percussion instrument for ordinary items also created an avenue for exploration and expression. After Julie designed her percussion instrument (13 March),

Natasha commented: “Julie actually participated and created meaning throughout the lesson, and her recycled percussion instrument was phenomenal” (46:9).

Julie could create meaning because collaboration with peers created meaning between the learners. In this case, Julie could see the value and meaning of teamwork and positive communication as she "coloured and decorated" her instrument with pride (13 March). The meaning the learners created during their music activities helped them to flourish in their music journeys.

7.6.1.5 Achievement

You provided materials, you equipped them to start forming an idea, and when some of them looked a little bit lost [...], you helped them out. You actually took them aside and triggered a thought pattern or idea (Interview with Natasha on 13 March).

Natasha’s observation highlights my efforts as the facilitator of the music lesson to create a supportive and engaging environment. I provided guidance and resources for the learners to start forming ideas for the percussion instrument they wanted to design using recycled material. During the design process, I offered support to help the learners develop their thoughts. As the teacher, I endeavoured to create an environment where success is achievable and likely.

Although I found providing clear instructions challenging (as I have already indicated), I endeavoured to set clear, achievable goals for the learners. I offered constructive feedback by focusing on the positive and suggesting ideas for improvement. I often sat on the carpet, legs crossed, brainstorming with the learners (40:7). I tried to create a supportive environment where challenges were seen as learning opportunities. In reflection time, I celebrated everyone’s ideas and work, instilling a feeling of achievement. A sense of accomplishment and competence is also vital to SDT.

7.6.2 Reflecting on Facilitating Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness in my Music Classroom

Through my data analysis, I could identify the three components of SDT in my music classroom. Autonomy, competence and relatedness were evident through my observations and reflections on my lessons. These aspects contributed to learners flourishing in the music classroom.

7.6.2.1 Autonomy

I facilitated the achievement of autonomy in my music lessons by creating an environment where the learners could take ownership of their learning. On 3 April, when I introduced the *Hello song*, or what I refer to as the validation song, learners had the freedom to choose how they would like to be greeted: a hug, a high five or a wave and a wiggle. This activity was structured to enable the learners to make decisions in the music classroom. The learners could also choose an action that made them feel validated and fit their personality better. Tisha commented that creating her action made her feel excited and also responsible (61:5). Helena asserted that this activity gave the learners choice and autonomy (61:4). I tried to encourage problem-solving to enhance autonomy in my classroom. Learners could choose who they wanted to work with (40:18). This eliminated conflict and enabled them to control their learning conditions more. Helena also acknowledged this: “It is great that you created a lesson where they could collaborate without any conflict. I think the autonomy helped – the fact that they had a choice of who they wanted to work with” (40:18).

Retrospectively, I realised I could have given the learners more choice and autonomy when they listened to *Carmina Burana*. Although I had a specific objective in mind where learners had to create a personal narrative through active listening, I could have extended the lesson to offer them more ways to express their emotions. As I reflected on 14 February (Addendum O): “A more extraordinary offering of ‘languages’ to express feelings would be a good idea. Some girls expressed that they felt like dancing” (41:14; 42:33). Helena also confirmed this when she said that it sounds like a good idea to offer more ways than verbal language to express themselves, like dancing or even drawing (42:41).

The music environment I fostered during the learners' engagement with percussion instruments made from recycled material and timbre activities was designed to encourage free exploration. Natasha suggested putting materials out so that the learners could experiment and try different options (46:17). Naomi also suggested giving the learners autonomy; she proposed:

It would be quite interesting to have one or two really interesting questions with visual clues. Maybe when the learners arrive in the classroom, so without necessarily verbally expressing any form of instruction, just having one or two open-ended ponderings or types of questions or prompts would prompt further exploration or perhaps create an idea where children would explore further and

then create an opportunity at the end of the lesson to reflect and upon reflection, you could perhaps further explore some of their thinking (57:19).

By using unconventional recycled items and focusing on the unique sounds they produce, I created a space where learners felt empowered to experiment and discover new musical possibilities. The learners felt safe exploring and navigating their own learning. Naomi (22 April) confirmed this when I asked whether she thinks the learners felt safe. She said:

Very much so! In fact, perhaps sometimes a little too safe. To test and to experiment, and I think that's a much easier thing to have than children not feeling safe. But yes, I think they felt very safe to explore and to navigate their way around the classroom space.

This safe environment promoted creativity and allowed the learners to explore sound and rhythm more freely (13 March). In my reflection after the lesson, I stated that I loved seeing how the learners created their own knowledge (40:46). Naomi commented after observing the learners enjoyed dancing and making moves in the copycat game (10 April): "So suddenly, there is a sense of agency because you are allowed this free space and movement. That then enables agency, so if you are enabling agency, I would assume that empowerment is also the result" (57:16). By giving the learners autonomy and agency in the music classroom, they felt empowered by their own learning.

7.6.2.2 Competence

The learners felt confident and competent in their ability to complete the activities designed for them, because every learner was eager to share after the music activities (46:12). Natasha confirmed the learners' eagerness by saying that in her experience she never had all the girls wanting to share. Still, they were all eager to share in the music classroom (46:12). The learners enjoyed acknowledgement and positive feedback during our music activities. My acknowledgement and positive feedback made the learners feel competent in their music activities. Natasha remarked after participating in a music lesson: "You acknowledge everything they were saying, you actually responded to their thoughts and ideas, you complimented and acknowledged, and I think that makes them feel like their involvement was meaningful and they contributed" (46:13).

From Natasha's comment, it is evident that the learners felt like their contributions were meaningful and that they supported and played a role in the success of their group activities. When Kinsley, the withdrawn and shy child, raised her hand to volunteer her

melodic contour for the jungle gym activity on 15 May, I observed her pride. Because of her withdrawn nature, she would not have volunteered her design if she deemed her contribution unsuccessful. I always attempted to recognise every individual learner's efforts and their competence. For instance, Ashley decided to draw a picture of her and her teacher walking in the garden (24 January), while everyone else drew a sunrise. Instead of telling her that she missed the point, I was fascinated and enjoyed her different take on the music and her unique narrative. The learners presented their work to the class after the weekly music activities. The purpose of the learners' presentations was to celebrate every group's achievement publicly. My comment on 8 May illustrates this celebration of achievement while the learners were illustrating their differently sized dots to create *crescendos* and *decrescendos* when I applauded the girls by saying: "That was Oh-some!" (71:33) and "OHHHHH goodness, I LOVE your ideas" (71:7).

I attempted to set the learners up for success through brainstorming and collaboration with groups, facilitating and supporting the learners where they sometimes felt unsure or lost. Natasha observed the support I offered the learners when she noted that I set the learners up to complete the music activity successfully (46:8). Naomi confirmed my support and approval when she said that the learners look to their instructor to keep them in the direction they think they ought to be headed, so they want approval for their actions. Upon deeply pondering Naomi's comment, I have concluded that her comment on seeking "approval for their actions" actually means they want "acknowledgement of ability to perform the task".

7.6.2.3 Relatedness

After my first lesson on Haydn's *Surprise Symphony* yielded no sense of relatedness, I tried to foster relatedness in my music classroom by creating an environment where the learners felt connected to me, their peers and the music. The music classroom was a space where every learner was included. Hadley often did not want to join an activity, but I would gently take her hand and invite her into the circle (81:2). My action demonstrates an attempt to include Hadley and ensure a connection between me and Hadley, her peers and the activity. Helena commented that I was reaching out to promote a feeling of belonging (82:1).

Belonging highlighted the feeling of being part of a community in my music classroom. Helena's comment on how I reached out to foster a sense of belonging (82:1) highlights

my attempt to make every learner feel accepted, valued and included, which influences a learner's sense of relatedness. Naomi also observed when I gently took Hadley's hand and guided her into the music activity. She noted that: "I think she (the music teacher) was observant in one particular case and involved in one child outside of the circle. Just trying to bring her in and almost involve her as a co-driver of the lesson idea and content" (57:11).

Naomi's observation highlighted my attempts to be attentive to the individual needs of the learners and to include and integrate these learners into the group. After Hadley was included, she felt accepted and valued as she reflected that she had fun and loved being part of the dance and doing it with someone. She said that it made her feel happy (10 April). Hadley's reflection on feeling happy and accepted when participating in the dance illustrates how the sense of belonging contributed to her overall sense of relatedness and emotional well-being. I encouraged group work to promote a deeper connection between peers. Opening up and sharing experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings create that connection between learners (41:9). Therefore, I built a supportive music community where the learners could relate, participate and ultimately flourish (41:5).

7.6.3 Reflecting on Facilitating Character Strengths in my Music Classroom

My goal was to develop and build on character strengths through music teaching. In my learning journey, particularly when I started reading and researching positive psychology and positive music education, it became clear to me that flourishing is connected to character strengths. I started to encourage and notice several character strengths of the learners in my music lessons. These character strengths included creativity, love of learning, kindness, love, teamwork, self-regulation, fairness, appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude and spirituality.

7.6.3.1 Creativity

As the facilitator of musicking, I encouraged creativity as a character strength by fostering imagination and exploration in the activities. I promoted imaginative play and creative problem-solving. One example of an imaginative play activity was the melodic contoured jungle gym lesson (15 May; 16 May). Hazel and Kinsley explored creatively by creating horse-inspired see-saws (81:21). I tried to encourage creativity through collaboration. The creativity was evident when Annie and Cath designed a slingshot (81:22).

Incorporating recycled materials allowed the learners to use their imagination (40:6). I, therefore, encouraged creativity by allowing the learners to explore and design a percussion instrument from recycled materials. Natasha explained: “You planted a few seeds and then let [the learners] take it from there. I mean, creativity comes so much more naturally” (46:16). By bringing recycled materials into the music room, I promoted creativity through hands-on exploration and created an environment where the learners felt safe to explore. Naomi commented:

I like the amicable approach, or at least it appears to be an amicable approach that as much as the children feel that they’re free to explore and perhaps become versions of their creative selves; at the same time, there seem to be enough boundaries in place to create a sense of safety (57:3).

I used open-ended questions (41: 4) when I proposed the listening activity on 24 January and 14 February (Addendum O). The questions I asked were intended to get the learners to think of how the music makes them feel. I invited and encouraged personal interpretation and creative thinking through the open-ended questions. I also encouraged the learners to learn to express themselves through art (38:27) and movement. My encouragement indicates the options I provided for creative expression. I, therefore, nurtured the learners' creativity by allowing them to choose the medium of expression that resonates with them most personally, which subsequently promoted their love of learning.

7.6.3.2 Love of Learning

I attempted to foster a love of learning among the learners. I facilitated peer learning. I observed that peer learning fosters a love of learning by showing learners that they can gain knowledge and skills from peers. This love of learning with peers was confirmed when Lucinda said that she learnt a lot of new moves from peers (56:20). I created an environment where learning is an enjoyable experience. In my lessons, I found that enjoyable experiences nurture a love of learning. Ziva confirmed this when she exclaimed that she wanted to learn everything (56:22). I reflected on 10 April (Addendum O) that the learners loved dancing and moving to the music alongside their friends. Tisha shared that she was so excited to see what the new actions would be (56:31). Tisha’s excitement was sparked by her curiosity and eagerness to engage with and learn from her friends.

7.6.3.3 Kindness

I fostered kindness as a character strength by modelling and recognising care, support and acts of kindness. I acknowledged learners when they showed kindness. For instance, when Julie gave Yola the bracelet (70:14), or Luna suggested making a bigger circle for everyone to be involved in (71:23), I reinforced the importance of kindness in the music room. I facilitated music activities that required learners to work together in groups, such as designing percussion instruments or creating moves for dances. Through these musical activities, I tried to create opportunities for learners to support each other and express kindness to each other. In one instance, when the girls hooked up and skipped around the circle while singing *Rig-a-jig-jig*, I observed: “When the girls were doing it in the wrong direction, hooking up left to left, there was always a girl coming to the rescue, helping and explaining” (56:39). I continued by explaining: “It wasn’t a bossy kind of help but genuine care. The girls who were helped also didn’t perceive the help as invading or negative” (56:58).

Through my inclusive efforts, I demonstrated kindness; for instance, when I included Hadley, I made sure she felt valued (56:7). By incorporating activities like the *Hello song*, where learners gave each other hugs, high fives, or waves, I promoted positive social interactions that built a sense of community and kindness in the classroom. Helena pointed out that through songs that validate the learners, they learn to care about others and give love to others (61:9). I tried to foster kindness as a character strength by encouraging learners to care for, support, and appreciate each other in their learning environment.

7.6.3.4 Love

I fostered love as a character strength by building solid relationships with the learners. I created an environment where the learners felt comfortable expressing affection, such as when Tara and Amy openly expressed their love for me (43:4). These expressions indicate a trusting relationship where the learners feel connected and valued. I welcomed affectionate gestures like hugs, reinforcing closeness between the learners and me (52:35; 52:27). The nurturing environment created a sense of community in my classroom. Learners felt that they could express their fondness for me, the teacher and peers. Yola added that: “Friends are family” (43:59).

7.6.3.5 Teamwork

I fostered teamwork as a character strength by creating an environment where collaboration was encouraged and celebrated. My efforts were evident in Lola's reflection when she stated that the most important thing is to work and learn together (54:16). Through structuring collaborative activities, I promoted the importance of teamwork. I also fostered a sense of enjoyment in collaboration. This awareness of teamwork is seen in Yola's exclamation that teamwork is dreamwork (54:17). Tisha showed excitement when she copied her peer and when her peer copied her. She exclaimed that she loved copying someone and someone copying her. Tisha stated, "It was just the best" (56:14). These examples indicate that as the facilitator of musicking, I created opportunities for the learners to collaborate and enjoy teamwork, fostering teamwork as a character strength.

7.6.3.6 Self-Regulation

I fostered self-regulation during music activities by encouraging reflection, sharing and formative assessments. I asked the learners to reflect on their social experiences (58:3), which promoted self-reflection (53:4). By giving every learner a turn to share their experiences, I encouraged the rest of the class to listen and have the self-control not to interrupt (55:3). Taking turns ensured that every child had the opportunity to express themselves, which fostered a sense of responsibility (54:9). Through the use of formative assessments (53:3), I provided opportunities for the learners to reflect and regulate their learning and also on their own behaviour.

7.6.3.7 Fairness

I encouraged fairness as a character strength by guiding and modelling negotiation. Negotiations occurred through collaborative activities where the learners had to compromise, communicate and share responsibilities. I fostered fairness by encouraging the learners to take turns and share tasks equally, as seen when Annie and Kinsley alternated drawing dots with a coloured pencil (71:33). This approach ensured that both Annie and Kinsley had an equal chance to contribute to the activity.

I facilitated negotiation in conflict situations. When Sandra and Amy had different ideas about creating a dotted pattern, I intervened to help them negotiate a solution. My intervention included discussing how many dots it would take to make a pattern and including both girls' ideas. I encouraged Sandra and Amy to compromise to satisfy both

their needs (71:7). Following the completion of the activity, learners reflected on their disagreements and how they found a solution in compromise. (71:15) The learners could identify and appreciate the fairness in reaching a solution.

7.6.3.8 Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence

I encouraged the appreciation of beauty by facilitating a connection with nature and engaging the learners' sensory experiences. For instance, Emily creatively described that it sounded like the parachute was like a big tree and the wind blowing through the leaves (43:25). This activity allowed the learners to appreciate the beauty of the sounds of the parachute and the imagery they evoked. Similarly, I supported Aria in expressing her love for the cold air from the parachute going up and down by helping her describe the sensation she felt: "It felt like snowballs were kissing me" (52:52).

These activities enabled the learners to connect with their sensory experiences. Through these interactions, I created opportunities for learners to explore and appreciate the beauty around them, fostering their connection with nature and helping them express their experiences creatively and meaningfully.

7.6.3.9 Gratitude

I encouraged gratitude by creating an environment where Zara felt comfortable expressing her appreciation. She shouted, "The music was beautiful, by the way!" Zara's words reflect a sense of gratitude for the experience that I provided (56:9). By fostering a supportive and positive atmosphere, I helped Zara recognise and express her appreciation of the musical experience.

7.6.3.10 Spirituality

I encouraged spirituality as a character strength in my music lessons by creating experiences that promoted mindfulness (41:2), emotional reflection (42:6), and personal connections. For example, I incorporated mindful breathing exercises to help learners connect with themselves and their surroundings (41:2). I also fostered a sense of spirituality by encouraging learners to share how the music made them feel, which led to profound reflections from learners like Sadie (42:18;35), who described feeling as if she was floating and then returning to earth, and Bailey (42:19;35), who felt she was in space with the world exploding around her. These reflections indicated a deeper emotional and possibly spiritual response to the music.

Additionally, learners expressed their spiritual experiences through imaginative and emotional descriptions. For instance, Stella felt like she was parachuting and looking down from great heights (43:15). At the same time, Zara envisioned herself on top of a cloud, connecting these experiences to relationships with her family (42:17). The sharing of these feelings among learners, and their enjoyment of making connections with each other (43:58; 54:22; 56:16), further underscored the spiritual aspect of the lessons (42:38). These examples illustrate an environment where learners were able to connect with each other and their own emotions which enhance a sense of spirituality in the music classroom.

DISCUSSION: EXPLAINING THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER WITHIN RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GRADE 1 REGGIO-INSPIRED MUSIC CLASSES

The final chapter of my self-study journey details my attempts to develop into a more compassionate and relationship-driven music teacher (Figure 8.1), reflecting on each stage of my learning experience. Having grown into a more flexible and learner-centred music teacher, I have come a long way from my rigid and teacher-centred teaching days. My approach to teaching music has evolved from being reactive to proactive (Figure 8.1). Instead of concentrating on punishment and discipline and adopting a punitive stance, I now prioritise compassion and inclusion, rejecting a "one size fits all" mindset. My main focus in teaching has shifted away from the relationships between musical parts and the learners' interpretations of all the elements of music. I now place a high priority on building great learning environments and cultivating healthy relationships between the teacher and the learners. The direction of my lesson plans has shifted from being task-oriented to being relationship-driven, with the emphasis being placed on strengthening these relationships.

Additionally, I have started to value the learning process more highly, rather than focusing merely on the results. Creating a safe classroom environment that is filled with positive emotions was accomplished by emphasising the importance of cooperation above competition among the learners. These developments towards becoming a more compassionate and relationship-driven music teacher are illustrated in Figure 8.1.

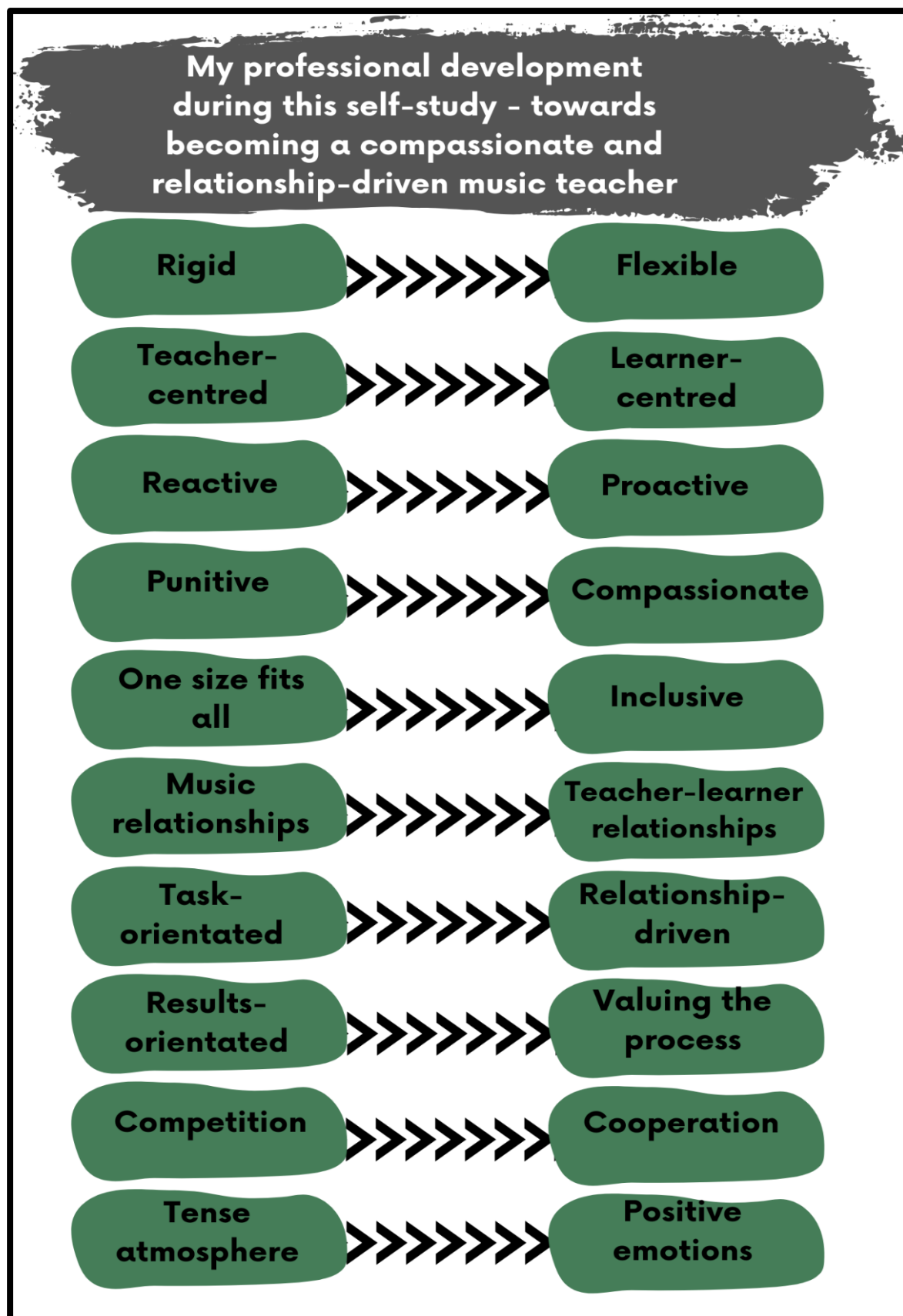


Figure 8.1: My Professional Development During This Self-Study - Towards Becoming a Compassionate and Relationship-driven Music Teacher

These shifts shown in Figure 8.1 reflect my personal journey in understanding the roles a music teacher needs to fill to create a relationship-driven environment. Through my self-study, I developed and reflected on these roles, allowing me to identify how a teacher can foster a relationship-focused music setting. The shift within my learning journey enabled me to formulate the different roles that the teacher needs to fulfil to create a relationship-driven music environment.

This chapter consolidates the findings by discussing them in relation to the relevant scholarly literature. The purpose of this chapter will be to facilitate an in-depth synthesis and discussion of the teacher's role in relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired music classes, addressing the research question outlined in section 1.2.

How can the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired music classes be explained?

Figure 8.2 illustrates the roles of a relationship-driven music teacher. Conceptualising Figure 8.2 in itself served as a reflective journey (Addendum L). As this was a music study, my role as a facilitator of musicking was essential, as music served as the medium through which all teaching and learning occurred. In other words, as the facilitator of musicking, I taught life skills through music. At the same time, I also created a safe space in the classroom by fostering compassion and an inclusive environment, recognising that compassion was an integral aspect of inclusivity.

In this self-study, I focused on building relationships by intentionally structuring lessons to encourage connections. These connections were vital for establishing a learner-centred approach and environment in the music class. Intentional connections laid the foundation for a learner-centred environment, while compassion enhanced relationships. As these relationships deepened, a safe space was created where learners felt secure and supported.

Throughout this process, reflection was vital. Reflection served as the golden thread that wove everything together, continuously shaping a safer space, enhancing the teaching of

life skills through music, and strengthening the relationships between myself and the learners. I continuously reflected on the development of life skills, the compassion and inclusivity I aimed to foster, and the relationships that were growing between learners and myself.

Nurturing communication was another critical aspect of this approach. By fostering open, meaningful communication, I contributed to creating a safe space, laying the foundation for teaching life skills through music, and building strong relationships within the music classroom. By fulfilling these five roles—facilitating music, teaching life skills through music, nurturing communication, creating a safe space through compassion and inclusion, and fostering intentional connections—I believe the outcome was the learners flourishing through musicking.

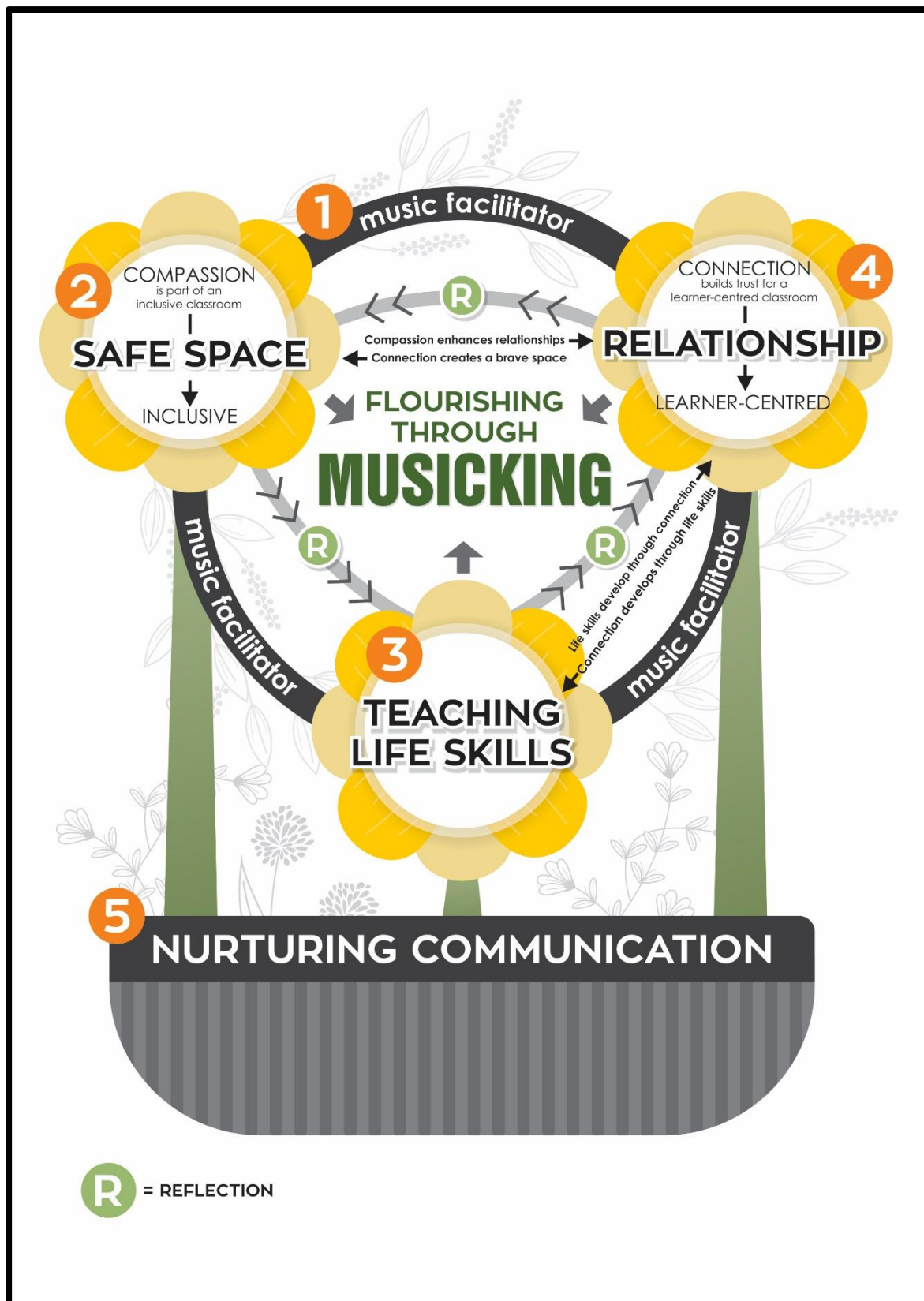


Figure 8.2: The Role of the Teacher within Relationship-Driven Teaching and Learning in Grade 1 Reggio-Inspired Music Classes

Through the data analysis in Chapters 5 and 7, reflection and conceptualisation, it became clear that there are several roles of the teacher in a relationship-driven Grade 1 Reggio-inspired music class (Figure 8.2).

The roles of the teacher are to:

1. Facilitate musicking;
2. Create a compassionate and inclusive classroom environment;
3. Teach life skills through music activities and apply reflective practices to enhance life skills;
4. Create moments for intentional connection to form relationships and create a learner-centred classroom;
5. Be communicative because communication supports relationships, enhances a compassionate and inclusive environment, and reinforces reflection and the development of life skills.

Consequently, if the teacher fills these roles, the outcome is an optimal learning environment where learners and teachers can flourish (Figure 8.2). This chapter will also discuss the implications for various audiences of the results of this study in relation to the research problem, as stated in Chapter 1 (section 1.2). Furthermore, this study's achievements and limitations will be discussed, and suggestions for further research will be offered.

Bailey (2022) states that the music teacher must be able to communicate sincerely, be compassionate and supportive, encourage reflection, promote collaboration and cooperation, inspire engagement, and embed social-emotional skills in a safe music context. My study concurs with Bailey (2022), where the role of the music teacher is described as being communicative, compassionate and reflective, inspiring intentional connection through collaboration and cooperation, and teaching social-emotional skills through developing life skills. As a complement to Bailey's (2022) findings, this study identified the necessary characteristics of the music teacher as being relationship-driven, inclusive and enabling learners to flourish in the music context.

8.1 The Role of the Teacher is to Facilitate Musicking

In Small's (1998, p. 9) book, he defined musicking as "to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing". He points out that the significance of music lies in the activity of music. Since this was a music study, it was imperative that I play the position of facilitator of musicking, because music was the channel through which all instruction and learning took place and the activity through which relationships were built (Figure 8.2).

Through music activities and incorporating different props such as parachutes and balls, I imparted life skills such as communication, self-awareness and thinking skills. Edgar et al. (2023) affirm that musicking promotes self-awareness and enables the learner to establish an improved sense of self. I also established a secure atmosphere in the classroom by cultivating empathy and a welcoming atmosphere, understanding that empathy was a necessary component of inclusivity.

As the music facilitator, my role as the teacher developed personally from that of a punitive music teacher to a compassionate music teacher (Figure 8.1). Being a compassionate music teacher involves adopting a multifaceted approach to creating a dynamic, engaging and compassionate learning environment. In a study by Varner (2020), he found that 'musicking' enhances social bonding and relationships. He also states that improvisation, ensemble playing and emotion-focused music listening can foster empathy among learners. Varner (2020), therefore, agrees that musicking can create an empathic and compassionate music environment; however, in this study, it is not just the act of 'musicking' that creates an empathic environment but also the music teacher (Figure 8.2). As the music teacher, I played a pivotal role in creating a dynamic and engaging music environment by building relationships through music activities that established a compassionate environment for music teaching and learning.

Kisilevsky et al. (2003) determined that the human voice is a primary expression of connection. Singing is, therefore, a fundamental tool and medium in the music classroom, contributing to positive outcomes in music teaching and learning. In my study, I found that through singing, I could express emotion, be humorous and communicate with the learners in my classroom, which in turn yielded positive emotions. As I found in my research, Kisilevsky et al. (2003) and Parker and Hutton (2023) also underline the

importance of singing in music education, stating that an individual's awareness of their vocal expression is linked to their interactions and relationships. Like Kisilevsky et al. (2003) and Parker and Hutton (2023), Good and Russo (2016) found that children singing together enhanced cooperative behaviours. In my lessons, singing served as the foundation for all musical expressions as well as all connections where the learners acknowledged each other, for example, through greeting songs. I found that singing created unity in my classroom and a platform for learners to express and experience musical elements such as dynamics, form, rhythm and pitch.

According to Reggio Children (2022, p. 99), the institute "became increasingly aware that music education and dance education are an integral part of developing cognitive faculties in all persons, and even more so when working with children from an early age". Aligning with Reggio Children's new research, I led through movement and song in my music classroom. Shifting from a results-orientated teacher to valuing the process (Figure 8.1), I stimulated creativity by integrating playfulness and imagination into the lessons, using songs, rhythmic and melodic patterns, and role-playing to manage the classroom, while making activities within the process of learning enjoyable. In alignment with Good and Russo (2016), I also created a sense of unity within my classroom; moving and dancing created a learning community in my music classroom. As the facilitator of musicking, I, therefore, added a new edge to stimulate creative thinking, not only through movement and song as in Reggio Children, but also through playfulness, imagination and enjoyment, while creating a music learning community.

As the facilitator of musicking, I shifted from approaching classroom management reactively to (Figure 8.1) managing the classroom proactively, while balancing familiarity and novelty to keep learners engaged. Russel (2000) also found that there was no need for the teacher's reactive classroom management strategies if one used a variety of activities, a blend of new and old content, and fast pacing. Russel's (2000) finding confirms the effective manner in which I, as the music facilitator, managed the classroom. Evertson and Weinstein (2006) and Greenberg et al. (2014) stressed that meaningful classroom management requires positive teacher-learner relationships. Even though Bauman-Field (2024) researched trauma-informed classroom management, she advocates that all music teachers should create routines and rules that offer stability, predictability and structure; engage their learners in meaningful, enjoyable lessons; praise learners often and honestly and for their effort rather than their accomplishments;

and place a high value on the development of positive teacher-learner relationships based on care and trust in order to manage the classrooms effectively.

A synthesis of the findings of the study and the relevant literature indicates that effective classroom management involves an exciting blend of old and new content, positive relationships between learners and the teacher, a proactive music facilitator, stable routines, clear communication, predictability, meaningful engagement and positive feedback (Bauman-Field, 2024; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; J. Greenberg et al., 2014). My study aligns with these findings. Like Bauman-Field (2024), I provided clear communication of expectations to offer predictability and structure, often using singing as a cue to transition between activities, which helped maintain focus and enthusiasm. I designed engaging activities to be interactive and relevant, with thoughtful transitions and mindfulness practices integrated to enhance awareness and focus. The environment was crafted to be stimulating and interactive, fostering curiosity and creativity, while I encouraged learners to share ideas and collaborate. Through these strategies, I facilitated an engaging and supportive classroom where learners could thrive because they felt included.

8.2 The Role of the Teacher is to Create a Compassionate and Inclusive Classroom Environment

This study indicated that the role of the teacher as a compassionate educator (Figure 8.1) involved creating an environment where every learner feels valued, supported and understood. I continuously strove to make each learner feel included, nurturing a sense of belonging to ensure that all children feel part of the group. By building solid relationships with learners, I gained a deep understanding of their feelings and expressions. I shifted from a punitive stance to adapting lessons with compassion (Figure 8.1), maintaining the fun and playfulness of the activities. My study, therefore, aligns with that of Hendricks (2023b), who states that music teachers need to improve their compassion, connection with others and expression by adjusting their teaching and becoming more flexible in their approaches. Similarly, Edgar et al. (2023) stress that flexible lesson plans are part of compassionate teaching. In this developmental journey, as a compassionate music teacher, I readjusted my approach to be connection-driven and flexible as opposed to rigid and disciplinarian.

As the music teacher, I shifted from a task-orientated teacher to a music teacher who acknowledged that knowledge creation is a collaborative effort and is socially constructed within a relationship-driven (Figure 8.1) environment. The learners in my music classroom collaborated to find meaning. As a result, my research points to learning as a dialogue and a collaboration between learners, the teacher and the environment. Bates et al. (2021) affirm that in the music classroom, collaboration, engaging with others, and connectedness are signs of compassion.

In my study, where my role was to create a compassionate and inclusive music environment, I viewed every child as musically promising, thereby endeavouring to create moments for the child to find meaning and significance within musicking (Figure 8.2). Reggio Children (2022, p. 108) conducted a recent research project, *Resonances between dance and music*; they stated that the "aim of the project is to build contexts which allow the children to find themselves in situations which are significant for them, where the learning processes can take root in lived experiences." This statement aligns with my study's finding that the child is an active participant in their development and knowledge creation. In the Reggio Children (2022) research project, both the teachers and the learners were fortunate to view the learners as capable. In my study, however, the emphasis was solely on the teacher recognising the child as a capable musician. This recognition aligns with the idea of the child as an active participant in their learning journey. Consequently, I evolved from a rigid to a flexible facilitator of musicking (Figure 8.1), acknowledging each child's potential for growth. Shifting towards a flexible approach as the facilitator of musicking allowed me to adapt to each child's interests and strengths. This shift created a supportive environment where children could actively engage and develop their musical abilities, aiming to encourage the children in the music classroom to view themselves as capable musicians.

Within this study, I shifted from a music facilitator with a 'one size fits all' mindset to an inclusive music teacher (Figure 8.1). I took on the role of creating an inclusive space within the music classroom. In this space, everyone was welcome. It was evident that the teacher needed to remain open to gaining insight into diverse cultures and classroom situations. Boon (2014) recommended that teachers should recognise and actively incorporate the diverse musical backgrounds, preferences and experiences of each learner in the music classroom. Her suggestion was derived from Ladson-Billings (1995), who advocated that culturally relevant teachers include aspects of the learner's culture in

the teaching and learning by observing them in their community. Ladson-Billings (1995) describes a CRT as a teacher who uses the culture of the learners to help them learn. Robison (2020) advocates for teachers to take the time to gain insight into learners' cultures, beliefs and religions. He believes in culturally responsive classroom management in the music classroom. Furthermore, he believes that our culturally responsive classrooms need teachers to reflect and remain open to learning and not overestimate their understanding of the learners in the classroom. This study echoes Robison's (2020) study, which states that teachers need to be culture-sensitive to create an inclusive environment, while remaining open to new learning opportunities.

In order to create an inclusive classroom environment where all the learners feel welcome, Lourenço and Valente (2020) believe that the role of the teacher is to recognise and understand the learners in the classroom. Not only does this study concur, but it expands on the role of the teacher to include and also create a supportive community where families can participate, strategize, and collaborate. Lourenço and Valente (2020) further believe that the role of the teacher is to foster compassionate behaviour. My study supports Lourenço and Valente's (2020) perspective, but elaborates that the teacher's aim is not only to foster compassion but also to promote peace and understanding, to accommodate and include all the learners in the classroom. In my study, I fostered empathy between the learners, and between myself and the learners, avoiding a tense atmosphere to create a positive learning environment (Figure 8.1).

My role in creating a compassionate and inclusive classroom is in line with Noddings (2002), who suggests that empathy emerges when one is understanding and sensitive towards others, remaining aware of and responsive to their needs. Hendricks (2021) explains that compassion and care go beyond caring for and about learners; instead, compassion and care extend to teachers and learners caring for each other in the music classroom. Lourenço and Valente (2020) also believe that through an empathic approach, a more profound connection is formed, which influences the quality of teaching and learning. This perspective validates my study where, as the teacher, I fostered empathy, which in turn created a supportive learning environment (Figure 8.2).

To create an inclusive environment in the music classroom, Meirink et al. (2007) value reflection and collaboration between teachers, stating that teachers have the opportunity to learn from one another and enrich one another. My study also provided testimony that

instead of competition between colleagues, it is better to develop proactive strategies, including the need for reflection, collaboration and cooperation amongst colleagues to support and embrace all the learners in the music classroom. My study established that through reflection and collaboration with other teachers, I was able to adapt my approach to be flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of the learners in the classroom. Dirks et al. (2024) and Smith (2021) promote preparing and training music teachers to support and address the needs of diverse learners in the music classroom. Dirks et al. (2024) and Smith (2021) imply that despite efforts to collaborate with colleagues, additional preparation and professional development might still be necessary to equip music teachers.

8.3 The Role of the Teacher is to Teach Life Skills through Music Activities and Apply Reflective Practices to Enhance Life Skills

During this study, I transitioned away from a teacher-centred approach towards a learner-centred environment (Figure 8.1) where music learning was a vehicle to teach life skills. In an extensive study, Erasmus (2022) demonstrated that music activities can help young individuals with developmental disabilities learn the life skills needed to succeed. In my research, I used music as a medium to teach life skills such as interpersonal skills and enhance learning and social dynamics in the music classroom (Figure 8.2). In an article by Jansen van Vuuren (2022), she advocates and promotes the integration of music into the classroom to reignite the enjoyment in learning; she also acknowledges that through music, life skills such as social skills can be addressed. In my self-study, the lessons incorporated interpersonal skills and provided a foundation for practising leadership skills. Similarly, Fung (2018) advocates for music learning to be a vehicle for social and emotional learning by giving each learner leadership opportunities. Fung (2018) further advocates for smaller groups to teach, because of the greater possibility to build self-confidence and more opportunities to take the lead. Varner (2020) believes that incorporating circle games into music lessons enables attentive listening, while also enhancing life skills and interpersonal skills, such as communication skills, while the learners are having fun.

As the music facilitator, I encouraged the development of creative thinking skills as a life skill. Mumford (2003) believed that creative thinkers are able to blend different concepts to produce original ideas. My study incorporated activities where learners were required

to connect various ideas, engage in creative thinking and, instead of competing with one another, collaborate and cooperate with others. These thinking skills were cultivated through group work, where learners were challenged to negotiate, think creatively and work together to solve problems or create music. Varner (2020) also believes that general music activities should encourage learners to contribute collectively, which involves collaboration, self-regulation, empathy and critical thinking.

Documentation of the child's learning serves as a crucial tool for reflection, enabling the teacher to interpret the child's knowledge and educational experiences effectively. In Reggio Children's recent study on music and dance (2022, p. 110), they state that "emerging from discussions with the teachers on the documentation produced on the *Resonances between dance and music* research study, the outcomes included greater awareness of the communicative and expressive potential of the body, greater ability to focus on phrases made of sound and movement". In my shift from being a reactive music teacher towards a proactive music teacher (Figure 8.1), I facilitated my reflections in this study by inviting the children to evaluate their knowledge and gain awareness and new perspectives, often in partnership with others. According to Reggio Children's study (2022), in which learners became aware of their own musical expressions, my study lacked the same depth in exploring musical expression and focused more on the relationships and reflections within these relationships within a music environment. My study is therefore aligned with Smilkova's (2023, p. 88) concluding remark at the International Conference on Social and Education Sciences, "Music-induced reflections on one's own essence and depth have an impact on a person's relationships and connections with other people and society".

8.4 The Role of the Teacher is to Create Moments for Intentional Connection to Form Relationships and to Create a Learner-Centred Classroom

My development from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach (Figure 8.1) inspired me to foster intentional connections in the music classroom. These intentional connections were forged because I focused on building solid relationships not only between myself and the learners, but also among the learners themselves and with the music materials. Lessons were thoughtfully designed to deepen both emotional and intellectual ties, with activities where learners reflected on the music and teamwork, and shared their experiences with a partner.

As a learner-centred facilitator, I empowered learners to manage and resolve conflicts independently. Lourenço and Valente (2020) conducted a study on how the emotional intelligence of teachers affects conflict management in the classrooms. They identified the strategy of 'integration', where conflict is managed through collaboration, cooperation and problem-solving to meet all the parties' interests. I encouraged collaboration to enhance engagement and participation, not only for conflict management.

This learner-centred approach contrasts with traditional methods, where learners might feel passive (Deslauriers et al., 2019; Doolittle et al., 2023; D. Gilbert, 2016). Collaboration in my study fostered confidence and independence, while promoting a sense of agency and empowerment. Edgar et al. (2023) also believe that the music teacher should guide learners in a way that empowers them to feel in control of their own learning. Gilbert (2016) found that the teacher is responsible for the learner-centred environment; he recommends that the teacher should establish a safe learner-centred environment by ensuring that learners engage in and develop positive interactions while acting with autonomy. My role was to foster such a learner-centred environment, where I viewed every learner as capable and active in their learning process (Figure 8.2). Similarly, Dansereau (2023, p. 99) also regarded the child as musically-abled. He expressed the view that if the music teacher places excessive emphasis on children becoming musical adults, we (as music teachers) are ignoring or discounting their existing musical ability and giving the impression that they are musically deficient.

I created a learner-centred climate by facilitating group dynamics, embracing group work and creating opportunities to connect with myself, others and the music (Figure 8.2). Gilbert (2016) ensured engagement and positive interactions in his learner-centred environment, while Edgar et al. (2023) stated that music education will be meaningful when learners have a sense of belonging, a voice and positive connections; these views are very similar to the findings in my study. Hendricks (2018) found that teacher-centred strategies offer fewer opportunities to connect to self, others and music. Similarly to Green (2002, 2008), who enabled a learner-centred approach to encourage engagement, I fostered a learner-centred environment to encourage creative expression and promote independence. Wilson (2022) agrees that a learner-centred music environment supports the learners' creativity and adds that the learners' focus is on creating rather than reproducing music. In the learning-centred environment, the learners' creativity is sustained through the communicative music teacher.

8.5 The Role of the Teacher is to be Communicative

The role of the teacher is to be communicative because communication supports relationships, enhances a compassionate and inclusive environment, and reinforces reflection and the development of life skills (Figure 8.2). My role as the music teacher focused on communication and integrating both verbal and non-verbal communication into music activities, fostering an understanding of the different ways of communicating among learners. Instead of only focusing on the relationship with the content of the music lesson, I encouraged teacher-learner relationships (Figure 8.1). Fung (2018) noticed that teachers can adopt a rigid communication style, but recommend that they should rather model respectful conversations with the learners in their classes. I agree with Fung (2018); however, I contend that respectful communication includes facilitating social learning by encouraging negotiation, compromise and accommodation among learners, while guiding the learners through conflict resolution, emphasising the importance of understanding and accommodation in effective communication.

As the communicative teacher, I designed intentional activities and modelled a pedagogy of listening to build stronger relationships, being attentive to learners' needs and creating a supportive environment. According to Rigney and Kelly (2023), the pedagogy of listening not only involves hearing, but goes beyond what is said through listening actively and by being understanding and responsive to the needs of others and body language. Clark (2005) aligns with Rigney and Kelly (2023) by stating that in order to build stronger relationships, communication is vital and reliant on both verbal and non-verbal listening.

As a result, when the music teacher fulfils the roles of facilitating music, creating a compassionate and inclusive classroom environment, and teaching life skills through music while reflecting, it helps to create intentional connections (Figure 8.2). These connections are essential for establishing a learner-centred classroom and supporting communication to strengthen relationships. This approach enhances compassion, inclusivity, reflection and the development of life skills, ultimately leading to an optimal learning environment where both learners and teachers have the opportunity to flourish through music.

8.6 The Role of the Teacher is to Enable Flourishing

Learning should aim to promote positive emotions, both personal and collective happiness (Noddings, 2003). Seligman et al. (2009) advocate for well-being and flourishing to be promoted by the school curriculum due to enhanced life satisfaction and improved learning and creativity.

8.6.1 PERMA Model of Well-Being

Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed the PERMA model to identify five essential elements of well-being and flourishing: positive emotions, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and achievement. As the teacher, I endeavoured to encourage PERMA as a means of ensuring that learners flourished in the music classroom. By integrating playful activities, I encouraged creativity and self-expression through singing, movement and dance to enhance positive emotions. Positive emotions improve creative thinking (Vosberg, 1998). My study aligns with Vosberg (1998), that the role of the teacher is to recognise that joyful emotions enhance creativity. I, therefore, promoted collaboration and social interaction to foster a positive atmosphere, while consistently modelling positive emotions. This notion is related to the study by Fung (2018, p. 58), who suggests music teachers "should strive to make positive attitudes infectious."

Peterson and Seligman (2004) acknowledged the value of humour and classified it as a character strength, since it promotes connections and relationships through laughter, while affecting emotions positively (A. Wood & Niedenthal, 2018). The experimental studies by Martin (1996, 2001) established that humour helps minimise stress. In my research, I showed enthusiasm and incorporated humour, while also encouraging learners to reflect on their successes and the positive feelings associated with their tasks. In Terceiro's (2023) study, he states that humour is a crucial component of creative expression.

Through using the PERMA model, I deliberately introduced new concepts weekly to maintain engagement, ensuring that lessons remained fresh and stimulating. By providing creative freedom and encouraging learners to take the lead, I fostered a sense of ownership in the learning process. Learners were also challenged to share and reflect on their experiences. My focus shifted from creating a competitive environment to building a cooperative environment (Figure 8.1), where creativity is enhanced through collaborative

activities. This is in line with Terceiro's (2023) view that learners engage with their world by communicating, supporting and motivating each other, strengthening their engagement in the music classroom. Communication, support and motivation also strengthened the relationships within the classroom.

I facilitated and encouraged positive relationships, as referred to in the PERMA model, by creating a relational space in the classroom where learners could thrive. By introducing activities that were not task-orientated but rather collaborative activities that entailed modelling respect and kindness, the tone was set for how learners should interact with one another. These collaborations served as the foundation for a relationship-driven environment (Figure 8.1), where enjoyment and social learning were central to promoting positive relationships in the music classroom. Denton (2008) posited that teachers foster positive connections by being authentic towards learners and expressing confidence in their skills and motives, while engaging more in listening than in speaking.

I worked to build trust by showing genuine interest in the learners' lives and their learning. By being approachable, listening and offering emotional support, I established myself as a trusted voice of reason during negotiation situations. The difference between Denton's (2007) approach and mine is that I seemed to have built a more profound relationship with the learners by offering emotional support and establishing trust within the music classroom.

In light of Seligman's PERMA model (2018), I encouraged the creation of meaning by connecting learning experiences to personal experiences. By listening to music and linking it to learners' own emotions, they found deeper meaning in their experiences. I encouraged storytelling, with music serving as a tool for sharing personal narratives, allowing learners to reflect on what makes them feel happy, safe, or scared. Runco (2015) comments that our experiences are meaningful when we are creative. I, therefore, created a platform for learners to be innovative and express their emotions and interactions through graphics and non-verbal communication. Feldman (1999) also comments that creativity calls for support and opportunities to practise and communicate with others. In my study, I fostered a sense of purpose by ensuring that every contribution was perceived as meaningful. Opportunities for unique self-expression and collaboration with peers further deepened their understanding of meaning as well as the sense of achievement of every learner, enhancing the overall learning experience.

With reference to Seligman's PERMA model (2018), I made achievement possible by leveraging my role as the facilitator of musicking to create a supportive and engaging environment. I provided guidance and the resources to help learners form ideas, while supporting them in developing their thoughts. My efforts were geared towards creating an environment where success was not only achievable, but likely as a result of constructive feedback by focusing on the positive aspects of learners' work and suggesting ideas for improvement. Dweck (2007) suggests that teachers must commend the learners for their efforts in the learning process when contemplating a growth mindset rather than intelligence or talent. Fung (2018) also believes that respectful interactions require care for others and that encouragement makes learners open to correction. By fostering a space where challenges were seen as learning opportunities, I encouraged perseverance and growth in my music classroom.

Additionally, I sincerely celebrated the learners' ideas and contributions, which instilled a sense of achievement in them. Hendricks (2018) insists that praise from the music teacher must be sincere. Greenberg et al. (2014) state that praise can reinforce positive learner behaviour; Calderella (2016) support this, stating that praise is a valuable technique for music educators. Praise can influence a feeling of competence, which contributes to the learners' self-determination.

8.6.2 Self-Determination Theory (Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness)

In an autoethnographic study conducted by Wentink (2024), she examined how reflection can foster connection among diverse learners. Wentink found that creative tasks in the music class gave learners greater control, and collaborative engagement enhanced the learners' relatedness, which are vital aspects of SDT. I also fostered a sense of power and responsibility by enabling learners to make decisions within the music classroom, such as choosing their collaborators and solving problems creatively. According to Ryan and Deci (2002), autonomy refers to the ability and freedom to make decisions about matters that concern oneself, instead of being forced to respond to outside pressure or expectations. Both Wentink (2024) and I posit that creativity and problem-solving result in greater autonomy for the learners.

Ryan and Deci (2002) described relatedness as a feeling of connection with others and, therefore, experiencing a sense of belonging. Their description resonates with my study, where I ensured that every learner felt a strong sense of relatedness by creating

opportunities for group work and encouraging learners to share their experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings. My approach contributed significantly to the learners' overall sense of relatedness and emotional well-being, as they felt genuinely connected and included in the classroom environment. I highlighted the importance of being part of a supportive community by fostering an environment where learners felt connected to me as the teacher, their peers and the music. I made deliberate attempts to include and engage with each learner, promoting a sense of belonging within the classroom.

Wilson (2022) also invited the learners to select their group members when working in groups, as I did. Interestingly, both Wilson (2022) and Green (2008) found that as learners gained experience working in groups with friends, they began to branch out from their social circles to find new collaborators. This observation might point to a longitudinal study lasting over a year and its positive outcomes. In my study, there was a time constraint, so it was not possible to observe all the positive outcomes of encouraging autonomy.

Researchers like Ryals (2022) and Bailey (2022), who researched trauma-informed music education, both emphasise the necessity of having a secure learning environment, caring teachers and learner agency in their music education experience. Similarly, in my study, I designed a space that was welcoming and compassionate; the learners had autonomy in the music context, and as they had greater control over their learning, there were fewer conflicts. Hess (2022) also promotes compassion in the music class by allowing learners agency, which includes the option to refuse. Hess believes that choices can be empowering and eventually lead to increased learner participation when they feel safe and prepared to do so.

Bailey (2022), Ryals (2022) and Fung (2018) believe that the creation of a safe musical space is dependent on compassionate teachers and learner autonomy. I, therefore, agree with them that moving away from a punitive approach towards a compassionate approach (Figure 8.1) gives learners autonomy and agency. I empowered the learners to take charge of their own learning experiences, which enhanced engagement and competence in the music classroom.

Another aspect of SDT is competence; within my study, I set the learners up to feel competent by consistently acknowledging their efforts and providing positive feedback, which boosted their confidence in their music activities. This notion is supported by Hendricks (2023b). Hendricks (2023) supports the idea that acknowledging each learner's

contribution is an act of empathy and care. This recognition not only shows care and compassion, but also enhances the learner's self-confidence. This idea aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2002) SDT, which suggests that confidence stems from positive social interactions and motivates skill improvement. In this context, Hendricks's (2023b) acknowledgement of the child's engagement and contributions can be seen as a positive social interaction (Ryan & Deci, 2002), which, according to Ryan and Deci, fosters a feeling of competence and enhances the learner's self-confidence (Hendricks, 2023b).

Similarly to Hendricks (2023b), I ensured that every learner's contributions were recognised as meaningful and integral to the success of their group activities. By celebrating every group's achievement publicly through presentations, I highlighted the competence and efforts of each individual. I also facilitated success by guiding and supporting learners through brainstorming sessions and collaboration. The recognition of the learners' ability to perform tasks fostered a sense of accomplishment and competence, reinforcing their belief in their own skills and contributions.

8.6.3 Character Strengths

The character strengths in this self-study refer to Peterson and Seligman's virtues in action - character strengths (2004). My role in fostering character strengths was to encourage creativity, imagination and exploration within the classroom. I promoted imaginative play and creative problem-solving through various activities and collaboration, which is in line with Scott et al. (2004), who believed that the ability to solve problems is a critical component of creativity.

Fung (2018) recognised that a supportive music environment must involve positive social interactions, empathy and learner-centred exchanges. He further claimed that democratic contexts for learning encourage a compassionate approach towards others. As a relationship-driven teacher, I endeavoured to foster kindness as a character strength by encouraging learners to care for, support and appreciate each other in their learning environment. I modelled and recognised care, support and acts of kindness, ensuring that these behaviours were visible and valued. Like Fung (2018), I also encouraged kindness by acknowledging learners when they showed kindness; I reinforced positive interactions and built a culture of mutual respect.

In line with Fung (2018), in creating learner-centred exchanges, my role was to facilitate music activities that required learners to work together in groups and create opportunities for them to support and express kindness toward one another. Tunçgenç and Cohen (2016) found that clapping and tapping games positively influenced learners to help each other, while Beck and Rieser (2022) found that learners who participated in musicking showed a greater willingness to assist and contribute. In my music lessons, I promoted positive social interactions through collaborative activities that helped build a strong sense of community and kindness in the classroom, which resulted in support of the importance of empathy and cooperation in the music environment.

Collaboration and cooperation are crucial to many creative projects (Abra, 1994). Both collaboration and cooperation are implemented to boost teamwork (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2018). Teamwork as a character strength can enable the learner to flourish. Wentink (2024) found that cooperative learning helped learners satisfy the three psychological needs for flourishing: competence, autonomy and relatedness. In my self-study, I encouraged teamwork by creating an environment where collaboration was encouraged and celebrated. Kirschner and Tomasello's (2010) study on collaborative musicking and the way it promotes prosocial behaviour found that music and movement serve as a social bonding tool and boost cooperation, problem-solving solving and helpfulness. Through structuring collaborative activities in the music classroom, I promoted and emphasised the importance of teamwork. By fostering a sense of enjoyment in collaboration, I made teamwork a positive and engaging experience for the learners. I created numerous opportunities for the learners to collaborate and enjoy working together, effectively fostering teamwork as a character strength in the classroom.

In this study, I fostered self-regulation during music activities by encouraging reflection, sharing, and formative assessments. In Wilson's (2022) research, she found that formative assessment had a positive impact on learners' achievement and participation. Fautley and Colwell (2012) previously stated that formative feedback supports learning in music education. Although my research also found that formative assessments benefitted the learning process, it also found that giving every learner a turn to share their experiences enhanced self-regulation within the learners. While learners reflected on their learning, the rest of the class had to listen attentively and exercise self-control by not interrupting, which fostered a sense of responsibility. Therefore, in my study, taking turns ensured that every child had the opportunity to express themselves, reinforcing their

ability to manage their own behaviour and interactions. Additionally, through the use of formative assessments, I provided opportunities for learners to reflect on and regulate both their learning and their behaviour, further promoting self-regulation as a critical aspect of their development.

Varner (2020) expands on this notion of fairness by suggesting that a strong sense of community is formed when people are respected and treated fairly. My study highlighted the role of the teacher in creating fairness in the classroom by guiding and modelling negotiation. Fairness was therefore encouraged as a character strength through collaborative activities where learners had to compromise, communicate and share responsibilities. In conflict situations, I facilitated negotiation and intervened to help learners reach a fair and equitable solution. My approach ensured that fairness was consistently upheld and practised in the learning environment. I fostered fairness by encouraging learners to take turns and share tasks equally, consequently forming a sense of belonging among learners and social cohesion, which is in line with Varner's (2020) study. Reflecting on my purpose statement (see 1.1), I now know that the child's image, competence and sense of value developed through meaningful relationships in the music classroom (Schlicte et al., 2006).

8.7 Implications for Practice

This study will be relevant to a number of audiences. The audiences include music teachers in schools, choral and orchestral conductors, researchers in music education, private instrumental teachers, programme coordinators, community music groups, classroom teachers, early childhood teachers, educators with interest in improving the education system, Reggio Emilia administrators, school counsellors, parents of music learners, pre-service teachers and teacher educators, academia and researchers studying education, psychology or children's development.

This study can be helpful for music teachers in schools who want greater insight into how to build positive relationships with learners and how these relationships can enhance learners' musical engagement, abilities and classroom interactions. Choral and orchestral conductors can implement relational strategies to establish community and collaboration within their ensembles, which can strengthen interpersonal connections, improve collaborations and elevate performance levels. Researchers in music education who seek to understand the relationship between music pedagogy and relational pedagogy will

have an opportunity to explore how these approaches impact learners' engagement, motivation, creativity and achievement. Teachers in private settings, such as those teaching piano and other instruments, can utilise relationship-driven teaching techniques to connect with learners and make lessons more engaging.

Programme coordinators managing music programmes in schools and music communities can apply relationship-driven strategies to create more inclusive music environments, ensuring that learners feel valued and motivated to participate. Community music groups can use these teaching methods to enhance the sense of belonging among a wide range of learners, fostering a supportive and motivating environment for all. Classroom teachers who aim to improve classroom management, increase learner engagement and create an inclusive environment may find relationship-driven teaching beneficial. Early childhood teachers can introduce these strategies to strengthen relationships in the classroom, helping to deepen learner engagement. Educators interested in improving educational systems need to understand how relationship-driven methods can cultivate a healthier culture and sound outcomes for learners.

Reggio Emilia administrators can benefit from insights into relationship-driven teaching to ensure that a culture of respect, teamwork, and dialogue is fostered through lessons and classroom setup. School counsellors who support learners' social and emotional well-being may also benefit from understanding how strong teacher-learner relationships contribute to a positive learning environment. Parents of music learners can appreciate the importance of teacher-learner relationships in their child's musical development, motivating them to engage with music teachers and support their child's progress. Pre-service teachers and teacher educators can develop and incorporate relationship-driven teaching strategies into their training programmes. Additionally, academics and researchers studying education, psychology or child development may find valuable data on the impact of relationship-driven teaching on various learning outcomes.

8.8 Achievements and Limitations

This research shed light on how improving connections between teachers and learners can enhance learning. The importance of SEL and the role that teachers play in establishing relationships is highlighted, and there is a better understanding of how teachers influence learners' knowledge and growth. Researching relationship-driven teaching in music classrooms provides a significant and unique contribution to music

education, especially in light of how relationships can improve learners' engagement and musical experiences. Since this study places children at the core of the learning process by following a Reggio-inspired approach, it has revealed how teachers can encourage learners' creativity, autonomy and love of learning. The study provides methods and approaches to enhance the value of relationships in teaching, making them essential tools for teachers' professional development. I hope to inspire educators to make relationship-building a critical goal of their teaching practices.

Despite the focus of this research on music education, its findings may also have an impact on other subjects. The relationship-driven approach will encourage teachers from different subject areas to adopt strategies to create a safe and stimulating learning environment. By applying qualitative techniques such as observations, interviews and reflections, this study can offer a deeper understanding of the daily lives of both teachers and learners. The findings will help role players better understand the different aspects of relationship-driven education.

The study will contribute to the body of information on the Reggio Emilia method, especially regarding music education, and it shows how successful Reggio-inspired teaching strategies can be in diverse educational environments, which can have an impact on ways of teaching worldwide. Because of the focus on Grade 1 learners, this study presents information that will help formulate desirable teaching methods for this critical phase of young children's development. The results of this study can be used to develop successful teaching methods for these early years. The knowledge acquired will be valuable in improving teacher training by emphasising the value of relationship skills and compassion in the classroom.

Since the focus is on Grade 1 learners, this study could be less applicable to other areas of education, such as those involving different age cohorts, non-Reggio-inspired teaching methods, or other topic areas. Personal interactions are a part of relationship-driven learning and these might be subjective. Replicating the results is impossible, since different teachers may interpret and apply relationship-driven approaches in various ways.

Because of the study's limited duration, the long-term benefits of relationship-driven instruction might be underestimated or missed. It might be essential to understand how these relationships benefit learners over time, and a short-term study will likely not be

able to show this. This research relied on qualitative techniques, such as observations, interviews and personal reflections. It would not have been possible to describe the detailed nature of all of the interactions accurately. The study may also have overlooked the contributions of the larger community, including the learners, parents and the wider school environment to relationship-driven teaching and learning, because it focused so specifically on the teacher's role.

8.9 Future Research

My study of the role of the teacher in relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired music classes could inspire research into exploring the role of parents in supporting relationship-driven music education, inspired by Reggio Emilia's emphasis on family engagement, to see how parental involvement enhances children's musical experiences and strengthens the teacher-parent-child relationship. A long-term study on how relationship-driven music education influences learners' lifelong engagement with music and learning could be conducted to see how early relational experiences shape learners' musical journeys. Research on how relationship-driven teaching strategies enhance interdisciplinary learning across music, art and play in Reggio-inspired settings could explore how relationships foster creativity and learning across different domains, with an emphasis on holistic development.

It would be valuable to explore how continuous reflection and collaboration among educators enhance relationship-building and teaching effectiveness in music. An investigation into how relationship-driven music education can integrate South African cultural elements to create meaningful learning experiences for young children could be valuable for education in other countries with diverse learner populations as well as cultures. This study could lead to further studies in the South African context on how relationship-driven music education can promote social cohesion among diverse learner populations in South Africa.

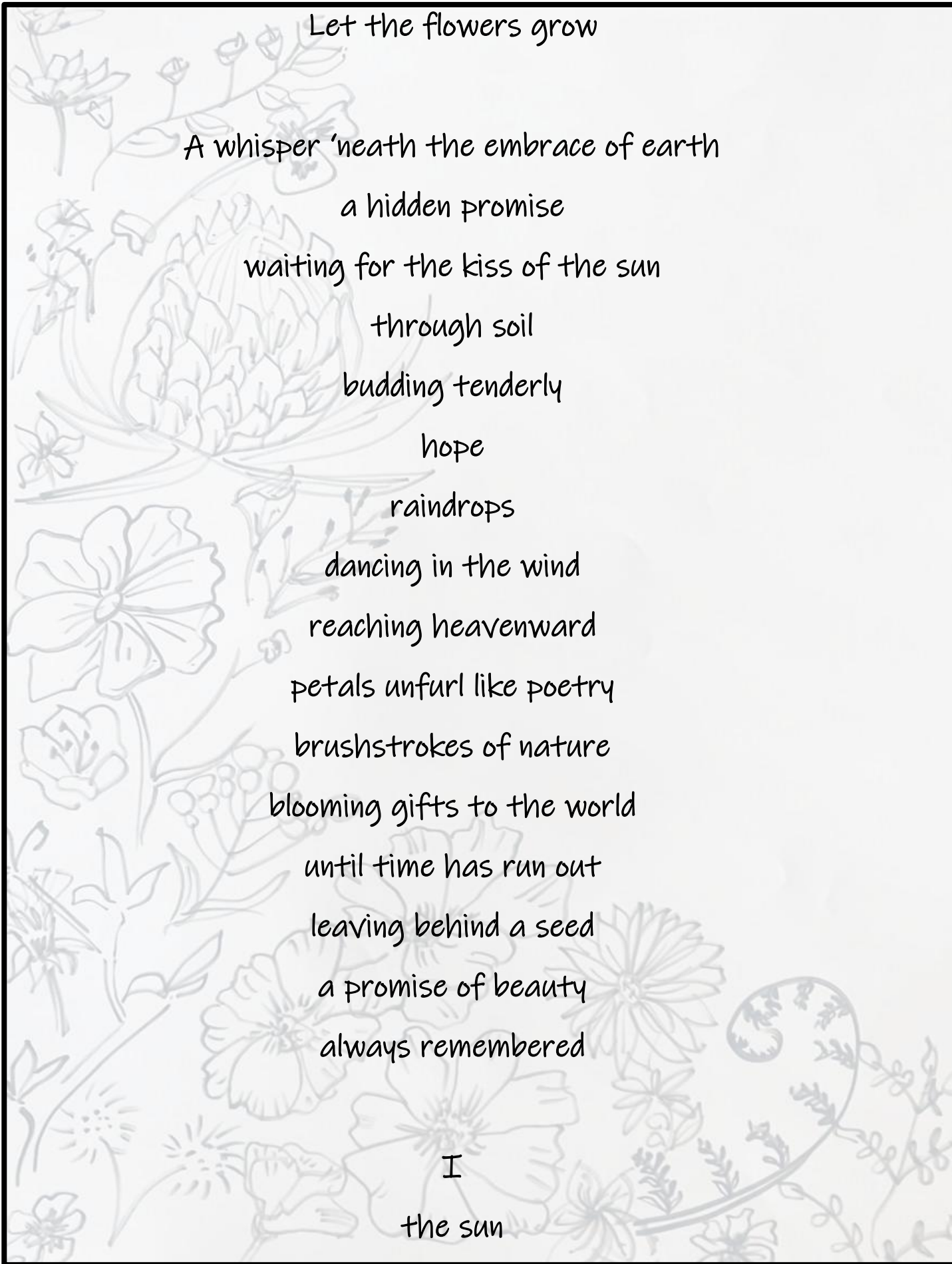
8.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this self-study represents a transformative journey towards becoming a relationship-driven music teacher within a Reggio-inspired setting. Through collaborations with critical friends, Reggio Emilia and music education experts, and a profoundly influential international study tour to Reggio Emilia in Italy, I discovered five

distinct roles for the music teacher to enhance an optimal learning environment where learners and teachers can flourish. The role of the relationship-driven teacher is to facilitate musicking, create a compassionate and inclusive classroom environment, teach life skills through musicking and apply reflective practices to enhance life skills, create moments for intentional connection to form relationships and be communicative. The Reggio approach, with its strong emphasis on *cura* (care), inspired me to create safe spaces, embrace lifelong learning, and research the child by adopting an open, relational stance.

Upon returning to South Africa, I began to implement these ideas in my music classroom, intentionally focusing on building connections with learners. Inspired by Hendricks's (2018) work on compassionate music education, I became deeply committed to forming meaningful relationships with my learners. As I planned and reflected daily, I observed not only my own growth as a teacher, but also the flourishing of my learners. Just observing this inspired me. The learners experienced positive emotions, engaged more fully and built strong relationships, ultimately finding pride and accomplishment in their learning.

This experience sparked a new direction in researching positive music education. I realised that the impact of my self-study extended beyond myself, creating a ripple effect where learners' experiences could positively influence their lives. Ultimately, I discovered that this study held a vital meaning both for my learners and for my own sense of flourishing as a teacher. Reflection and open communication became essential tools in shaping a learner-centred, compassionate environment, allowing both me and my learners to thrive.



Let the flowers grow

A whisper 'neath the embrace of earth

a hidden promise

waiting for the kiss of the sun

through soil

budding tenderly

hope

raindrops

dancing in the wind

reaching heavenward

petals unfurl like poetry

brushstrokes of nature

blooming gifts to the world

until time has run out

leaving behind a seed

a promise of beauty

always remembered

I

the sun

Figure 8.3: Postlude: Let the Flowers Grow (by S Quinn)

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ADDENDUM A: INTERNATIONAL STUDY GROUP PROGRAMME



INTERNATIONAL

Study Group

L'approccio educativo di Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia, November 13-17, 2023

I

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Morning: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

SG_INTERNAZIONALE NOVEMBRE 23.docx

8:00-9:00

Registration of the participants

9:00-13:00

Welcoming remarks

Introduction to the programme of the Study Group

Reggio Children

The values of the educational project of the Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools of the town of Reggio Emilia

Daniela Lanzi, pedagoga, Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

10:30-11:00

Light Break

13:00-14:30

lunch at PAUSE

afternoon: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

14:30-16:00

Introduction to the visit of Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools

Annalisa Rainieri, teacher, Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

16:00

Buses from the International Centre to the Infant Toddler Centres:

16:30-18:30

Visit to the Infant Toddler Centres:

RODARI (55 PP)

IOTTI (55 PP)

ALICE

BELLELLI

RIVIERI

SOLE

18:30

Buses from the Infant Toddler Centres to the city centre and to the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Morning: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

SG_INTERNAZIONALE NOVEMBRE 23.docx

9:00-13:00
Thinking by design: Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools as places of research.
"ROADS TO...imagine, play, build, represent..."
Annalisa Rainieri, teacher - Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

10:30-11:00
Light Break

13:00-14:30
lunch at PAUSE

afternoon: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

14:00-14:30
Introduction to the visit to Remida, the Creative Recycling Centre
....., Remida Centre

14:30-16:00
The cultures of the families
Daniela Lanzi, pedagista - Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

16:00
Buses from the International Centre to the Preschools

16:30-18:30
Visit to the Preschools:

8 MARZO
ALLENDE
BALDUCCI
GULLIVER
IQBAL MASIH
VILLETTA
XXV APRILE/MARTIRI DI SESSO

18:30
Buses from the Preschools to the city centre and to the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Morning: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

SG_INTERNAZIONALE NOVEMBRE 23.docx

9:00-13:00

The preschool and primary school at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre.
Presentation of experiences and research projects.

10:30-11:00

Light Break

13:00-15:00

lunch at PAUSE and working in groups among the participants

Afternoon: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

15:00-16:30

Sharing comments, doubts and questions of the working in groups in plenary sessions

Annalisa Rainieri, teacher and Daniela Lanzi, pedagoga - Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Morning: Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

9:00-10:00

The culture of the Atelier
....., *atelierista Reggio Children*

10:00-10:30

Light Break

10:30-13:00

GROUP A:

Plenary session:

Crossing "thresholds". Re-thinking the environment to design didactics

SG INTERNAZIONALE NOVEMBRE 23.docx

Matteo Bini, atelierista - Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

GROUP B:

5 Concurrent Ateliers:

- RErida, The Creative Recycling Centre (30 pp)
- A festive thought. Visual metaphors and everyday life (30 pp)
-
-
-

13:00-14:00

lunch at PAUSE

afternoon:

14:30-16:30

GROUP B:

Plenary session:

Crossing "thresholds". Re-thinking the environment to design didactics

Matteo Bini, atelierista - Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

GROUP A:

5 Concurrent Atelier:

- PAUSE (30 pp)
- A festive thought. Visual metaphors and everyday life (30 pp)
-
-
-

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

8:30-9:30

Free visit to Remida, the Creative Recycling Centre

9:30 Bus from Remida to the International Centre

9:30-10:00

Light break

Loris Malaguzzi International Centre – Auditorium

10:00-12:00

Project

SG INTERNAZIONALE NOVEMBRE 23.docx

Filippo Chieli, atelierista, Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

12:00-13:00

Conclusions of the Study Group

Daniela Lanzi, pedagista, Annalisa Rainieri, teacher - Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and Paola Riccio, Education Area Coordinator, Reggio Children

SG_INTERNAZIONALE NOVEMBRE 23.docx

ADDENDUM B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. Tell me about your thoughts and experience of observing a relationship-driven Reggio Emilia music lesson.
2. Describe your perception of the relationship between the teacher and the grade 1 learners.
3. How would you enhance the relationship between the teacher and the grade 1 learners?
4. Can you describe how the teacher encouraged and set up the lesson so that the children could create their own knowledge in the music lessons?
5. Describe what social learning took place.
6. Please describe how the teacher encouraged the interaction with people, places, materials and ideas for optimal learning.
7. How did the teacher seek to understand the needs and beliefs of children?
8. Based on what you have observed in the class, what are the benefits of a relationship-driven music lesson?
9. How did the teacher support the children academically, socially, and emotionally?
10. Do you think the kids feel safe with the teacher and in the environment? Why do you say that?
11. How do the children perceive their involvement as meaningful?
12. Some people would say relationship-driven teaching empowers children, but what is your opinion?
13. Can you tell me a bit more about how you perceived the children's motivation in the classroom?
14. Explain how you perceived creativity in the music classroom.

15. Would you describe what you think would be the ideal way for the teacher to encourage exploration in the music class?

ADDENDUM C: REFLECTION PROTOCOL

Date: **Grade 1**

What happened:

What did I think?

What did I feel?

What worked?

What did not work?

What now?

Interpretation:

ADDENDUM D: MY JOURNEY WITH JULIE

24 January 2024: I want you to draw a picture of what you think happens in the [...] song, Sunrise from the Grand Canyon Suite by Ferde Grofe started playing[...]Julie suddenly had an outburst. She shouted, when the music stopped, "I'll just pack away! My ideas are all gone." She was wailing out loud. I almost did not know how to handle this situation. I have never encountered such an outburst with the mere last note of a song. I went to Julie and told her that she was welcome anytime to come back and we could do it again and finish her drawing. She calmed down a bit (38:21;38:38).

14 January 2024: I am going to play you a piece of music[...] what do you think the music wants to tell you?"[...] The girls looked very calm as they listened to the music[...]I explained the 'talking pen'[...]Julie started crying out loud because she didn't get the 'music stick' when she wanted it (41:16).

13 March 2024: Today, I want you to design your own percussion instrument with recycled stuff you can find in the class, but I want you to do it with a friend". The girls were cheering, and they were so excited[...] Julie and Ally (said) "we made a drum, we put like some Christmas decorations on and some nice gorgeous black stars and we even made some rock and roll pictures on the drum and then we coloured it in blue... it was made out of a toilet paper roll and we shake our heads on it...."Julie started giggling out of her tummy. She came to school today without any socks with her brown baby doll shoes[...] (40:23).

Seeing Julie participating and contributing to a whole lesson without any blowouts or disruptions was terrific[...]I just wanted to figure out a way to include her (and her needs) so that every lesson succeeds. I had a meeting with Julie's teacher, and apparently, Julie has severe ADHD, although the parents would prefer the term not to be used due to being labelled. At the end of the lesson, the girls had to do the noon Angelus prayer – Julie was on such a hype after the lesson that she giggled throughout the prayer. I don't know if the half an hour of focus time was too much for her and that she felt a complete sensory overload. Or did she enjoy the creativity and partnership so much that she was in a good mood or space? (40:31)

20 March 2024: The girls had to make eye contact and roll the ball while singing hello and address the friend they are rolling to[...] (43:44). I saw Julie started getting restless. I gave her a pop-up bracelet. She participated in the singing game without interrupting because she had to figure out how to put the bracelet on. I spontaneously started singing 'up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up and down" [...] I demonstrated how I nominate someone to swop places with me while we were in our circle formation[...]As I explained how I will choose my friend with using my facial expressions and my eyes, they seemed to start understanding. Once again it was so cute seeing the intentional eye contact and intentional big eyes indicating swops. As the parachute activity came to an end, the only thing the girls wanted to know is if we can play it again. Julie was very keen to find the talking stick and hand it to the girls to share

their experiences[...] (43:47) Julie wanted to share, she was fiddling with the pop it toy while she said "we learnt that if you look at someone with your eyes you must swop with them, you have to quickly swop cause if the parachute comes down, its fire, you must be in your place". Julie was calmer, she got the opportunity to share her experience with her friends(43:39) [...] Julie was very busy with the pop it toy, at least she didn't proceed to interrupt everyone talking or screaming and crying in the corner(43:61)[...]I tried to involve Julie in the lesson, I was sitting next to her and occasionally checked in with her to ask her if she is okay. She was very helpful and contributed to the whole of the class (43:68).

3 April 2024: "Can we also be a train, please??" "Of Course, all aboard!" I shouted. Chookoo train, chookoo train, we are on our chookoo train," I repeated as we were 'driving' to class. Once again, we arrived in the music room five minutes into the lesson. "Where is Julie?" I said when we got into the classroom. "She's crying," the girls said. I quickly ran back and got Julie, who was crying out loud and stomping her feet. "Come, my Julie, come with me. I really want you to be part of my lesson. I need you to come and have fun." I saw a little smile emerge, and she took my hand. Then, we went off to the music classroom (52:40). "Hello, hello, good morning, friends. How are you today?" I started singing as we got into our usual circle formation. I quickly demonstrated that if I cross my arms over my chest, I need a hug; if I raise my one hand, I need a high five; and if both my hands are in the air, I need a wave and a wiggle. We started singing our hello song while walking around the classroom[...] As we finished our last verse, Julie stormed out of the class and stomped her feet. I was apprehensive because my classroom overlooked the church parking area, and I didn't want girls running outside. I quickly ran to find Julie. She was leaning on the wall outside my class. The thing that surprised me most was that there was a little smile in her mouth. She was mischievous, not that upset. " Julie, why did you run out? I was so worried about you," I said. "because I didn't get a last hug," she said (52:43). I took her back to class, and we started our parachute activity[...]When we reflected, I asked Julie to come and sit next to me. This way, I can help her regulate and check on her needs to fulfil or guide her. She added in a sorry voice that everyone thinks she's a bully[...] Julie commented on every girl's response: "I hated it.... It felt horrible". I asked her why she didn't enjoy it as much. She said, "I didn't like it because everything is too loud". I asked her what would help her. "Would earphones help Julie? To block out some of the noisy bits?" She seemed satisfied with the solution [...] Julie was sitting on the floor with me, putting her head on my leg. I was touching her hair gently.

Julie started wailing out loud again. " Julie, come here, please", I said in a loving voice. "Noooo!" She shouted. "Nobody loves me!" she screamed. " Julie, I love you very much," I said. In the meantime, the bell rang, and I sang "Goodbye Grade 1's", using So-Mi patterns. I could now turn all my attention to Julie[...] As I sat down, Julie wormed her way onto my lap. She put her little head on my shoulder. Julie was wailing like a little two-year-old. "I'm scared that I will get into trouble," she said. "Why will you get into trouble?" I asked. "Because I almost broke your piano," Julie said. She told me she had

walked into the piano and thought she would break it. "I care more about you, Julie than my piano. Did you get hurt?" She shook her head. I could see relief in her little tear-stained face. I walked her to her class. We got her lunchbox out, and she felt better[...] I honestly feel exhausted and hopeless with Julie some days. I realise that she has ADHD, but I feel like she desperately wants to be the centre of attention. I am trying hard to validate her, but she is playing with me as if she enjoys interrupting. Is she genuinely sad because she didn't get that last hug, or is it to get my attention? Maybe I am wrong. It is the end of the long term, so perhaps some exhaustion clouds my mind. Julie 's comments, "I hated it.... It felt horrible" don't feel valid to me because she participated only at the end when she ran off. Was this the first lesson where she couldn't finish her drawing, which made her hate it? I understand the overstimulation of noise when she said, "I didn't like it because everything is too loud". I will ensure to have noise reduction earphones readily available for our next lesson. There is definitely fear present in her reactions. Why was she so scared to break my piano? Has she been in trouble before for breakage? Is she afraid to disappoint me? Was it a fear of disapproval?

I have no idea how to improve it, but I find it challenging to keep Julie focused and happy while trying to win the other girls. A class of approx 23 girls can be a handful. I am balancing keeping the music space safe and brave without losing the whole class of girls.

4 April 2024: I immediately started the lesson by singing, "Copycat, copycat, can you do this and that?". The girls were familiar with this song, as I use this song for a focus activity now and again[...] I quickly went into explaining how we will do "copycat". Every number will get a chance to be the leader and make up actions that the rest of the group must copy. Julie asked, "can I please get the pop-up bracelet?". I responded with "just now, you are going to use your hands first, and then you can get it when you feel you need it". They set to work very eagerly. Every child was wholly engaged in their group work. Some girls tried to make more challenging actions for the rest to copy, while others, like Julie, tried to be funny. She put her finger in her left nostril and then in the right nostril for the girls in her group to copy. They were laughing.

When every girl got a turn to lead her group[...] Julie said, "I loved doing this. I got to be their leader and do silly things".

10 April 2024: Julie was the last to participate in Rig-a-jig-jig before continuing to the next activity. I demonstrated to the girls how to sit and mirror their friends before doing the final countdown to get into pairs.

Julie interrupted "you are bissis Quinn, and Fissis Quinn". I jokingly interacted. "No, I'm not Dissus Quinn, fissis Quinn or Bissis Quinn. I am Missus Quinn", I said entertainingly. Julie enjoyed the joke. While the other girls were talking, Julie drew on my lesson plan. She wrote the word "run". Julie was giggling throughout, sucking my pen until I told her that her tongue would turn blue from the ink[...] Julie ran out of the class again. I ran after her. " Julie, it is tough for me when you run away. Please come back to my

classroom". "I'm right next to you; all you can do is answer the other girls," she said. "I'm sorry, Julie," I said. "Can I try again, please?" I asked. "Madam, Julie wants to share her thoughts," I said as I walked into the classroom, handing her the talking stick. She loved the attention. Julie was giggling. Julie added, "It was so cool working with my friend today". Julie started playing on the piano, even though I asked her not to. "Julie, please help me," I asked. "I always give you a turn, but please help me too". By this stage, Julie is beside herself, licking chairs and girls. It feels like chaos at this stage of the lesson. Julie is laughing uncontrollably[...] Cath saw the need and got the fidget toy on the piano; she handed it to Julie[...] I loved how Cath was looking out for Julie to hand her the fidget toy when she saw Julie that she wasn't coping or regulating[...] I love humour, but I find Julie 's humour exhausting at times. I find it off-task distractive and interrupting. I try to speak to Julie in a loving and acknowledging way, but I am unsure if her running away is trying to escape or get attention. I playfully made her the centre of attention when I said "Madam Julie wants to share her thoughts", but presenting a lesson to evolve around one child is truly exhausting.

8 May 2024: I locked the class door to ensure no one ran out of my class. I opened 'Say Zoop' by Hervé Tullet, "Today we are going to read a very special book together". Julie went to get the pop-up bracelet before we even started[...] We started by pointing to all the Oh's in the book. Julie blocked her ears when they got very loud but participated throughout. Julie was sitting with her friend Ally again, excited to start[...] By now, Julie was chewing the pop-up bracelet and banging on the piano – luckily, it was short-lived, and she soon returned to work. I handed out a coloured pencil in this class to eliminate the colour issue[...] Ally and Julie enjoyed working together. One drew the dots while the other one coloured in. I gave Julie's group the pink pencil because they had asked for it. I wasn't prepared to lose her over the colour of a pencil[...] After the activity, I asked Julie to take all the pencils to reflect on and share them with the class. Julie took her job very seriously. She counted to ten to get the girls to hand her the pencils. I was ready to give the sparkle stick to the groups to share[...] Julie wanted to share her crescendo with the class. They also did one dot by Julie and the following dot by Ally. I realised I had locked the door when Sage wanted to go to the bathroom. Julie had not even attempted to run away. I think it was a good lesson for her[...] From observing Julie, I think she was utterly overwhelmed by the sounds (loud noises) in the music class. I feel very proud of her for getting up and getting the pop-up bracelet. She took control and self-regulated. Although I always support making new friends and working with new partners – it would be too much for Julie. Ally understands her, and they are best friends. To have Julie participate in my class, I must compromise a bit by giving her extra responsibility and making her feel in control of her own space, adding to her experience and everyone's experience in music.

9 May 2024: It was noisy in the class. Yola was sitting in the corner crying and had been crying for the last few lessons. I took her outside the class to console her, and she murmured that I struggled to hear her. She just wanted to hug me. She said she misses her mommy. "Can I be your music mommy?" I asked her. As we walked into the class,

Julie approached Yola and gave her the pop-up bracelet. She started calming down a bit. Julie was very cooperative today. I allowed her group to share first. Their Ohs frightened their Ahs, so it was quiet with a very big Szforzando at the end. Julie was very proud of her work and her group. I realise that Julie wants to be listened to. She is okay negotiating with her group if they allow her to share[...] Julie's compassion blew me away. She identified with Yola's emotional turmoil and gave her the pop-up bracelet because she knows from experience it has a calming effect. Julie wants to be heard. I have had good dealings with her since she can regulate and has positive attention. The girls were so creative that I enjoyed observing their learning.

15 May 2024: Everyone closed their eyes. I began describing a visit to the park, imagining all the equipment and jungle gyms. The girls were excited but quiet, eager to hear more of our imaginative play. I started singing "up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up" on a major scale and then swooped down with my voice back to the tonic. "What did I go on, girls?" They shrieked in delight. "The slide, you went on the slide," they all said. Julie interrupted. She wanted to give Oakley the pop-up bracelet. It is like she knows you can have it when you are not feeling well. Upon asking why, she said, "Because my granny died". She gave her the bracelet to make her feel better because she was despondent[...] Julie was still very concerned about it. I gave her agency, and when she felt someone needed to regulate, she could hand them one of my self-regulation toys. When I did the melodic contour with my voice of the monkey bars, Julie was the first to raise her hand and excitedly shout out, "Monkey bars [...] I knew it was monkey bars because you didn't do a whoooooop (like a swoop)". "Well done, my Julie, you are listening like a rock star", I said[...] Julie was ready to take her turn but was scared that the other girls would peep when she did her contour, so she insisted on turning around and facing the wall while creating her vocal contour. Julie started. The girls were excited to guess. She went on the swing and sang beautifully, "whoooooop, woooooooooo, whoooooop, wooooooo". "See Julz, you don't even have to be shy, and you did so well", I tried to encourage her. Julie came to sit on my lap, very comfortable. She needed to feel my love and my approval. It is much easier with this sense of control in my lesson, where she does not interrupt the whole time[...] Julie got off my lap and started spinning on the floor. Oakley quickly gave her a pop bracelet to help her regulate, and within a few seconds, Julie was sitting still, listening and contributing to the class again[...] I enjoy seeing Julie's compassion towards the girls in her class. She has a very gentle, caring side that comes out when she is not overwhelmed and overstimulated. Being empathic also gives her confidence; she feels like she is in control and does not need to regulate herself. This enables Julie to participate in the music class because she is very musically proficient. Julie was also willing to perform or share her ideas but was anxious. This could only be dealt with when she could turn around and didn't need to face everyone. She felt a bit overwhelmed, but with the help of a regulation tool, Julie could be present again

16 May 2024: The girls got ready in their groups to create one jungle gym they could play on with their voices. The girls were so excited. We reiterated that the main idea of

group work is sharing, teamwork, and, most notably, taking turns. The class was quite rowdy at this stage from pure excitement. After I reminded the girls to use inside voices, they calmed down and started working on their projects.

I went to collaborate with the different groups. Julie was quite worried because she had torn a piece of paper by mistake, so I gave her another piece. There was more noise in the air than usual. I could see that the noise was a bit too loud for Julie.

Julie and Ally made two slides on the piece of paper that they wanted to connect with a zipline. The noise became unbearable for Julie as she stood up and tried to run out of the classroom. I stood by the door so that she couldn't escape. She had a little mischievous smile on her face, she started shouting and went to sit under my desk. The lesson was over, and I had to take her from under the desk. Once I got her from under the desk, I gave her my rose quartz stone to rub. She calmed down but said she didn't want to share her jungle gym with the class[...] Julie was overstimulated by all the noise and excitement in the class. She was able to regulate.

ADDENDUM E: THE PARACHUTE SONG

Up and Down

Up and down, up and down, the pa - ra-chute goes up and down.

5
Up and down, up and down, the pa - ra-chute goes UP!!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 6/8 time. The first staff contains four measures of music with lyrics: 'Up and down, up and down, the pa - ra-chute goes up and down.' The second staff starts with a measure rest labeled '5' and contains four measures of music with lyrics: 'Up and down, up and down, the pa - ra-chute goes UP!!'. The melody is simple, using quarter and eighth notes. The final note of the second staff is marked with a double bar line and repeat dots.

ADDENDUM F: MAKE THE CIRCLE BIG, BIG, BIG

Make the circle big, big, big



ADDENDUM G: COPYCAT, COPYCAT

Copycat



ADDENDUM H: HELLO SONG

Hello song (*YEBO*)



ADDENDUM I: RIG-A-JIG-JIG

Rig-a-jig-jig

As I was walk-ing down the street, down the street, down the street, a pret - ty girl I
nice young man

chanced to meet. Hi - ho, hi - ho, hi - ho!* A - rig - a - jig - jig and a - way we go, a -

way we go, a - way we go, A - rig - a - jig - jig and a - way we go. Hi - ho, hi - ho, hi - ho!

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caption: Atelier, Ernesto Balducci municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

2_Scuola_Balducci_Atelier2.tif
caption: Atelier, Ernesto Balducci municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

3_Scuola_Balducci_Piazza.tif
caption: Piazza (central square), Ernesto Balducci municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

4_Scuola_Balducci_Quart_creta.tif
caption: In the foreground: string quartet in clay by 5- to 6-year-old children, Ernesto Balducci municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

5_Scuola_Balducci_Orch_grafica.tif
caption: Orchestra. Drawing by 5- to 6-year-old children, Ernesto Balducci municipal Preschool (Reggio Emilia)

In the inner pages of her PhD thesis entitled The Role of the Teacher in Relationship-driven Teaching and Learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music class that Selma Quinn will present on Nov 2024 at Faculty/Department Humanities North-West University 11 Hoffman Street, Potchefstroom, - Music 2531, South Africa, South Africa (full address).

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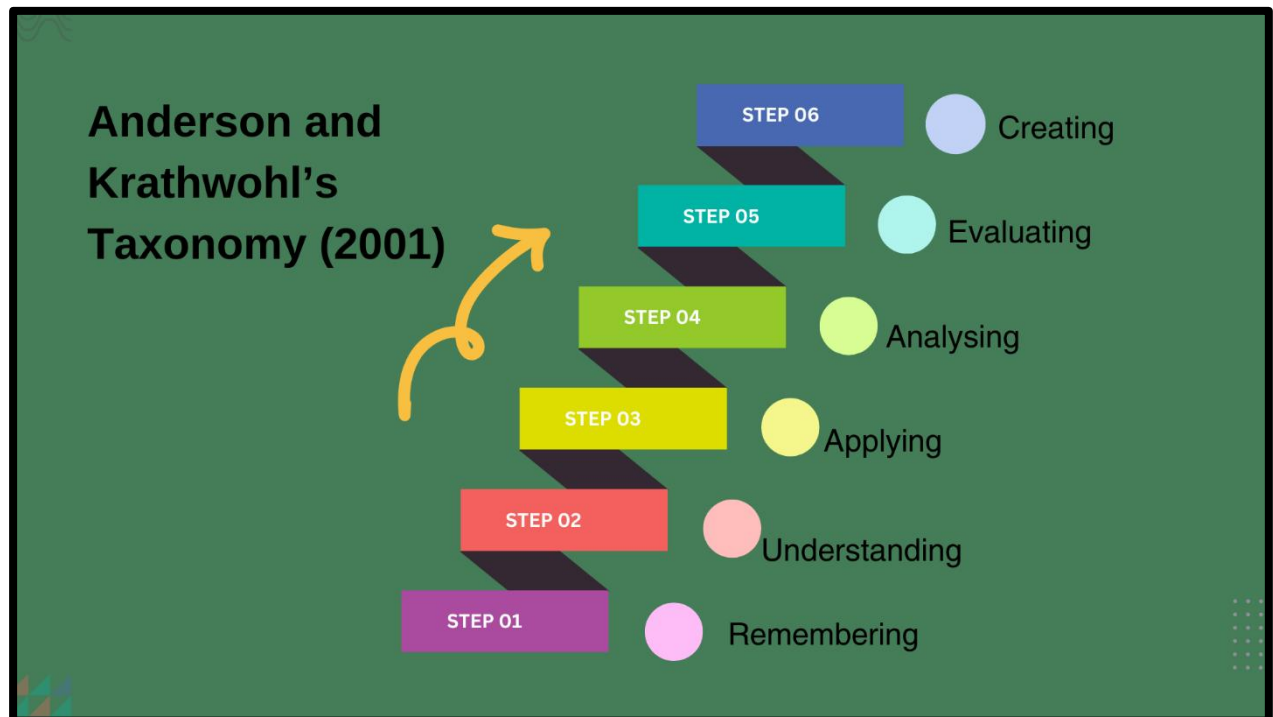
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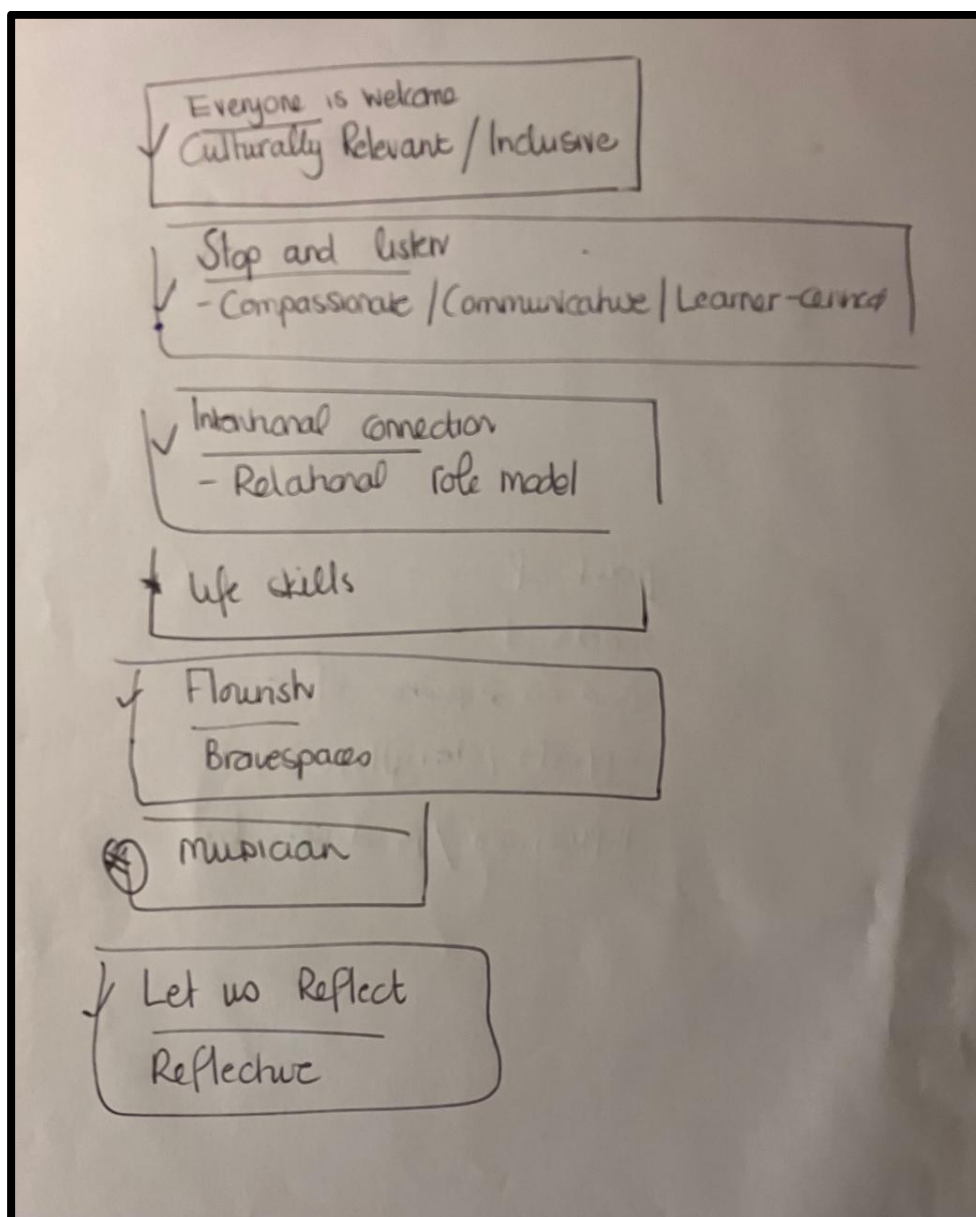
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ADDENDUM K: ANDERSON AND KRATHWOHL'S TAXONOMY 2001



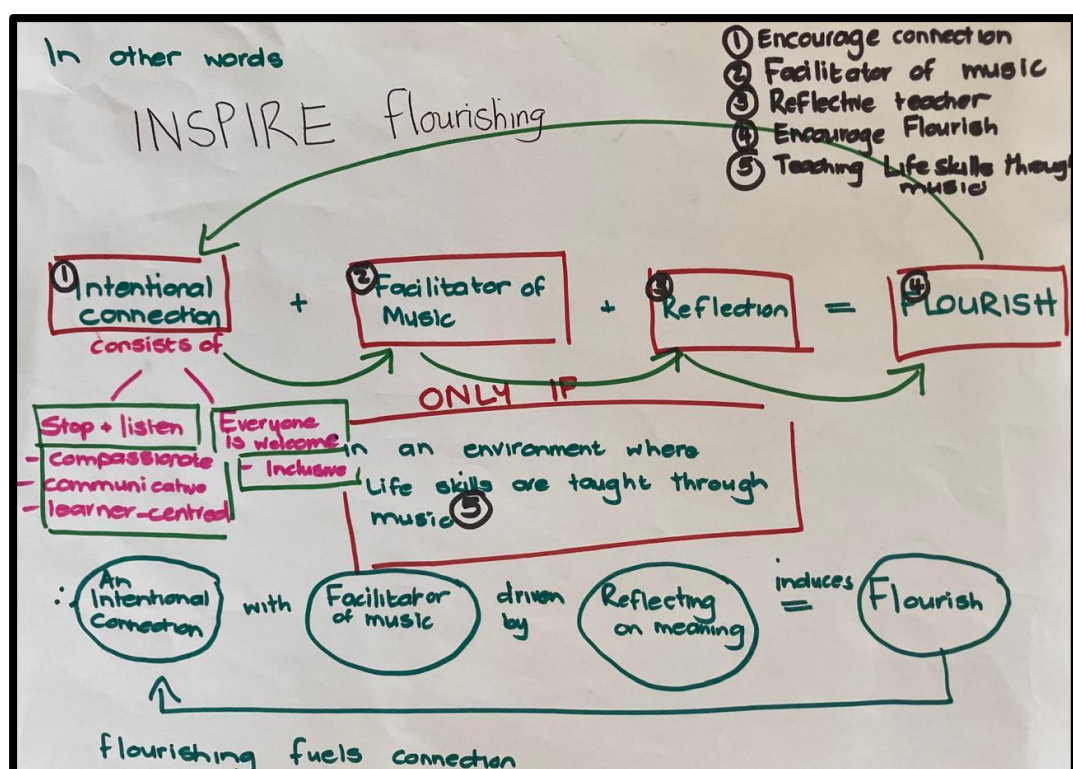
ADDENDUM L: STEPS OF THEORISING

STEP 1:



Step 1 started by listing the themes that were discussed in the two findings chapters: the findings from the learning journey in Reggio Emilia, Italy and the findings from the teaching journey. I then tried to make sense of how the two findings chapters complemented each other.

STEP 2:

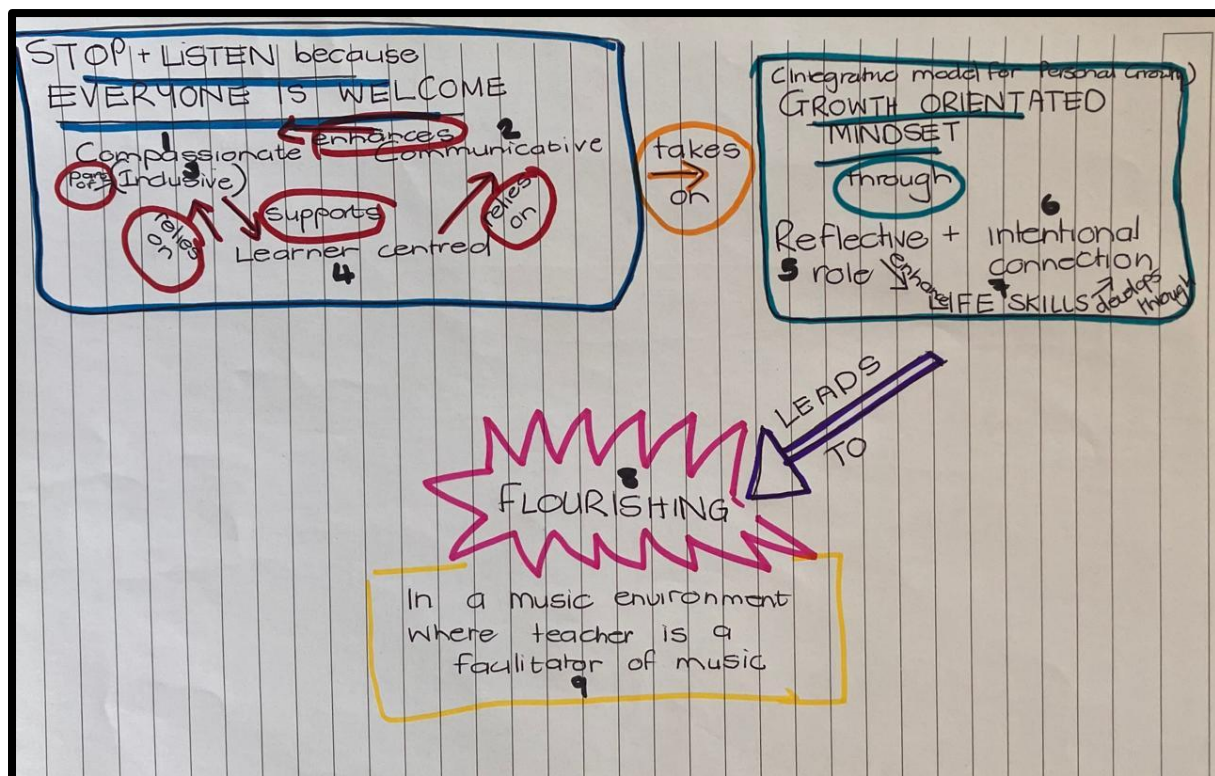


I was trying to make sense of how these different themes influenced one another. The role of the teacher is to encourage an intentional connection through music that is driven by reflection on meaning and induces *flourishing*. This can only happen in an environment where *life skills are taught through music*—*flourishing fuels connection*, which creates a cycle towards achieving well-being. Role number 1, *Intentional Connection*, therefore consisted of *stop and listen* and also, *everyone is welcome*. I used ChatGPT to generate an acronym for the elements of this framework.

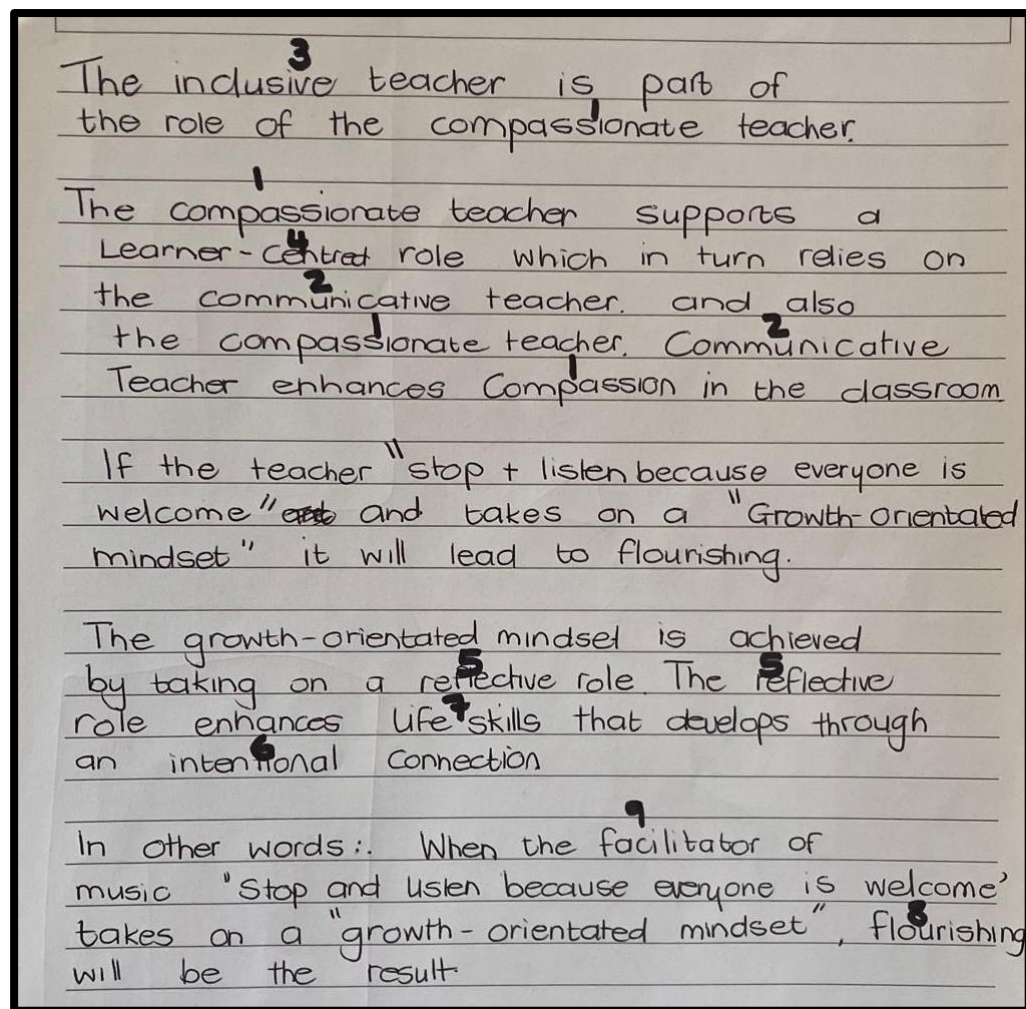
INSPIRE Flourish: Intentional
Nurturing through Supportive
Practices and Integrated
Reflection for Empowering
Flourishing in Music

After not being hundred per cent happy with this theoretical framework, I decided to think deeper and attempt another version of the theoretical framework.

STEP 3:

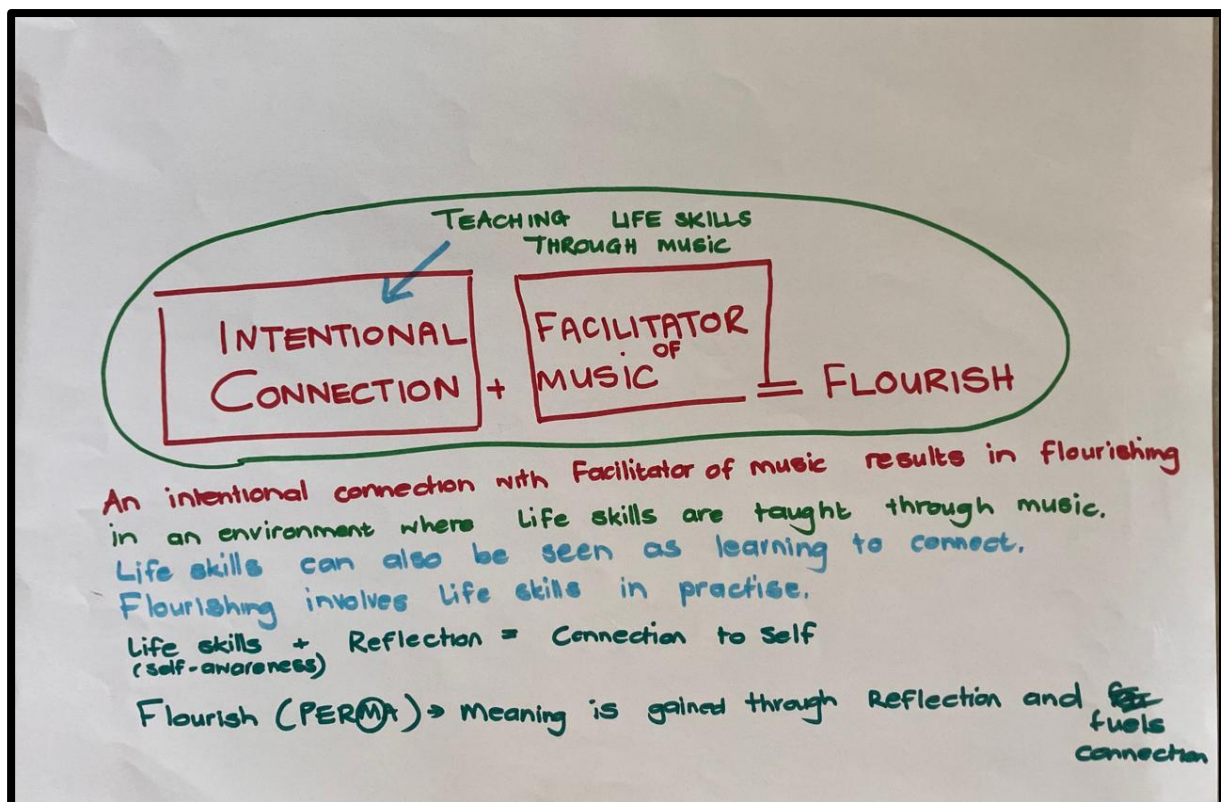


I interpreted this theory as follows:



I still felt like the framework was not making sense. I was also concerned that the role of *facilitation in music* was not included, so I started thinking about the whole process and all the relations between the roles in the study. I included the *music facilitator* in the next attempt.

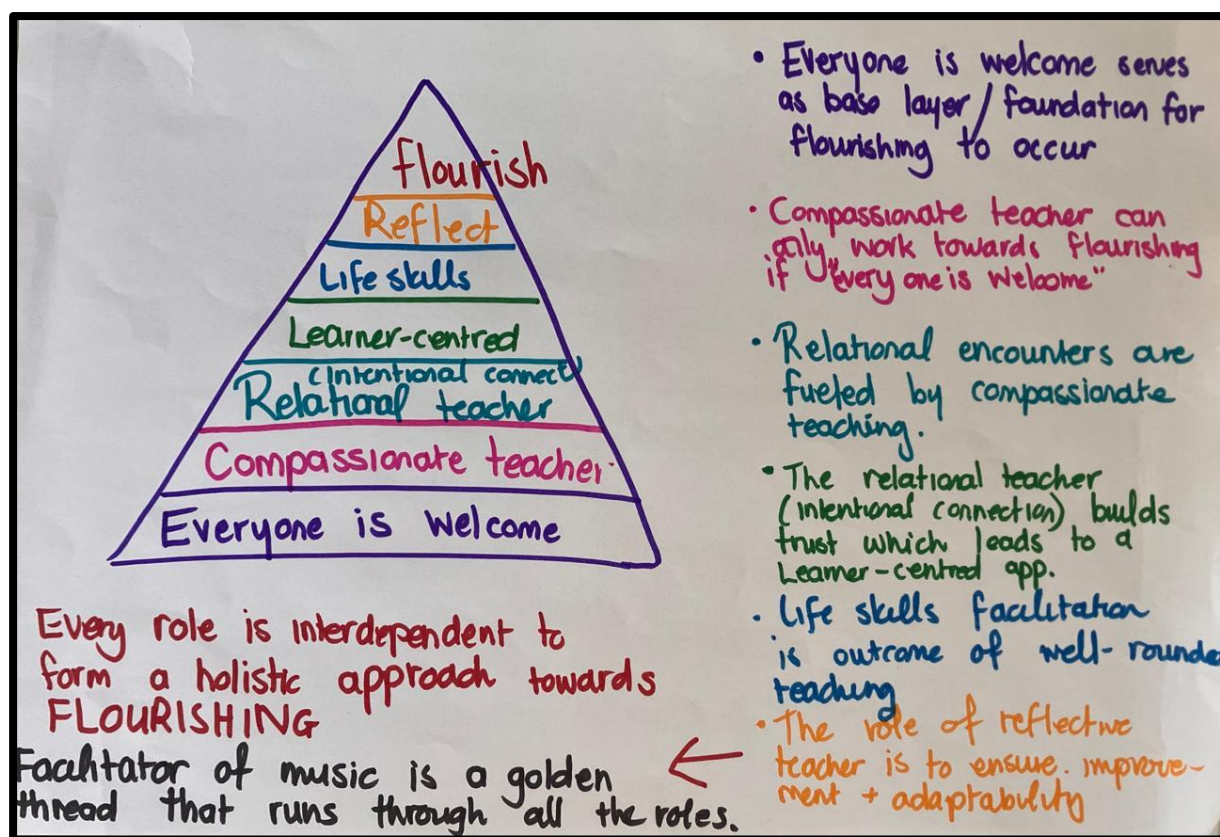
STEP 4:



As seen above, step 4 states that an *intentional connection* with the *facilitator of musicking* results in *flourishing* in an environment where *life skills* are taught through music. I interpreted life skills as 'learning to connect' and posited that 'flourishing' involves life skills in practice. It, therefore, made sense to me that *life skills + reflection* = a connection to self. Flourishing, per the PERMA model, means meaning that is gained through reflection, which fuels connection.

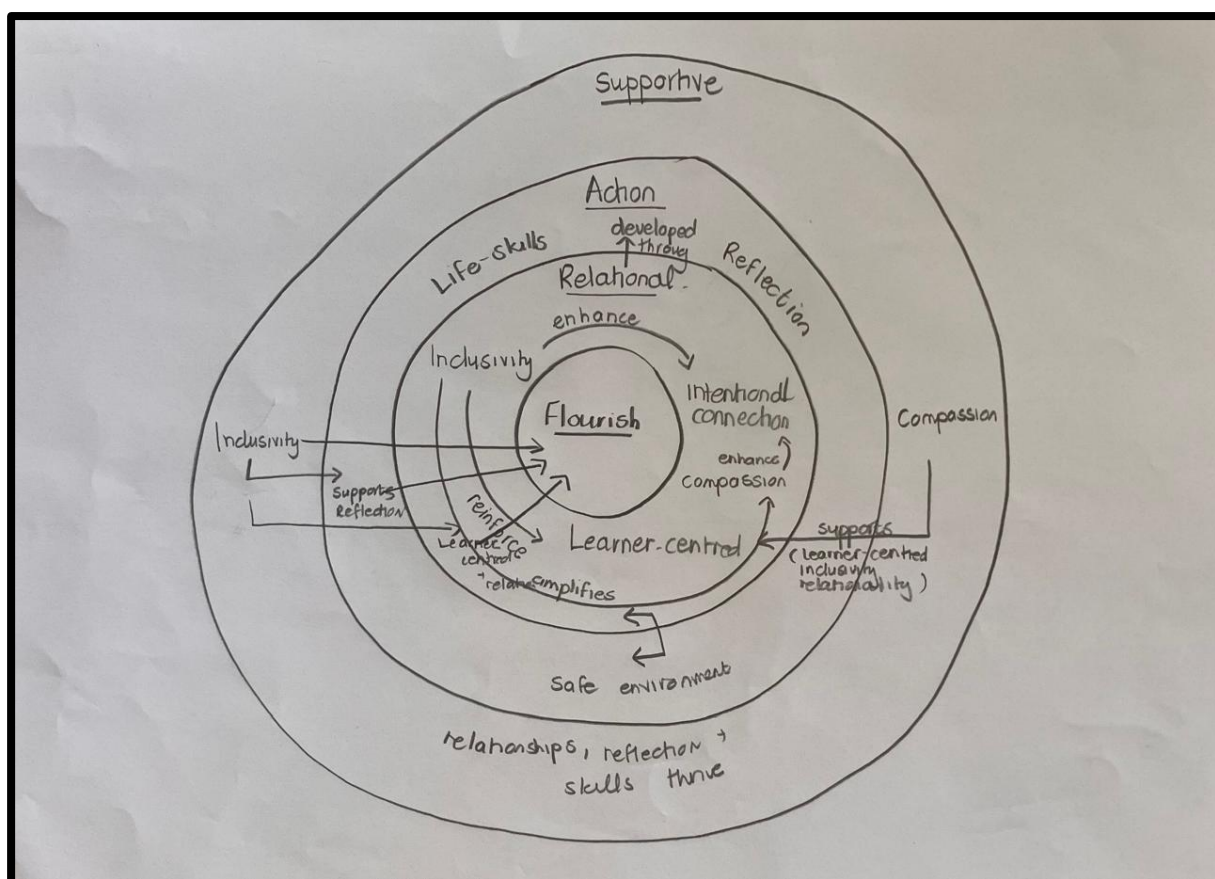
I pondered on this version of the theoretical framework, but I felt like all the elements/ roles of the teacher were not incorporated in an equal way. I decided to try creating a pyramid, like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where the pinnacle was *flourishing*.

STEP 5:



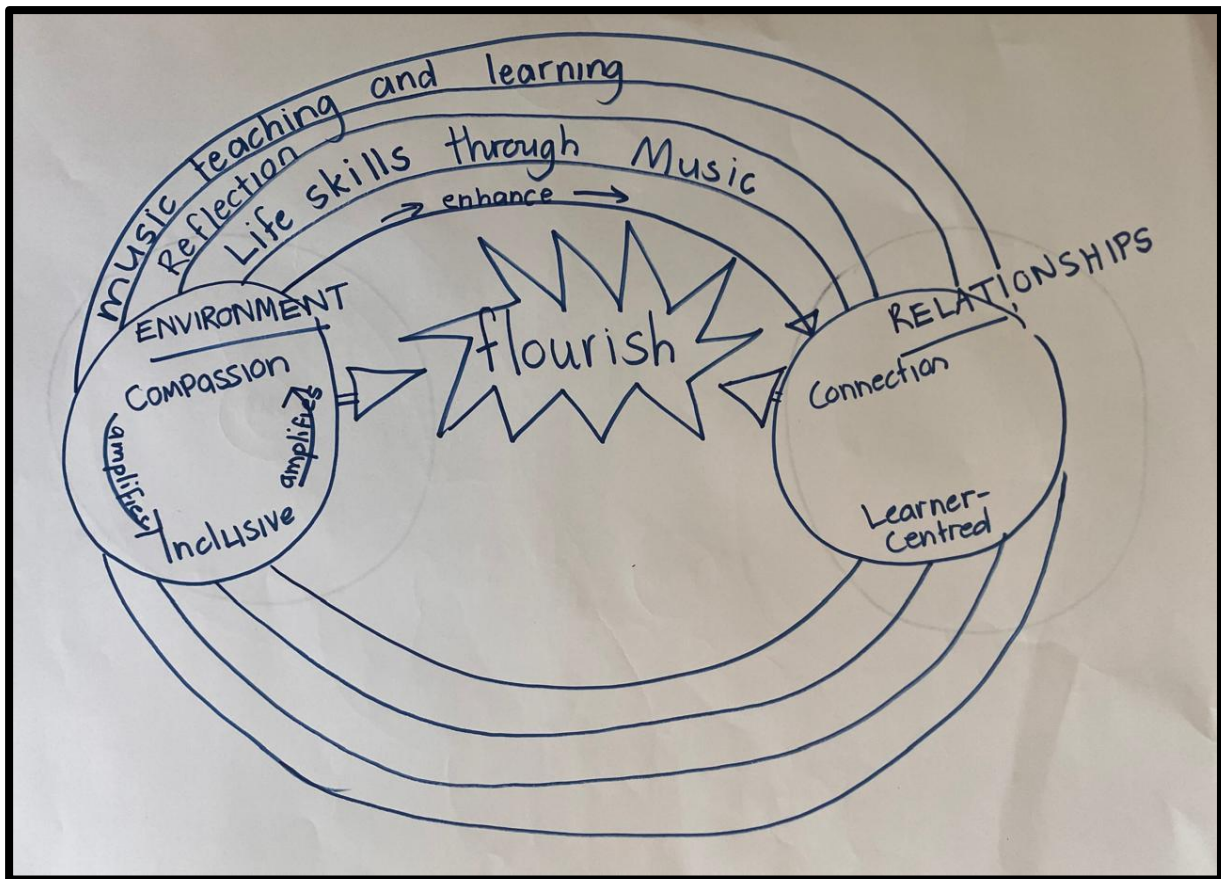
I made sense of this by using *everyone is welcome* as the foundation to enable *flourishing*. In the second layer, the *compassionate teacher* can only work towards *flourishing* if the foundation that *everyone is welcome* has been laid. *Intentional connection* or the *relational teacher* is responsible for relationships in the classroom, which the *compassionate teacher* fuels. The *relational teacher* builds trust, which then leads to a *learner-centred* approach. It became clear to me that the next level of *life skills* is the outcome of a well-rounded education and that the role of the *reflective teacher* is to ensure consistent and continuous improvement. I described the pinnacle of the pyramid as *flourishing* and posited that every role is interdependent to form a holistic approach towards flourishing. Once again, I did not find a suitable place for the facilitator in this attempted theory. I also had no idea how to illustrate it. I became more and more frustrated. My promoter commented that the development is not clear. I decided to try a circular/ cycle or ecology for the roles of the teacher.

STEP 6:



I remembered a previous theory that I studied, Van der Merwe and Erasmus's (2024) 'Framework to Positive Music Education'. They used antecedents, nature and outcome as a structure for their theory. I used 'Supportive' as the antecedent, because I interpreted it as 'what needs to be in place before any work can be done'. I thought that in order for an environment or the teacher to be *compassionate*, the teacher needs to be *inclusive*. I decided to place both of these roles in the 'Supportive' stage. I knew that there needed to be 'action' to finally lead to *flourish*. I asked myself HOW music should be taught, and the answer was simple: it should be taught through *life skills*, which is precisely what I have prioritised throughout this study to create a relationship-driven environment. The question was: is there anything else that needs action? I realised that *reflect* is a verb and a noun. It is something that needs to occur in and after teaching life skills. However, the relational element was still not present. Still, through life skills, it is possible to build a relationship through structuring moments for *intentional connection* that will create a *learner-centred* classroom to enable *flourishing*. I, therefore, put 'Flourish' in the middle as the outcome. I felt that I was finally getting somewhere, but my promoters still felt that life skills had not yet been placed in the right place. So, I carried on thinking and reflecting.

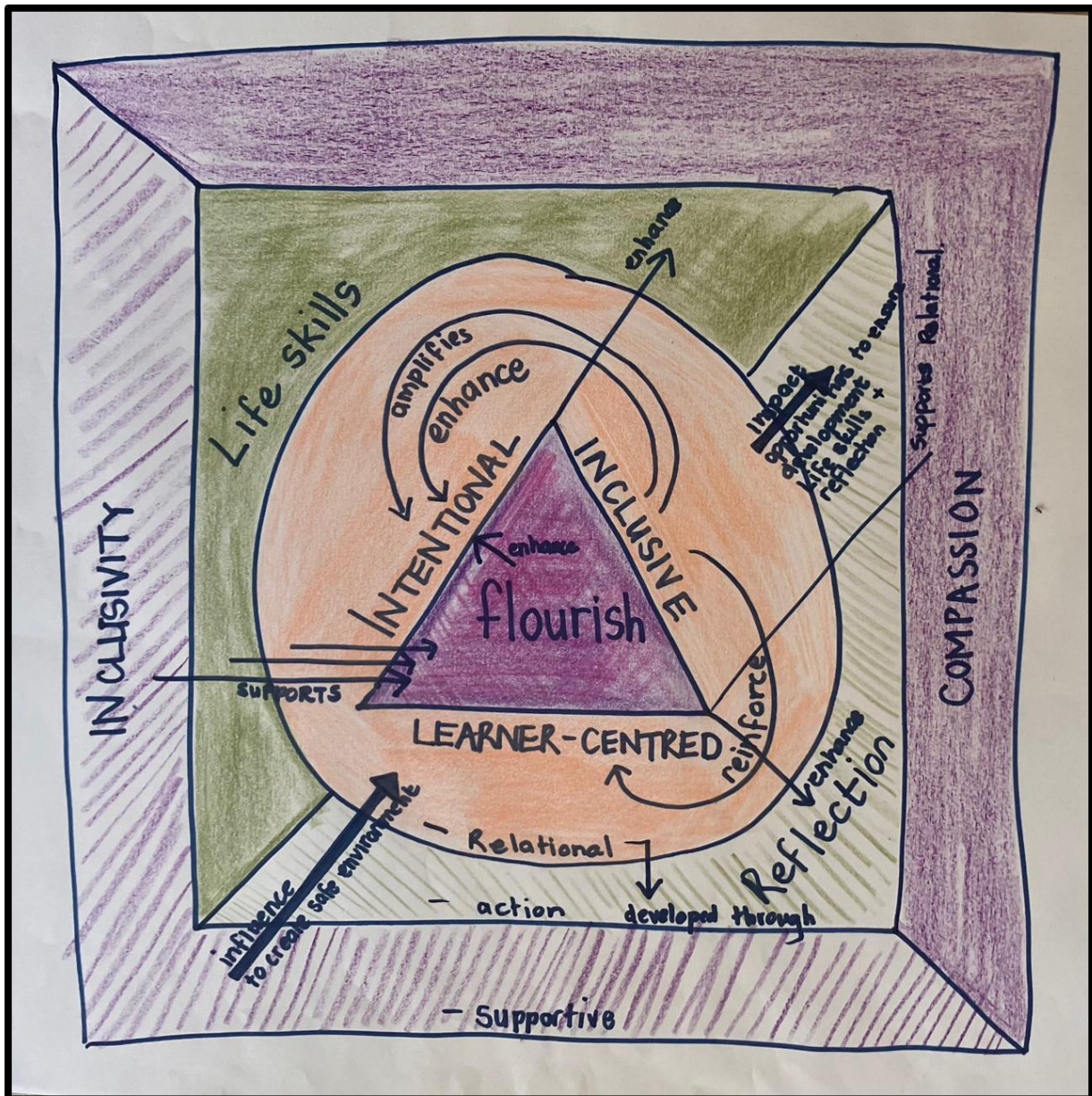
STEP 7:



So, *life skills* and *reflection* had to be ever-present, but it was also a music study. There were no traces of music in this study when I tried to theorise the roles in the study. I decided to create 'the environment', which serves as the antecedent and flourish as the outcome, right in the middle, and relationships on the other side. Both the environment and the relationships point to flourishing, but only if life skills, reflection, and music learning are present.

The framework started to take more shape.

STEP 8:



But I still was not sure if it was clear enough, so I decided to try and draw another version. I described it below.

Supportive level (compassionat + inclusive)
influence Relational (inclusive, learner-centred +
intentional relations)

= to create safe environment

Relational impact Action

= Relationships foster opportunities to
develop L/S, while learner-centred +
inclusive enhance reflection

Reflection = ongoing improvement

Flourish is supported by each level

flourish enhance - reflection

- intentional connection

- development of L/S

Creates positive classroom leading
to more Flourishing

Reflection was not present in every role, and once again, I could not determine the role of the *music facilitator*.

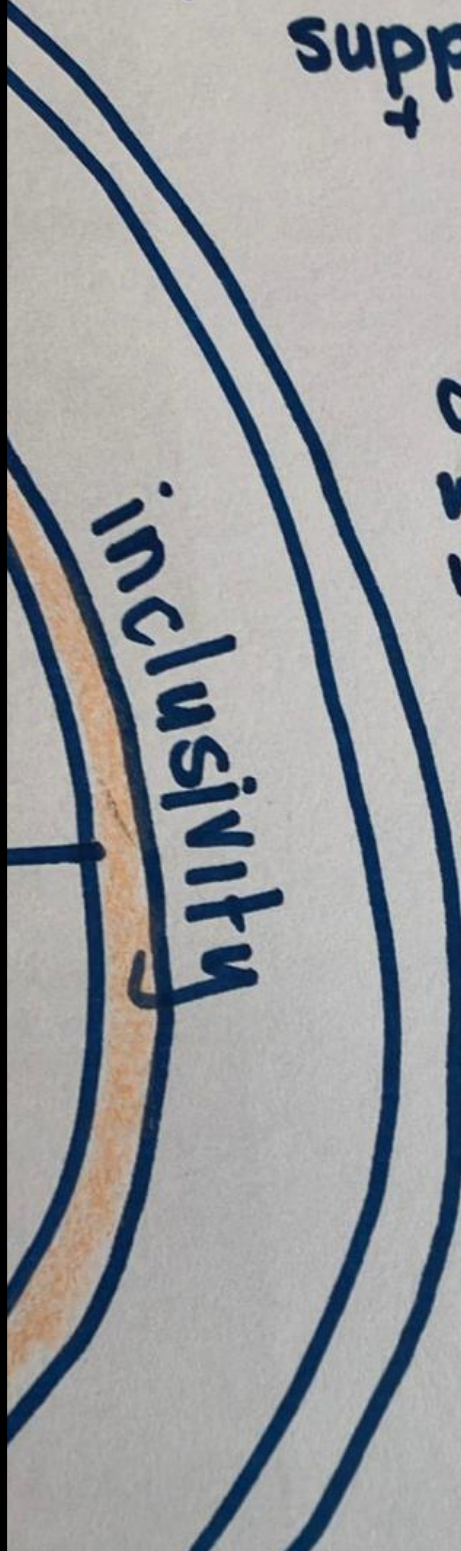
Flourish: the goal

relational:

support interpersonal
+ group dynamics

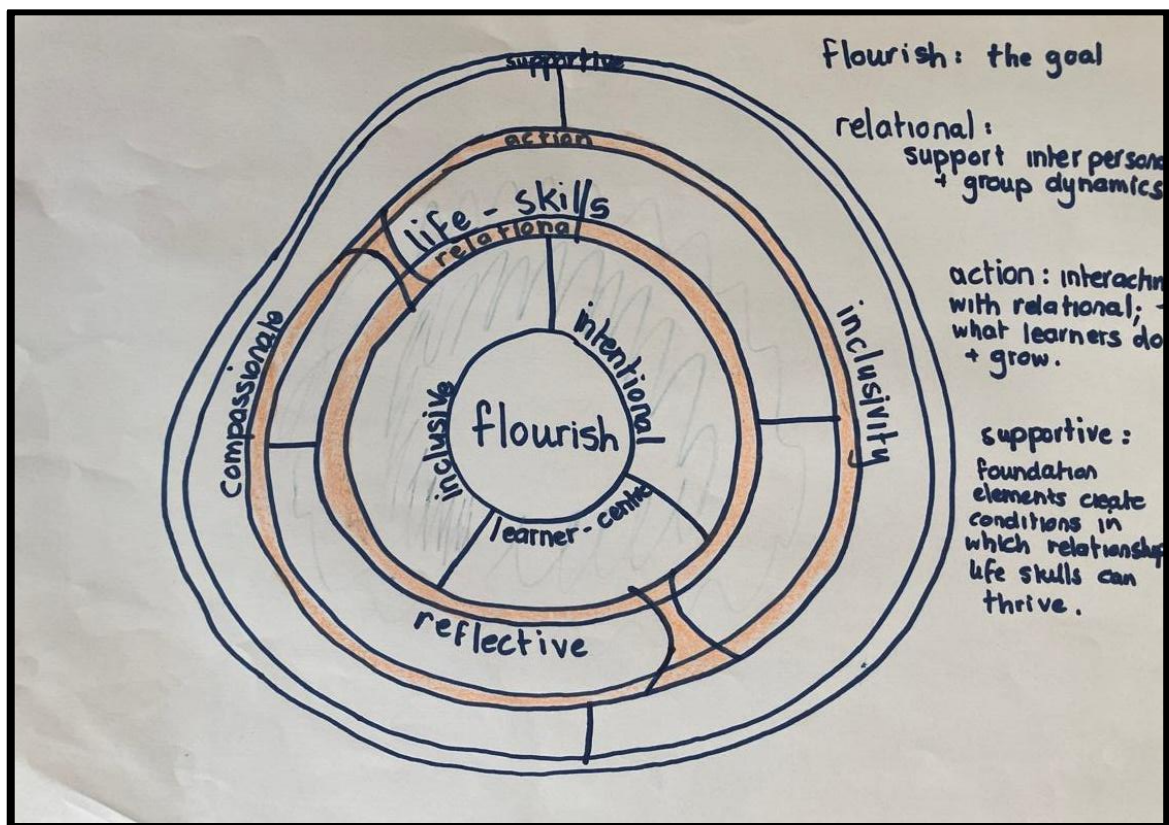
action: interacting
with relational;
what learners do
+ grow.

supportive:
foundation
elements create
conditions in
which relationships
life skills can
thrive.



inclusivity

STEP 9:



In step 9, I started to illustrate how *reflection* is connected to the *relational stage*, and I quickly got another idea of how I was going to illustrate the relationships between the roles.

Inclusive, compassionate, intentional relations,
Learner-centred, Life-skills and reflection
directly contributes to flourishing.

Flourishing also strengthen these element
creating a positive classroom dynamic to
enable more flourishing

Compassion + inclusive enhance relationality
[understanding + emotional support]

Inclusivity reinforces learner-centredness
[abilities are accommodated]

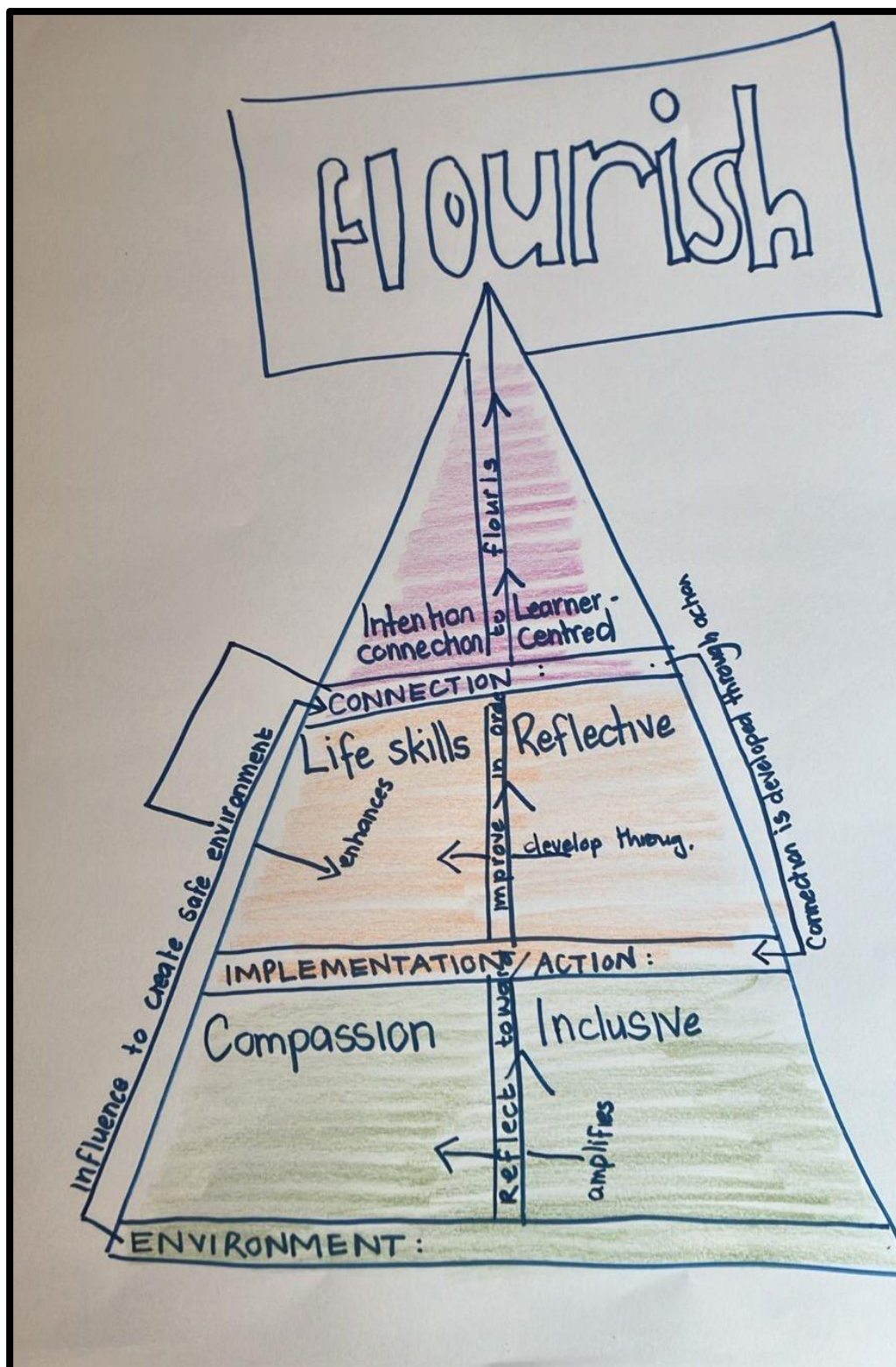
Inclusivity amplifies compassion
[needs are met + supportive environment]

Life-skills + reflections
[action]

Lifeskills develop through reflection to strengthen
relationality

Reflection is connected to all elements

STEP 10:



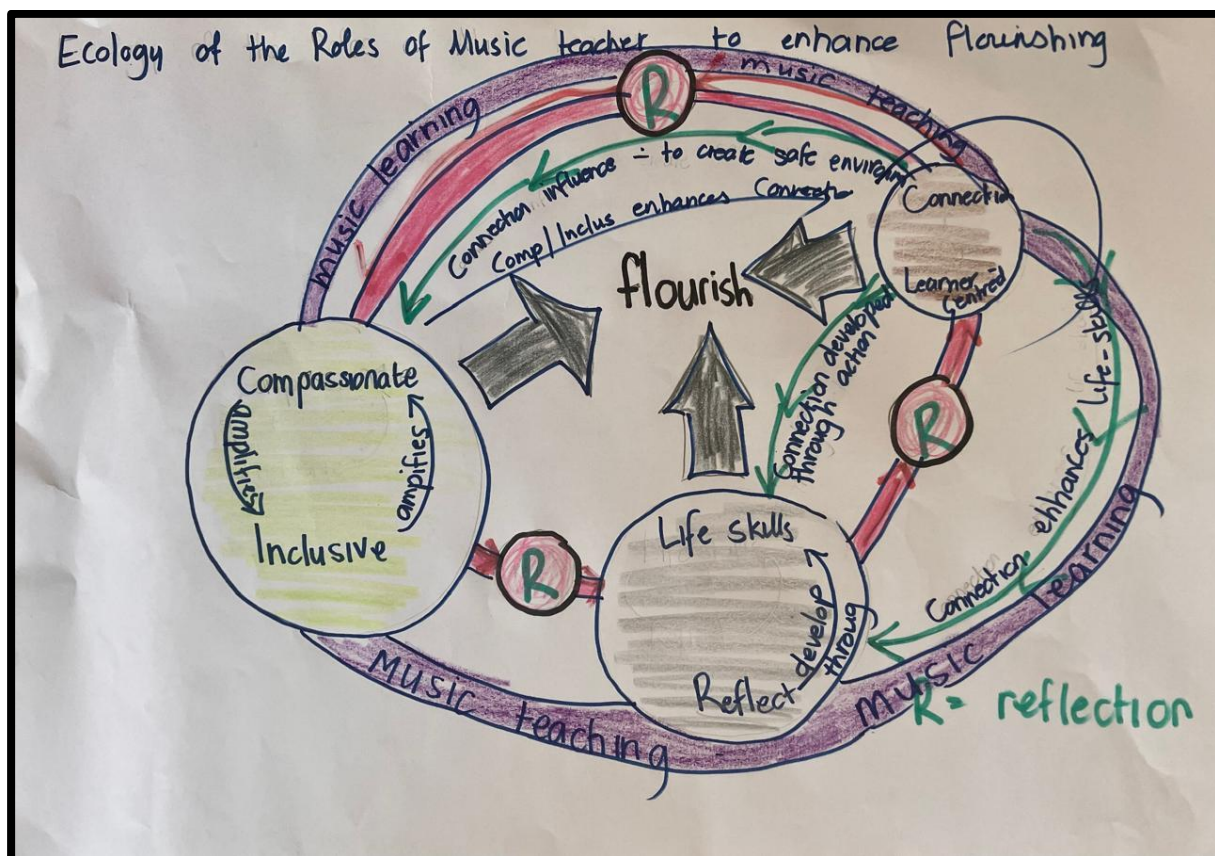
This illustration of the framework shows how *reflection* is connected to the environment, the implementation or action, and the relational aspect (connection). There were only three steps towards the ultimate goal: *flourishing*. I placed *flourish* at the top of the triangle (like the star on a Christmas tree). I described this illustration as:

A Framework + A Skillset + Action in Context = Flourishing.

My promoters thought that this makes more sense and that a positive environment creates an upward spiral of flourishing. But the music element was still missing.

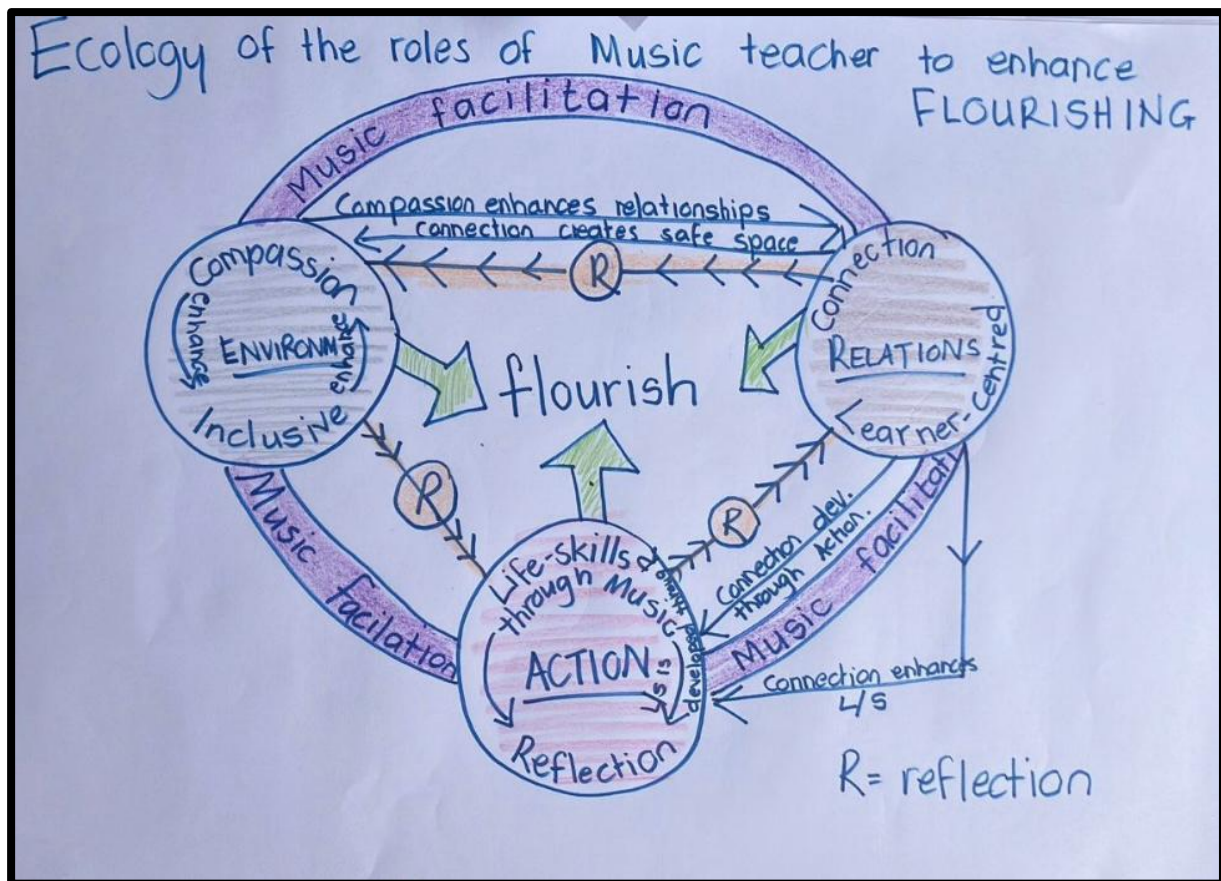
I decided to copy this but add the *music-teaching* element. I tried a cycle/ecology once again; this time, music teaching and learning formed the outer circle, or, so to say, the 'foundation' of the study. *Reflection* was once again shown to run through all the roles.

STEP 11:



I could not sleep that night and was working out how to depict this to make sense first of all and do justice to the whole process. I made *compassion* and *inclusivity* the biggest circle because the environment is the 'antecedent' and then *life skills* and *reflection* as the 'action'. *Music teaching and learning* (purple) run through all the elements, and *reflection* (pink) is a continuous process. My promoters looked at this framework and said that *connection* is central to relationship building and cannot be the smallest circle.

STEP 12:



I grabbed another piece of paper and started making three circles of equal size for the environment, action, and relations. I called it the Ecology of the roles of the Music teacher to enhance *flourishing*. I pondered on this framework after going through the roles in my findings chapter. I realised that *communication* enhances the environment, supports relationships and deepens the actions. So, I added *communication* to the framework.

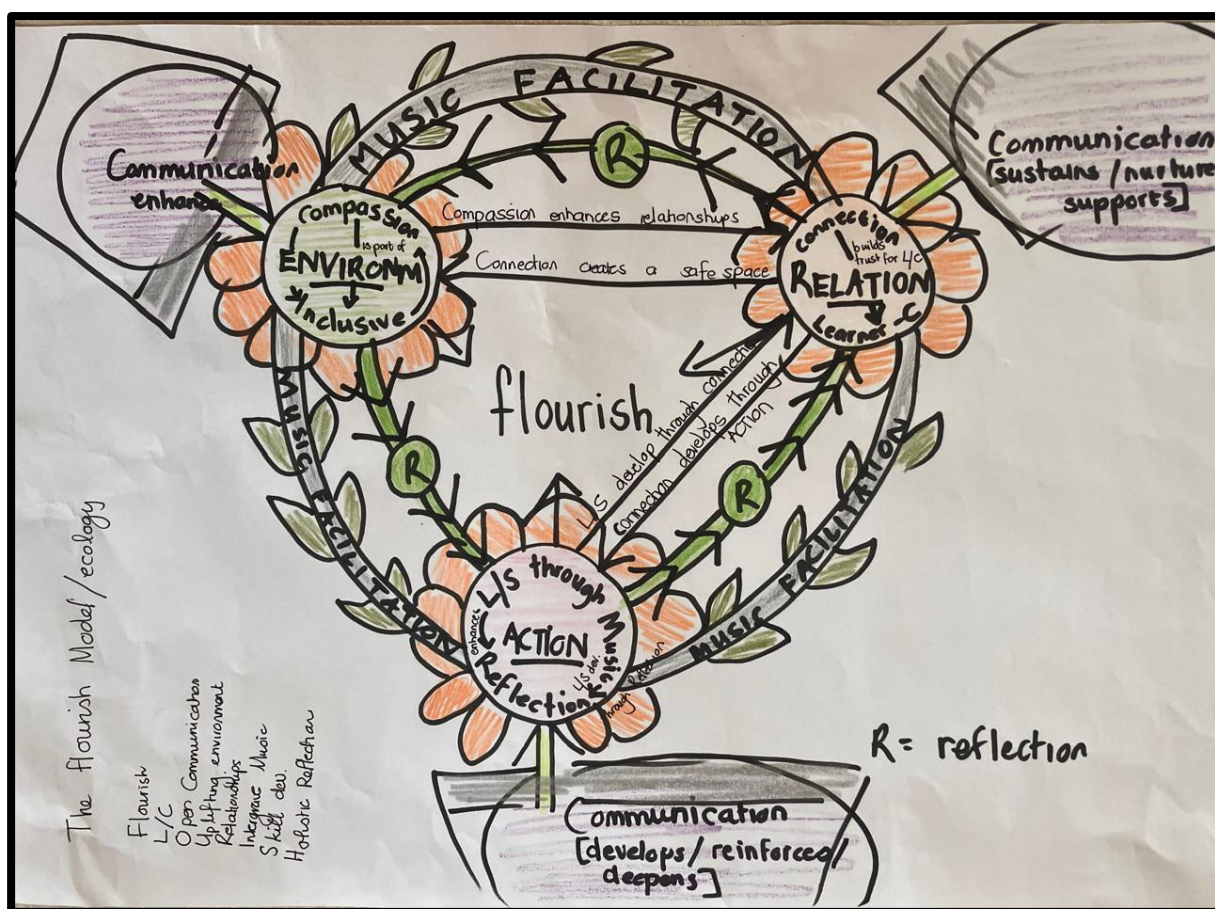
The diagram illustrates a cyclical process of music facilitation. At the top, the words "MUSIC FACILITATION" are written in a large arc. Below this, a central circle is divided into four quadrants, each representing a stage in the process:

- Top Left:** "ENVIRONMENT" (with "Compassion is part of" above it and "Inclusive" below it). A callout bubble to the left says "Communication enhances".
- Top Right:** "RELATION" (with "Connection builds trust for life" above it and "Learned" below it). A callout bubble to the right says "Communication [sustains / nurtures / supports]".
- Bottom:** "ACTION" (with "Lis through" above it and "Reflection" below it). A callout bubble at the bottom says "Communication [develops / reinforces / deepens]".
- Center:** The word "flourish" is written in the middle of the cycle.

Arrows indicate a clockwise flow between the stages: from Environment to Relation, from Relation to Action, and from Action back to Environment. Additionally, there are arrows pointing from each stage towards the central "flourish" area. The entire cycle is enclosed within a larger arc labeled "MUSIC FACILITATION". A legend at the bottom right states "R = reflection".

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STEP 14:



I was so excited to see all the flowers. I felt the picture flourishing. I immediately sent it to my promotor (even though it was after hours). They asked me if this was answering my research question. I immediately wrote my research question down again and started having a conversation with myself.

How can the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes be explained?

I wrote down:

There are several roles of the teacher in a relationship-driven grade 1 music class.

1. The role of the teacher is to *facilitate music*.
2. The role of the teacher is to create a *compassionate and inclusive* classroom environment.
3. The role of the teacher is to action activities where *life skills* can be taught through music and where *reflective practices* enhance *life skills*.
4. The role of the teacher is to create moments for *intentional connection* to form *relationships* and to create a *learner-centred* classroom.

5. The role of the teacher is to be *communicative* because communication supports relationships, enhances a *compassionate and inclusive* environment and reinforces *reflection* and the development of *life skills*.

Consequently, if the teacher fills these roles, the outcome may be a *flourishing* music classroom with flourishing learners.

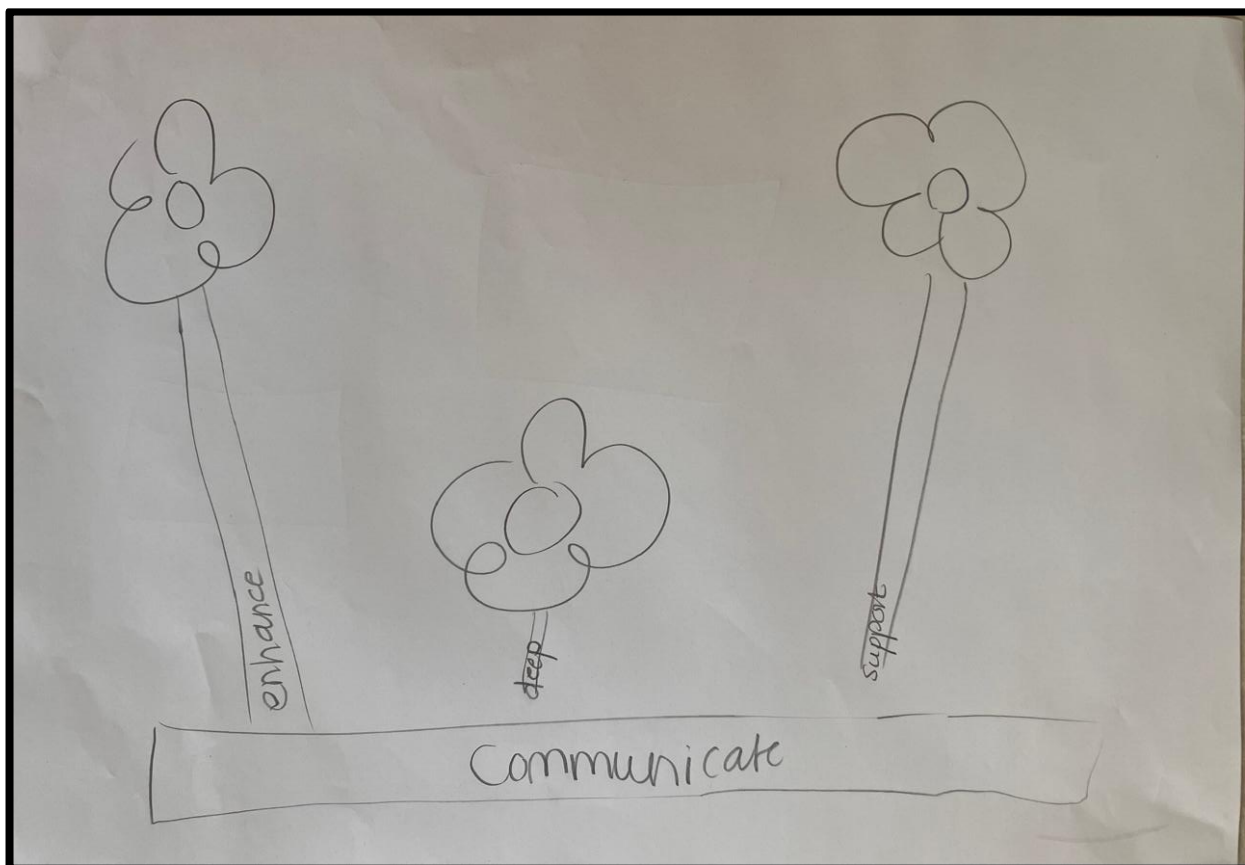
The following day, we arrived at these answers to the research question.

Through the data analysis in Chapters 5 and 7, it became clear that there are several roles of the teacher in a relationship-driven grade 1 music class:

1. The role of the teacher is to *facilitate* music.
2. The role of the teacher is to create a *compassionate and inclusive* classroom environment.
3. The role of the teacher is to do activities teaching *life skills* through music and where *reflective practices* enhance *life skills*.
4. The role of the teacher is to create moments for *intentional connection* to form *relationships* and to create a *learner-centred* classroom.
5. The role of the teacher is to be *communicative* because communication supports relationships, enhances a *compassionate and inclusive* environment and reinforces *reflection* and the development of *life skills*.

Consequently, if the teacher fills these roles, the outcome may be an *optimal learning* environment where learners and teachers can *flourish*.

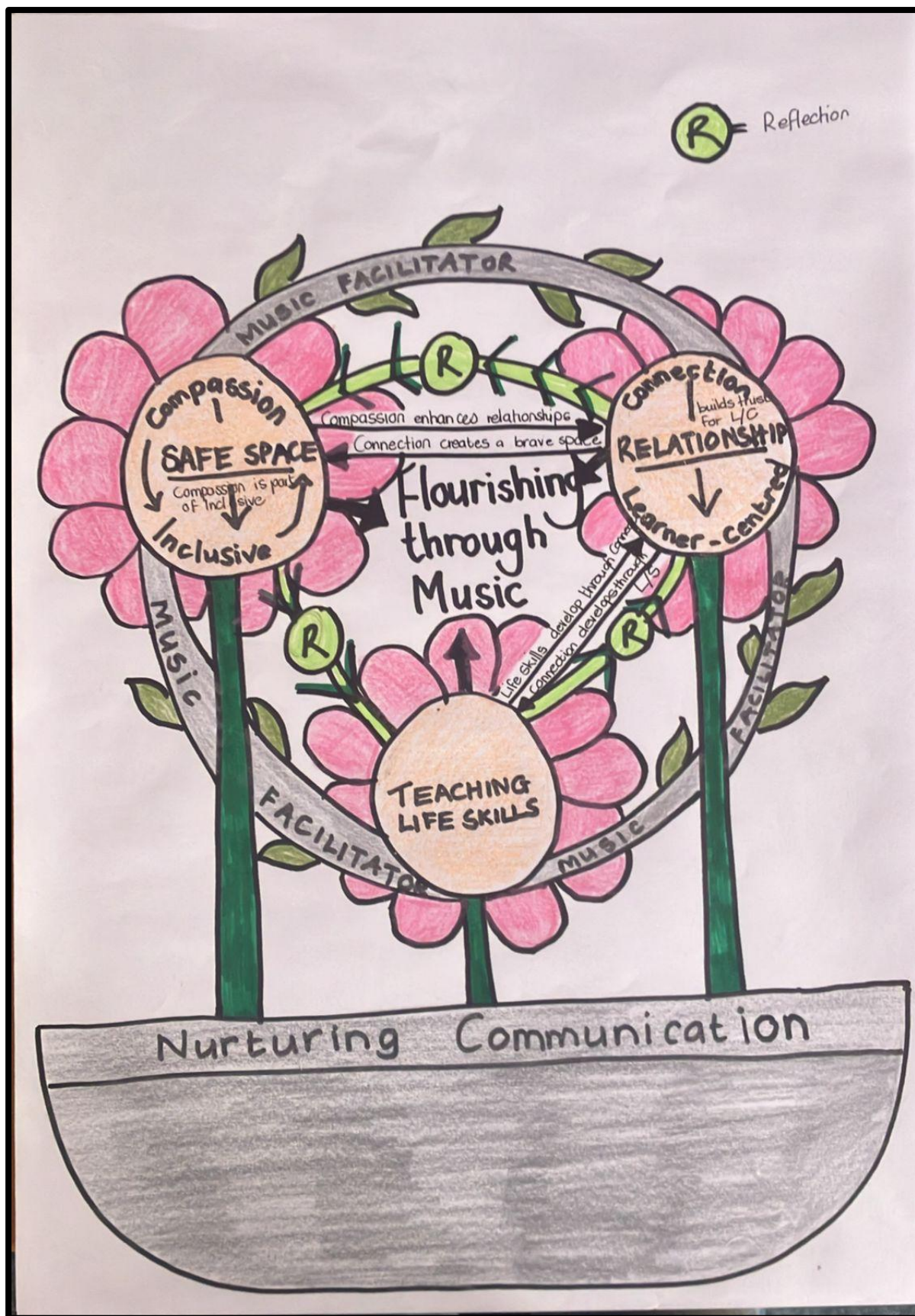
We had a meeting to discuss the last few details. We discussed and concluded that the *communication* in each role serves the purpose to enhance.



We also changed action to LIFE SKILLS, safe environment to SAFE SPACE, relations to RELATIONSHIPS and flourish to FLOURISHING IN MUSIC.

Through these steps, I ended up with the theory of FLOURISHING IN MUSIC.

STEP 15:



ADDENDUM M: CONSENT FORM



Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

DATE: June 2022

BaSSREC Authorisation

2022/11/04

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

Title of the research project	Explaining relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes: a self-study
Ethics number	NWU-01006-22-S7
Principal investigator	Selmari Quinn
Student number	25935577
Address	21 Mendelsohn Ave, Dunvegan, 1609, Edenvale
Email address	Selmari.quinn@gmail.com
Contact number	082 929 3921

You are invited to participate in a research project that forms part of my Doctor of Philosophy in visual and performing arts with music. Please take some time to read the information presented

here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU-01006-22-S7)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

This study is an investigation of the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes: thus, it is a self-study and will involve my own reflective journal entries, the use of semi-structured interviews with critical friends and e-mail correspondence with Reggio Emilia experts in order to reflect on my own practices.

- The researcher has been trained to use the above-mentioned methods.
- Approximately 4 participants will be included in this study.
- The objectives of this research are:
 - To complete a research project on how to explain the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- You have been invited to participate because you are either an expert in the area of the Reggio Emilia educational approach or you can critically reflect on relationship-driven teaching and learning.
- You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria: You are either knowledgeable with regards to the Reggio Emilia educational approach, or relationship-driven teaching.
- You will be excluded if you cannot critically reflect on Reggio Emilia or relationship-driven teaching and learning.

What will your responsibilities be?

- You will be invited to participate in the noted study by *semi-structured interviews spanning over a period of a year. These interviews will be approximately 15 minutes long and will occur monthly for 12 months via Zoom or Skype. Costs related to data will be provided for.*
- You will have 2 weeks to indicate whether you would be willing to participate.
 - You will be requested to sign this Informed Consent Statement before the commencement of

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- The direct benefits for you as a participant will probably be gain a deeper understanding of the role the teacher plays in relationship-driven teaching and learning. You will also gain an understanding of the role of the teacher within Reggio-inspired Music lessons.
- The indirect benefit will probably be *that your participation in this research will be contributing to the research field of relationship-driven teaching and learning within the Reggio-inspired music class.*

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The possible risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Possible risk	Mitigation strategy
COVID 19 risk during face-to-face interviews.	Interviews will be conducted on a digital platform (Zoom or Skype).

- *However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.*
- *Should we learn, in the course of the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.*

Who will have access to the data?

The following procedures will be observed in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA):

Principle	How will this be done?	When will this be done?
-----------	------------------------	-------------------------

Anonymity	Anonymity will be ensured by choosing your own fictitious names/I (the principal investigator) will assign a fictitious name to you before the interview starts. Only this name will be used in the research process.	Before the interview commence.
Confidentiality	Confidentiality will include the use of pseudonyms for participants. Composite characters will be created to protect the identity of participants to remove the possibility of revealing any participants to the study. The composite characters created by the researcher will be based on the reflections and notes of participants in this study.	For the duration of the study.
De-identification of data	All identifiable personal information will be de-identifies to ensure that no information identifies any participants, organisations and locations.	Before data analysis and the write-up of findings start.
Data storage	All data collected for the purpose of the research will be stored safely in electronic format for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed. The primary investigator will ensure data that both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.	For the duration of the study.

Privacy	<i>Privacy</i> will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters.	For the duration of the study.
Transcription/coding of data	I will not use a <i>transcriber</i> for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview. I will not use a <i>statistician/coder</i> for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview.	<i>If the primary investigator is responsible for transcribing/coding the data:</i> The primary investigator will be responsible for transcribing the data. Therefore, no other person will have access to the data. The primary investigator will be required to sign a NWU Confidentiality Agreement before the study commences.
Translation/interpreter services	I will not use a <i>translator/interpreter</i> for the purpose of the interviews/explaining the informed consent, etc.	This person will be required to sign a NWU Confidentiality Agreement and will not be permitted to share any information relating to the study with anyone else.

Collection of only relevant personal information:

Collection of only relevant personal information	I, the principal investigator will only collect personal biographical and opinion-related data about the topic I/we are studying.	Shortly list the <i>biographical</i> and <i>opinion-related</i> (main themes) information that will be collected for the purpose of the study. - experience within relationship-driven teaching - experience with Reggio Emilia - reflections on my teaching
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What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways in a findings chapter in my final Doctoral thesis. In none of this reporting will any participant be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated.

This is a once-off study, so the data will not be re-used, although data may be re-used in the form of a published book or academic article.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

You will not be paid/compensated to participate in the study. If you have to travel specifically for the purpose of participating in the research, however, your travel costs will be paid. There will thus be no costs involved for you.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by e-mail.
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, I will send it to you via e-mail

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Selmari Quinn at 082 929 3921 or selmari.quinn@gmail.com if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Human Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Erharbor Idemudia) at 018 389 2899 or Erharbor.Idemudia@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled: "Explaining the role of the teacher within relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes".

I declare that:

- I provide *informed consent*.
 - Thus, I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
 - Thus, I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I provide *voluntary consent*.
 - Thus, I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
 - Thus, I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
 - Thus, I am aware of the fact that I may request that the researcher does not continue with said recording if I request it.
- I provide *specific consent*.
 - Thus, I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say) could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
 - I provide *specific consent*. Thus, I consent to an audio recording of the semi-structured interviews.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

- You may contact me again ☐ Yes ☐ No
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research ☐ Yes ☐ No
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed ☐ Yes ☐ No

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____
Postal Address: _____
Email: _____

Phone Number: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____

Declaration by person obtaining consent (if not the researcher/primary investigator)

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20__

Signature of person obtaining consent

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher/primary investigator

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged them to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that they adequately understand all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20__

Signature of researcher

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher and participant

Personal face-to-face interviews during [Covid-19](#) restrictions (*if applicable*)

Additional declaration by participant in those instances where the participant requests to participate in a [personal face-to-face semi-structured interview](#):

By signing below, I _____, acknowledge the following information related to the required measures regarding Covid-19:

I declare that:

- It is my personal choice and preference to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher.
- This requires that I consent to the following strict measures to safeguard the personal health and safety of myself and that of the researcher/interviewer/primary investigator:
 - I consent to the researcher taking my temperature before the interview using a thermometer. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
 - I confirm that my temperature measured at _____ degrees. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
 - I consent to use the three-ply mask provided by the researcher. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
 - I consent to wear the three-ply mask for the full duration of the interview. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
 - I consent to the researcher sanitising the interview context using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before the commencement of the interview. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
 - I consent to the researcher using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before and during the interview if required. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20__

Signature of participant

Signature of the researcher

ADDENDUM N: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 016 103 4446
Email: Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

04 November 2022

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on **24/08/2022**, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Explaining relationship-driven teaching and learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music classes: a self-study

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof Liesl van der Merwe

Student/Research Team: S Quinn-25935577

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	1	0	0	6	-	2	2	-	A	7
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Institution Study Number Year Status
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single study

Commencement date: 29/08/2022

Risk: Minimal

Expiry date: 28/08/2022

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.

- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via BaSSREC-Admin@nwu.ac.za.

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof E. Idemudia

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

ADDENDUM O: REFLECTIONS

24 January 2024 – Miss K

What happened:

A class of rowdy Grade 1 girls, not accustomed to the order of big school on their first day, arrived in my Music class. They did not walk in rows but rather like a herd of sheep, needing some guidance to get them all into one music classroom. Most girls were not sure where to sit or where to stand. I was bombarded with questions ranging from "Can I go to the bathroom?" to "Are you our teacher?" To the few girls who knew me as Teacher Selmari, the djembe "drumming girl," I am now Mrs. Quinn. Even after making a circle and sitting down on the carpet, I had restless girls coming to ask questions – it was almost as if they had ants in their pants. I handed out some A3 papers and finally said, "Good morning, girls. Today, we are going to listen to a piece of music that tells us a story of a sunrise. I want you to draw a picture of what you think happens in the story or how this sunrise makes you feel". I pushed play on my laptop that went through the big speakers. The song *Sunrise* from the *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofe started playing. The girls were eager to begin making their sunrises but seemed quite unsure when the music started, barely audible. As the music got louder, an urgency and excitement grew. It was almost as if they suddenly knew what they were doing and that assurance that they were on the right track.

Hadley: "Mrs Quinn, can I draw myself with the sunrise?" I said, "Of course, Hadley, if you want to draw yourself with your sunrise, you are most welcome." As I gazed over some beautiful sunrise drawings, I saw Sandra did her whole picture in grey pencil. I found it puzzling that a little six-year-old would only use grey for a beautiful, warm sunrise picture. When the girls reflected on their pictures, I asked Sandra why she had chosen to do her sunrise in grey. She revealed that she is scared of messing up her picture with colour. Hadley pops up to me again, "Mrs. Quinn, I made two accidents." I think she meant mistakes, but I assured her it was her story and how the sunrise made her feel and that it could not be wrong. After asking some girls to share their stories and feelings, I realised that Hadley had given up after she perceived she made a mistake. I went up to Hadley and assured her there are no mistakes in my class as long as you tried. Zara felt that the music made her feel calm. Madison used pink, orange, yellow, and red for her sunrise; she used yellow for when the music was quiet and red for when the music got louder. Olga had a red, stick sun. She said the music "went up, and that told her the sun is coming up. Emily said she "got inspiration to draw a beautiful sun." She said, "The sun was rising, and she saw a beautiful bird as well." Ashley drew a picture of herself with her new Grade 1 teacher. I found it rather strange not to see any sun, but she said, "The music made me think of Miss T and me, walking in the garden." When I asked her to explain it, she said, "She's kind to me, and the music sounded kind and calm."

What did I think?

I loved the creativity that flowed within the music lesson and that I could see how the slightly frazzled new Grade 1's felt more at ease towards the end of the lesson. I enjoyed the participation I received and the discussion, as well as the willingness of these girls to share their emotions and their stories. There were considerably fewer questions towards the end of the lesson, and the girls stopped asking to be excused to go to the toilet. I enjoyed seeing how the girls responded to the music and how engaged they were when their friends shared their drawings.

What did I feel?

I felt nervous about the lesson; I was not sure if the girls would find a connection with the music, the music room, or me. I felt scared because I was worried that the girls would not engage. I was worried that I would not have anything to reflect on. At the same time, I enjoyed seeing the girls' faces lighten up as they could hear the crescendos in the music; it excited them hugely to feel the growth within the music.

What worked?

I am wondering about the content of the lesson. I must check my own bias because I did not include musical theory or notation, which is the expectation in a Western music context. I focused on the personal experience of music and what it means to the child personally. It was clear that the girls enjoyed the lesson and felt proud of themselves because they wanted to take their work home or, in Ashley's case, give it to her teacher. I think the girls felt they had a deep, profound moment they felt proud of. While the music was playing, there was no off-task chattering, noise, or movement. I could see that the girls were in the moment. The music captured their attention.

What did not work?

The girls entered the class, and I put them in a circle. I found that it was a bit cramped, and maybe the girls should have had more space for their reflection. As is always the case, having more time than the timetable allows would be ideal. I could have easily reflected with the girls for another 15 minutes.

What now?

Well, I think I need to reflect on more of my biases and maybe not look for the outcomes that come with music and music education but rather focus on the process. I would like to witness the relationships develop in my classroom, with each other, me, within themselves, with music and how it makes them feel and the music environment.

Interpretation:

I found it fascinating that Ashley connected with her emotions more than with the audible story; my introduction was clear and about a sunrise. The music was quite obvious, though maybe at a Grade 1 level, it wasn't so obvious, but she was the only child who felt and connected it with a relationship, a kind, fair, and friendly relationship

she had with her new teacher. Even though I first thought, Oh my goodness, this child has completely missed the point, upon reflection, I think she feels safe.

I feel pretty worried about Hadley and how she gave up before she even started. I would like her to feel confident and also have the freedom to explore while having the assurance that she is enough, that her best is enough.

24 January 2024 – Grade Mrs T

What happened:

More excited faces as the Grade 1's arrive from their very first Drama lesson. After setting the class down on the carpet in my purple class (this time, I didn't seat them in a circle but instead encouraged them to find their own space), I started with my introduction: Good morning, girls. Today, we are going to listen to a piece of music that tells us a story of a sunrise. I want you to draw a picture of what you think happens in the story or how this sunrise makes you feel." I pushed play on my laptop that went through the big speakers. The song *Sunrise* from the *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofe started playing. The girls seemed unsure and awkward as the music started playing quietly, almost inaudibly. The girls began asking questions. "Can I draw myself?" or "Teacher, can I draw my friend?". There was excitement and purpose as they heard the intensity of the music increase. I listened to the vigour of the twisty crayons as the girls started colouring and drawing faster. I played the 6-minute and 41-second audio clip only once, as I did with the other class. I did not want to bore the class. Julie suddenly had an outburst. She shouted, "I'll just pack away! My ideas are all gone," when the music stopped. She was wailing out loud. I almost did not know how to handle this situation. I have never encountered such an outburst with the mere last note of a song. I went to Julie and told her that she was welcome anytime to come back and we could do it again and finish her drawing. She calmed down a bit. I asked Sadie about her drawing, and she said she felt good while doing it and listening to the music. She drew a tiny sun with a giant rainbow. Suddenly, the speech therapist interrupted the lesson. Annie ran up to the speech therapist and hugged her. Some other girls shouted: "Hi, Dee!" I felt at that moment that I lost the focus of the class. Annie suddenly returned her attention to the music class and said, "The music made me calm, and I felt like I was in a fairytale. The girls were very keen to share their experiences. Carla said, "The music got higher and higher, and that is how I know the sun is coming up". The girls also had many remarks about how they felt like fairy princesses, lived in castles, or how the music turned them into fairies.

What did I think?

At one stage during the reflections, I felt like this class had missed the point entirely. I heard more stories about princesses and castles than sunrises. Maybe the princess theme is the feeling of empowerment? Perhaps the increasing dynamics and intensity of

the music contributed to the sense of self-worth, the empowerment of the individual and the feeling of grandeur.

What did I feel?

I almost felt more confident going into the lesson for the second time. I might have reached some point of reflection before the interruption. I felt the intensity in the music, not just audibly, but I could feel it. Even if I had closed my ears, I could have felt it. It became visual.

What worked?

I think this kind of experience is very effective, where children can feel and put it down visually. I also believe that this activity awakened an emotional state where the child could feel a particular emotion triggered through music.

What did not work?

The interruption certainly did not contribute to the class or the experience. Although impractical in a school where lessons are allocated for subjects, seeing smaller groups of girls at a time would have been helpful. This would aid in-depth reflection and allow the girls to share their ideas and emotions without being overwhelmed.

What now?

I need to find a way to enable the girls to reflect more deeply, and I need to find a way to spend quality time with each girl instead of whole groups. I am unsure if that could work, but I feel like this is a sausage factory. I feel like I am ticking boxes and not making a big enough impact.

Interpretation:

As I am trying to dig deep to interpret my reflection, I definitely feel that even though this Grade 1 class missed the point in the activity, maybe I should not have expectations of how they should experience or interpret a particular activity. I feel that they experienced emotions with this music – yes, they did not draw sunrises, but maybe it was more profound. I have to believe it was deeper than just platonic talk of princesses and castles. For now, I am interpreting that the music made them feel grand, unique, special and extraordinary. Maybe even a sense of worth?

14 February 2024 – Miss T

What happened:

"Good morning, girls, today we are going to find a space to spread out on the carpet; let us breathe in slowly.....1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8... hold it..... breathe out slowly....1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8..... I am going to play you a piece of music. I want you to think about how it makes you feel. Or what do you think the music wants to tell you?" I walked over to the sound system that was connected to my laptop. The girls are quiet;

they have settled. I switched Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" on. Amy started punching the air to the beat as the music gathered momentum. Emily began to kick the air to the beat.

At the same time, Amy stated, "It is so much fun". After the music stopped, I asked the girls to tell a friend how the music made them feel. They all eagerly started sharing their experiences with one another. Ashley said out loud, "I felt something strange....". After a few minutes I asked the class if anyone was willing to share their experiences and stories with me. Everyone put their hands up, waving, eagerly wanting to share. We moved into a circle, and I suddenly thought with everyone being so eager, maybe I should use a talking device so that the girls could take turns. What a genius move, I thought! No one shouted out!! Ashley was the first one to use the 'talking pen'. "Ashley, you said something felt strange...?" I said. "I felt like something was dangerous, like something was following me, and at the end, I got a fright because it felt like something was coming to me to eat me". Zara was the next girl who took the 'talking pen'. Zara said that she felt the Grinch was coming to her because the singing reminded her of the movie". Emily started sharing, "I was in this open field, with lots of insects. Then I felt like there was a huge storm, and I was climbing a tree, the wind was chasing me around the tree, and then the sun rose up. Then I dropped so high that I almost touched the clouds, and I did touch the clouds but then the storm came again. Still, then the sun rose again". Kendra stated that the music made her think of swimming, and then there was lightning. She had to get out of the pool. Hannah also wanted to share her story. She stated, "I felt like bad guys were chasing me. Still, there was a storm, but I ran into the house and locked the doors". Sindi said it reminded her of a huge spider and that she was terrified. Amy said, "I was in charge of all the soldiers. I had to teach them what's right, to fight for our country and whatever.... It was exhausting.....then all the soldiers disappeared.... I ran for my life. Sandra said it felt like she was at a party, and everyone was spinning around and around and dancing. She added, "I actually felt like dancing". Tisha said, "The music made me feel brave even though I was a teeny bit scared". Kendra also felt like she was at a dancing competition, and then she got the prize for the best dancer. Ziva shared that she felt it was load-shedding, and then she ran away.

What did I think?

I think that it is evident that every person has their own unique experience with the music. Within every child there is a reality and circumstances that gets elevated/brought to the front through a musical experience. This lesson was more focused on the relational aspect. The girls got to share their experiences with each other, and then we shared them in the class. I think, as with communication, the 'talking pen' is valuable in taking turns to speak and also turns to listen.

What did I feel?

I felt that there was an engagement in my class. Maybe it is because these girls have done listening and feeling exercises before with me. I felt like they really were engaged in the activity.

What worked?

As I mentioned before, the 'talking pen' really played a significant role in successfully sharing experiences; it was a tangible object for everyone to see who was speaking. The girls could also separate the act of speaking and listening.

What did not work?

I am not too sure what didn't work. I think maybe a more profound sharing experience to really get to the core of the girls' stories. I definitely think I need a more significant amount of time available.

What now?

I think the next step could be to build on the relationships with self (what am I feeling? Why? Etc) each other and also with me as the teacher.

Interpretation:

Ashley acknowledged that the music made her feel "something strange". She realised that something was stirring within her. I don't think she could pinpoint why she felt strange or uncomfortable, but she could note that it triggered a feeling, a sense of discomfort within. Zara recognised the music from a movie – I am not sure if the choral bit in the music triggered a memory of Christmas carolling, but she definitely had an aural memory.

The music definitely persuaded Emily; she could feel its urgency. I think she was confronted with her fears (in this case, insects and a storm). She desperately wanted to flee her fears, so she ran around the tree (mid-air). She referred to "I dropped so high", which almost seems confusing, but the fact that she touched the clouds makes me wonder if that is how she conquered her fears. That she may have risen above her fears? Maybe it referred to a divine intervention? Since this is a Catholic school, most girls attend church services every week and are reminded of the divinity. Maybe she was rescued by the Divine?

Kendra also personalised the danger in the music, as she perceived it, to her own circumstance with swimming and lightning, which is a considerable safety threat in South Africa. Similarly, Ziva ran away from the load-shedding in South Africa. The urgency in the music triggered fears in Kendra and Ziva. The same applies to Hannah, who sensed a threat, bad guys chasing her, and she ran to safety.

Amy's narrative is more puzzling. She had to fight. I remember her punching actions while she was listening to the music, and it makes sense to me. I know her father works in a war zone in Africa, and I wonder what her narrative of teaching soldiers what's right and fighting for our country really means in her narrative. In the end, she ran away. Does she want to run away? Does she want her circumstances with an absent father to change, e.g. for him to run away?

Sandra and Kendra felt like they were dancing, and Kendra got the prize for the best dancer. Does this mean the music caused some sense of victorious feeling? A feeling of grandeur, maybe?

14 February 2024 – Mrs K

What happened:

"Good morning, girls. Today, we are going to find a space to spread out on the carpet. Let us breathe in slowly.....1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8... hold it..... breathe out slowly....1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8..... I am going to play you a piece of music. I want you to think about how it makes you feel. Or what do you think the music wants to tell you?" I walked over to the sound system that was connected to my laptop. The girls are quiet; they have settled. I switch Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" on. The girls looked very calm as they listened to the music. After the music stopped, I asked the girls to tell a friend how the music made them feel. They all eagerly started sharing their experiences with one another. As we moved into a circle to share our experiences, I explained to 'talking pen'. This time, I called it the 'music stick'. Annie said the music "was so relaxing and that I mustn't worry about anything, I almost fell asleep". Oakley said, "It made me feel like I was floating in space with Ally when the music got faster, the earth turned faster". Kinsley said it made her want to drum on a djembe drum. Sadie said, "The music made me feel like she was floating, and then I came back on the earth". Bailey said, "I felt like I was in space. When the music was loud, it felt like the world was exploding, and I was happy to be in space. I felt a little sad in my heart". Lola said, "It felt like there were guardians taking me to the queen, and she was punishing me". Luna said it "made her feel like she needs to wake up and dance and spin with a beautiful red fashion dress". Julie started crying out loud because she didn't get the 'music stick' when she wanted it. Carla also felt like dancing with her rainbow dress. Hazel felt sad and scared of the "mean people in the music". Gianna was in her own movie, where she "got smaller and smaller". "the music made me small", Gianna said. Jenny was reminded of soldiers drumming: "It was going boom boom, and it made me feel like something scary, the song was scary, it was loud, it gave me a fright". Ally said, "The music made me feel like I was dancing with my friends, a scary dance". Carla added that she loved sharing her feelings with her friend. Annie said, "It made me feel calm to share my story with my friend because I trust my friend".

What did I think?

Music is so intimate and personal, with the exact instructions as the previous class. This class had way fewer 'scary' incidents. Spirituality is definitely more present here. There is also an element of relaxation through the music in this class.

What did I feel?

I feel a bit confused. I want to make accurate interpretations of the experiences. I also feel like there was more relationality in this lesson than in the first lesson.

What worked?

The 'music stick' definitely plays a significant role in the success of sharing with others, especially in larger groups like a class.

What did not work?

A more extraordinary offering of 'languages' to express feelings would be a good idea. Some girls expressed that they felt like dancing. If one girl started dancing, everyone would join because it seems like a good idea. This would, in turn, cause girls to mirror each other, which would cause the personal and intimate individual experience to be spoiled. Maybe a more incredible amount of physical space would be beneficial for the girls not to influence each other?

What now?

I need to reword that the girls can dance, listen, or draw without falling into peer pressure and doing what their friends are doing.

Interpretation:

In the other class the theme was fear, running away and escape. I find it strange that Annie said the music "was so relaxing and that I mustn't worry about anything, I almost fell asleep". It is the exact opposite experience. Oakley said, "It made me feel like I was floating in space with Ally when the music got faster, the earth turned faster". Space usually refers to spirituality in music or maybe an out-of-body experience. I wonder if this points to a spiritual experience in the music, but with a friend? Is it possible to have a relational-spiritual moment?

Kinsley said it made her want to drum on a djembe drum. The music made her feel the beat. Kinsley had a more musical experience. Maybe thinking abstractly is a challenge for Kinsley.

Sadie also had a spiritual experience: "The music made me feel like she was floating, and then I came back on the earth". Bailey said, "I felt like I was in space. When the music was loud, it felt like the world was exploding, and I was happy to be in space. I felt a little sad in my heart". I find this very interesting. Was it spiritual? With the world exploding, was there fear involved? She was sad because her family was left behind on earth. Is there perhaps a sense of loss that she experienced within the music?

Luna said it "made her feel like she needs to wake up and dance, and spin with a beautiful red fashion dress", while Carla also felt like dancing with her rainbow dress. The music clearly had a happy connotation with these girls. They wanted to use their bodies to communicate and express the feelings that they experienced within the music.

I had another incident with Julie. She started crying out loud because she didn't get the 'music stick' when she wanted it. After mentioning the previous incident to her class teacher, it became apparent to me that although Julie has a very high IQ, her EQ is significantly compromised. She struggles with sharing and, most importantly, with self-regulation. I must find a way to aid Julie and assist her with relational dynamics. I don't really know how to yet, but this is something I need to focus on. I also cannot afford to lose all the relationships in the class to gain one.

Hazel and Gianna felt scared; it was too loud, and there were mean people. Similar to the other classes' experience of fear and wanting to flee.

Gianna felt like she got smaller and smaller in her narrative. I have no idea how to interpret this. My only idea is that Gianna could feel overwhelmed and like she is losing control.

Carla and Annie said that they enjoyed sharing with their friends.

13 March 2024 – Miss K

What happened:

Good morning, girls. Can you make a circle? I started singing, "Can you make a circle?". It took a couple of repetitions of this Sol-Mi-La-So-Mi melody to get everyone's attention. Eventually, everyone was holding hands and in a circle. "Slowly, slowly, slowly in we go, back again and back again and back again so slow" This always seems to help to get the girls' attention. I quickly explained that we would walk three steps and point to someone, look them in the eyes and say *yebo*. The girls loved this, and I could see they would have loved to carry one. "As you know, girls, we have been working with percussion instruments...can anybody tell me how we play percussion instruments?" Everyone shouted, "you hit, shake or scrape". Today, I want you to design your own percussion instrument with recycled stuff you can find in the class, but I want you to do it with a friend". The girls were cheering, and they were so excited. They rushed over to the recycled box that they knew I had been treasuring and collecting. It was chaos. At this stage of the lesson, I felt like I had completely lost them. In retrospect, I should have explained more that we are not making a recycled instrument but only designing it. The scissors and glue sticks quickly emerged, and the recycled toilet rolls were cut into pieces. "Oh dear," I thought. I managed to get through to a view pair and reiterate we are designing it for now. After about 15 minutes of brainstorming with a few girls and getting down to their level on the carpet, I asked if anyone would like to share their designs. Everyone was so excited that my newly designed talking pen had to appear, but this time, the talking pen had a bit more flair and character. It was sparkly and covered with foil, with an extra amount of pizazz. Zara was very keen to start. They thought of blowing up many balloons and getting a thorn to pop them to the beat. Zara could decide who she wanted to pass the talking pen to. She decided Ashley and Emily needed to share their instrumental design. They used polystyrene to scrape with a pen and put two cardboard rolls into each other, making a scraping sound. Amy made a whole drum set with two boxes – she didn't design anything. She physically made the instruments. Tisha and Tara wanted to share that they used glass bottles with different amounts of liquid they could hit with a little stick. Their instrument is not only a recycled percussion instrument but also a pitched percussion instrument. Eagerly, they showed me with the bottles that different amounts of liquid created different sounds. Kendra and Nola asked me politely if they could please have the talking pen, "of course," I said, "especially since you are asking so nicely". They designed the most exciting instrument. They were inspired by the wooden paned doors of my classroom and the patterned glass that makes an "rrrrrrr" sound when scraped. They hit the wood and scraped the glass. Stella and Sindi scraped and hit different-sized boxes, intrigued by the different sounds of the boxes. Rory and Aurora were very interested in scraping giant polystyrene with toilet rolls. Hannah and Sandra tried to find scraping sounds: "We

scraped the metal from the blinds, and then we found this egg carton, which also makes a nice scraping noise". Hadley and Lucinda designed their instrument as a toilet roll that is filled up with marbles, and they also designed a tambourine. "what are those round things on your tambourine?" I asked. "we used bottle lids to make a nice tambourine sound" said Lucinda and Hadley. Tina and Rosa also designed a pretty unique instrument. Tina said, "I just got a rubber band and a box". "So, how do you play your instrument?" I asked. "By stretching the rubber band and letting it pop on the box, of course", said Rosa.

What did I think?

I thought it was chaos at the beginning, but I felt it was rewarding towards the end. Seeing how the girls were so creative and had such unique ideas was rewarding. I also felt proud of the girls for taking this task seriously.

What did I feel?

With the girls working in pairs, there were no conflicts or issues. They were very comfortable with whom they chose to work and communicated with each other without any problems.

What worked?

I felt like the relational element within the lesson was successful. It was evident that there was a relationship between peers, teacher and child, and materials, as they were manipulated into percussion instruments. Even though the girls felt out of control, I could not see any off-task behaviour.

What did not work?

My instructions were vague, and the girls did not understand my expectations. I think discipline within the classroom could improve, although discipline is not just a classroom thing but a cultural thing. It is acceptable at home, in their classrooms, etc.

Interpretation:

Even with a lesson that seemed like high energy, rushing for materials to design or making recycled percussion instruments, I think the girls enjoyed their lesson. They looked proud of what they accomplished. The social learning in this lesson worked well. The girls were very cooperative and collaborative in their pairs, even when one child made the drum and the other made the stick to hit it. It was incredible that the girls all wanted to share their creations with the class.

13 March 2024 – Mrs T

What happened:

Before the music lesson, I invited Natasha to observe the lesson. Natasha is a teacher at the school, known to the grade 1 classes. I have always felt inspired whenever I have a conversation with Natasha because she acknowledges and communicates with the girls at the school. The class arrived shortly after, and seeing the visitor, the girls

stepped up with their behaviour. I didn't need to sing to them to make a circle. I quickly explained that we would walk three steps and point to someone, look them in the eyes and say *yebo*. The girls loved this, and I could see they would have loved to carry one. At this point, we did it one last time, and they had five *yebos* in their pocket. "As you know, girls, we have been working with percussion instruments...can anybody tell me how we play percussion instruments?" Lorna's hand was up first. "You hit, shake or scrape". Today, I want you to design your own percussion instrument with recycled stuff you can find in the class, but I want you to do it with a friend". The girls were cheering, and they were so excited. This lesson evolved from the first grade 1 class I saw half an hour ago. I explained more carefully that they could get ideas from the class materials but must design their instrument on paper. From the chaos in the previous lesson, I decided to let the girls stand when we shared our instruments. Moving off the floor would instantly remove the girls from their instruments and be able to make a noise. It was pretty effective, although some girls were still talking and brainstorming out of excitement. The first girls to take the sparkly talking stick are Julie and Ally, "we made a drum, we putted like some Christmas decorations on and some nice gorgeous black stars and we even made some rock and roll pictures on the drum and then we coloured it in blue... it was made out of a toilet paper roll and we shake our heads on it....". Julie started giggling out of her tummy. She came to school today without any socks with her brown baby doll shoes. Olga and Sienna designed a very detailed picture of a scraper percussion instrument, polystyrene, that you scrape with another piece of polystyrene. They saw a little gap for humour and said, "No, you actually scrape it with your head, and you will have the snowy stuff in your hair". Gianna and Amber designed a box drum with sticks. The box drum had so much detail, even with the brand "Ouma rusks" on. Aria and Hadley worked as a team but didn't design the instruments together. Aria designed a drum to bang, while Hadley designed the stick to bang the drum, and together, they had a complete instrument. Sandrina designed a drum from a tuna tin, while Sadie designed a hand drum. Lorna and Yola decided to find inspiration from the bottom of an egg carton. Using sticks, you can scrape the bottom bit. Jenny and Molly also found inspiration in glass bottles. Instead of hitting the bottles, they scraped them.

What did I think?

I felt more in control of this lesson. I found it fascinating to see the friends chosen for the paired work. As Natasha pointed out, Jenny is very domineering, and she has a very soft and shy girl as her friend. Molly is also new to the school.

What did I feel?

I loved seeing how the girls created their own knowledge and how creative they were.

What worked?

The lesson worked better with more straightforward instructions and expectations. I also enjoyed the aspect of relationships within the lesson. It was evident that there was a relationship between peers, teacher and child, and materials, as they were manipulated into percussion instruments.

Interpretation:.

Seeing Julie participating and contributing to a whole lesson without any blowouts or disruptions was terrific. Although she was so sensory and wearing no socks with her leather shoes, I just wanted to figure out a way to include her (and her needs) so that every lesson succeeds. I had a meeting with Julie's teacher, and apparently, Julie has severe ADHD, although the parents would prefer the term not to be used due to being labelled. At the end of the lesson, the girls had to do the noon Angelus prayer – Julie was on such a hype after the lesson that she giggled throughout the prayer. I don't know if the half an hour of focus time was too much for her and that she felt a complete sensory overload. Or did she enjoy the creativity and partnership so much that she was in a good mood or space? Jenny, who dominates her partner, Molly, is an only child with severe discipline issues. She rules the roost at home and has established quite a notorious name for her. As the rest of the class lined up for the Angelus and then for break, she quickly went and crumbled the polystyrene into millions of little white balls – leaving the class in what seemed to be a 'snowstorm' amidst a heatwave in the city. Kinsley and Annie didn't finish their project. I reassured them that it was okay because they could share what they planned to design. Kinsley and Annie were so busy analysing and overthinking their design so much that they didn't even put a dot down on the paper. At the same time, the impulsive Julie and Ally were done and coloured and decorated.

13 March 2024 – Miss T

What happened:

I decided to go and collect the girls from their classroom as sometimes it can take a few minutes just to line the girls up to walk to music. My music class is behind the grade 1 classroom block. As we entered the classroom, I started singing "make the circle big, big, big" with a loud voice to catch everyone's attention. The girls quickly came in and started completing the circle. I suddenly sang quieter "make the circle small, small, small". Eagerly the girls moved into the middle of the circle. I ended the song with a big circle, and everyone sat down. I started singing "hello, Tara" while rolling the ball to her, she quickly made eye contact with a friend and proceeded to sing "hello, Rory", it wasn't long before everyone was greeted by name and greeted another girl. The girls loved making contact with their friend and was very quick to ask if everyone could have a second chance. There were smiles all around and every girl participated in singing beautiful So-Mi melodies. Tara ran up to me "I love you Mrs. Quinn". Amy also came to give me a hug and said, "You're the best Mrs Quinn". I told them that sometimes we don't need to use our voices to communicate, we can communicate with our body language. I told them we can use our facial expressions and our eyes to communicate with our friends. I started singing "up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up and down. Up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up.....". While singing the songs one girl had to communicate with someone across from her in the circle to swop places when the parachute was up, but the catch was that they weren't allowed to use their voices, because their voices had to sing the song. It was extremely cute to see how the grade 1 girls used their eyes and their eyebrows to indicate to the chosen friend that they had to swop. Although I had to remind the girls to gently move the parachute up and down, they understood the concept. Sometimes the parachute up when they

sang “down” and visa versa, but after stopping them to show them the contours of the music and the words and how they go together they understood. Every single girl participated and loved the social learning with their friends, through music and movement. One thing that I saw, and the girls found it challenging was they weren’t always sure if the person across the room made eye contact with them or the friend near them. But they soon discovered the challenges of non-verbal communication. Kendra just wanted to ascertain that we will play this game again, she loved it. Nola was the first volunteer to share her experience of the lesson, as she got the sparkling talking stick she said she felt the music go up and down like the parratshoot (parachute), she said the sound felt like we were playing violin – the high and low sounds. As Nola gave the talking stick, someone next to me said “awwww”, because she was so eager to share. I quickly reassured her that she will also get a turn to speak. Stella said, “I felt like I was in a real parachute, I was so high that I looked down to see the Statue of Liberty”. Tara felt like she was a “skyjumper”. Zara said she felt like she was “in a parachute, not in space, but on top of a cloud”. She continued to say her mom and her little sister were on the ground, “because my little sister loves mommy more than daddy”. She explained “daddy was with me because I love daddy more than mommy”. Hannah loved how the parachute felt, “when it goes up it made a nice breeze”. She carried on telling me that the colours of the parachute reminded her of a xylophone. Rosa also loved how nice it felt when the parachute made a wind in the class. Livi shared that it wasn’t hard for her to make eye contact with her friend. Hadley decided to chew on her money purse at this stage of the lesson, she lost interest. Ziva said that she could see someone talking to her without saying a word, just by the way they moved their eyes. Tisha overanalysed the parachute a little bit, she decided that the cloth sound of the parachute reminded her of percussion instruments. Emily built on Tisha’s explanation, she said “it sounded like the parachute was a big leaf blowing in the wind, and then it’s like a big tree and the wind blowing through the leaves”. Amy also added that when we sang up, the parachute went up and when the parachute went down, we sang down. She said, “it is like we followed the music”. Tara said she felt like she learnt that “when you can’t talk with your mouth, you can talk with your eyes”. Stella said, “you can think about something and then your tiny mouth cannot open and then it can just come out of your eyes, without saying a word”. Tisha quickly adds, “did you know shoes are also percussion, look”. She pointed to her sole with the sparkly talking stick, she started scraping the soles of her shoes. Ziva also added while quickly taking her school shoes off, “you can also clap your shoes together”. As I lined the girls up they said, “can we please carry on with the game?”

What did I think?

I think the best way for children to learn is through social interaction. They girls loved making contact with each other, through song and dance and through making eye contact. This lesson was intentional; the connection between the girls were the most important.

What did I feel?

I felt quite humoured to see how cute they were with their intentional connection, for me I felt like there was an element of innocence. I enjoyed seeing how they explore with expression, with communication. Although I felt like the regular interruption with

percussion instruments were a bit off task, I think it is wonderful that the girls were still stimulated by a lesson that happened a week ago. The fact that the girls just wanted to make sure we play this again made it feel like the lesson was a success.

What worked?

The parachute was a huge hit, the girls loved it.

What did not work?

Although I feel like every lesson in work in progress and one improves continuously, I had to make the contours within the music more pronounced. I felt like once the parachute was in the picture the girls lost sight of the parachute must go up when the melodic contours upwards, and downwards when the music gets lower.

Interpretation:

I think the way the lesson started with singing hello to every single child was a validation strategy, I think the girls immediately felt acknowledged, seen and safe. The girls were smiling out of enjoyment, and I think this had an effect on the immediate participation of the whole class. With the love I received from Tara and Amy I really felt like we had a special relationship and that the girls feels at ease in the music room. Stella felt that she was in a real parachute, she was so high that she could see the Statue of Liberty from the top. I think this could be interpreted that she felt empowered, in control. Like she is big, and the world is small. Zara's interpretation of being on top of a cloud, does this means she is ecstatic? Happy? Overjoyed? Could it have something to do with the enjoyment of social interaction? She continued to say her mom and her little sister were on the ground, "because my little sister loves mommy more than daddy". She explained "daddy was with me because I love daddy more than mommy". Does the space remove her from her mom and sister while joining her with her dad?

Hadley lost interest the moment the girls sat down for discussion, she only participated when gross motor movement were involved. Emily built a full theory of how the parachute sounds, the wind it makes and connected it to a tree. I am not sure of the interpretation of this image. I think for Amy it makes sense that a person can follow with your body what happens in the music. The girls understood that communication is not always verbal but nonverbal cues can also communicate.

13 March 2024 – Mrs K

What happened:

I collected Mrs T's grade one class from Drama. We hooked up because they love to pretend being a slithering snake, we hissed and when we got into the class I started singing out loudly, "make a circle, big, big, big". I repeated this song until everyone joined in. When I started singing make a circle, small, small, small "the girls collapsed on a small heap. In order to regain the attention of the girls, I sang "make the circle big, big, big" but presto this time. The urgency in my voice encouraged the girls to quickly get into a circle. We sat down and like the previous class sang hello to every individual. The girls had to make eye contact and roll the ball while singing hello and address the

friend they are rolling to. They sang beautifully with pretty accurate So-Mi intervals. I saw Julie started getting restless. I gave her a pop-up bracelet. She participated in the singing game without interrupting because she had to figure out how to put the bracelet on. I spontaneously started singing 'up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up and down'. Without exposing the parachute, we did the contours of the music with our hands. I demonstrated how I nominate someone to swap places with me while we were in our circle formation. This is before the girls knew that we are going to use the parachute in our lesson. At this stage the girls were also not aware of the non-verbal cues that will be integrated into our lesson. I started telling them that they are allowed to communicate throughout the lesson. Sudden cheers erupted! I quickly added that the only condition is that they are not allowed to use their voices. The girls looked confused. As I explained how I will choose my friend with using my facial expressions and my eyes, they seemed to start understanding. Once again it was so cute seeing the intentional eye contact and intentional big eyes indicating swaps. As the parachute activity came to an end, the only thing the girls wanted to know is if we can play it again. Julie was very keen to find the talking stick and hand it to the girls to share their experiences. Lorna was the first girl to share, she said "This was a very fun music lesson, and I learnt that when the music goes up, the parachute also goes up". Julie wanted to share, she was fiddling with the pop it toy while she said "we learnt that if you look at someone with your eyes you must swap with them, you have to quickly swap cause if the parachute comes down, its fire, you must be in your place". Julie was calmer, she got the opportunity to share her experience with her friends. Very animated, Ally spoke up: "we learned to talk with our eyes while a parachute went up and down, it was really fun". She pronounced every word and articulated every word. Cath also loved the lesson: "we learned to use our eyes to talk instead of our mouth, it was very colourful (maybe talking about the multi-coloured parachute)". Lynn said that she learned "I can talk through eye-contact". Annie said "I learned it is really hard to talk with your eyes, when I stand between Cath and Lynn, I don't always know if someone is talking (making eye-contact) with me or the Cath or Lynn. It is really hard to know if someone is looking at me". Carla also found it hard "I didn't know if the other people are talking to me, because they weren't saying my name". Amber said, "I think we should do this more in summer, because if you push the parachute up and down it makes such a nice breeze". "Molly your hands been up, use a nice big voice because I'm getting old, I can't hear so well anymore". "Oh no, you are not getting old Mrs Quinn" the girls shouted. Aria commented on the hello activity at the start of the lesson "I loved singing hello to my friends, and my teacher". Yola said she loved learning Music with her friends, she said it felt very "lovely". I have never heard that word before but to me it says so much, could it be 'filled with love'? Yola added that her "friends are family". Jenny said "when the parachute went up it felt like it was going into my stomach". Hazel said, "it was actually very easy for me to talk with my eyes because I can do lots of things with my eyes", she pulls a face and rolls her eyes, while laughing. Julie was very busy with the pop it toy, at least she didn't proceed to interrupt everyone talking or screaming and crying in the corner. Aria says, "you can do a lot of things with eye contact, you can even play a game with eye contact". Gianna believes "you can also use your eyebrows to talk", she frowns. Cath concluded the discussion by saying "sometimes when you can't use your voice to talk, you can use your eyes, your eyebrows or your nose".

What did I think?

As with the previous lesson, the fact that the girls learned about communication, melodic contours and listening to the music while they enjoyed it, feels like the lesson was successful.

What worked?

I found that with me starting to sing to introduce a new activity was very effective. I think a music teacher should limit speaking as much as possible and integrate songs as introduction for new activities. I also found that there is a positive reaction if you tell the class that communicate – give them the big possibility and then put boundaries and limits in place instead of just saying “right, you can only talk with your eyes”.

Interpretation:

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that discipline needs to be creative. Traditional reprimanding falls on deaf ears. Children need to be approached creatively to get them on board. Discipline and order is also depended on variety of different pitches, on variety of games and movement. It must be something where there is buy in from the children.

Julie’s restlessness was distracted with the pop-up bracelet, her participation was mostly evident. I tried to involve her in the lesson, I was sitting next to her and occasionally checked in with her to ask her if she is okay. She was very helpful and contributed to the whole of the class.

Through movement with the parachute the girls also learned and experienced the contours in music. They also experimented and experienced non-verbal cues and as this class said, you can speak with your eyes, eyebrows and even your nose. The girls also understood that there could be misunderstandings that accompany non-verbal communication, like Annie said you don’t always know if someone is talking to you, or what they are trying to tell you.

I enjoyed the new word Yola used “loveful”. I am yet to interpret if it means the lesson was filled with love, or if she had love in her heart and really enjoyed it.

20 March 2024 – Miss T

What happened:

I decided to go and collect the girls from their classroom as sometimes it can take a few minutes just to line the girls up to walk to music. My music class is behind the grade 1 classroom block. As we entered the classroom, I started singing “make the circle big, big, big” with a loud voice to catch everyone’s attention. The girls quickly came in and started completing the circle. I suddenly sang quieter “make the circle small, small, small”. Eagerly the girls moved into the middle of the circle. I ended the song with a big circle, and everyone sat down. I started singing “hello, Tara” while rolling the ball to her, she quickly made eye contact with a friend and proceeded to sing “hello, Rory”, it wasn’t long before everyone was greeted by name and greeted another girl. The girls loved

making contact with their friend and was very quick to ask if everyone could have a second chance. There were smiles all around and every girl participated in singing beautiful So-Mi melodies. Tara ran up to me “I love you Mrs. Quinn”. Amy also came to give me a hug and said, “You’re the best Mrs Quinn”. I told them that sometimes we don’t need to use our voices to communicate, we can communicate with our body language. I told them we can use our facial expressions and our eyes to communicate with our friends. I started singing “up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up and down. Up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up....”. While singing the songs one girl had to communicate with someone across from her in the circle to swop places when the parachute was up, but the catch was that they weren’t allowed to use their voices, because their voices had to sing the song. It was extremely cute to see how the grade 1 girls used their eyes and their eyebrows to indicate to the chosen friend that they had to swop. Although I had to remind the girls to gently move the parachute up and down, they understood the concept. Sometimes the parachute up when they sang “down” and visa versa, but after stopping them to show them the contours of the music and the words and how they go together they understood. Every single girl participated and loved the social learning with their friends, through music and movement. One thing that I saw, and the girls found it challenging was they weren’t always sure if the person across the room made eye contact with them or the friend near them. But they soon discovered the challenges of non-verbal communication. Kendra just wanted to ascertain that we will play this game again, she loved it. Nola was the first volunteer to share her experience of the lesson, as she got the sparkling talking stick she said she felt the music go up and down like the parratshoot (parachute), she said the sound felt like we were playing violin – the high and low sounds. As Nola gave the talking stick, someone next to me said “awwww”, because she was so eager to share. I quickly reassured her that she will also get a turn to speak. Stella said, “I felt like I was in a real parachute, I was so high that I looked down to see the Statue of Liberty”. Tara felt like she was a “skyjumper”. Zara said she felt like she was “in a parachute, not in space, but on top of a cloud”. She continued to say her mom and her little sister were on the ground, “because my little sister loves mommy more than daddy”. She explained “Daddy was with me because I love daddy more than mommy”. Hannah loved how the parachute felt, “when it goes up it made a nice breeze”. She carried on telling me that the colours of the parachute reminded her of a xylophone. Rosa also loved how nice it felt when the parachute made a wind in the class. Livi shared that it wasn’t hard for her to make eye contact with her friend. Hadley decided to chew on her money purse at this stage of the lesson, she lost interest. Ziva said that she could see someone talking to her without saying a word, just by the way they moved their eyes. Tisha overanalysed the parachute a little bit, she decided that the cloth sound of the parachute reminded her of percussion instruments. Emily built on Tisha’s explanation, she said “it sounded like the parachute was a big leaf blowing in the wind, and then it’s like a big tree and the wind blowing through the leaves”. Amy also added that when we sang up, the parachute went up and when the parachute went down, we sang down. She said, “it is like we followed the music”. Tara said she felt like she learnt that “when you can’t talk with your mouth, you can talk with your eyes”. Stella said, “you can think about something and then your tiny mouth cannot open and then it can just come out of your eyes, without saying a word”. Tisha quickly adds, “did you know shoes are also percussion, look”. She pointed to her sole with the sparkly talking

stick, she started scraping the soles of her shoes. Ziva also added while quickly taking her school shoes off, "you can also clap your shoes together". As I lined the girls up they said, "can we please carry on with the game?"

What did I think?

I think the best way for children to learn is through social interaction. They girls loved making contact with each other, through song and dance and through making eye contact. This lesson was intentional; the connection between the girls were the most important.

What did I feel?

I felt quite humoured to see how cute they were with their intentional connection, for me I felt like there was an element of innocence. I enjoyed seeing how they explore with expression, with communication. Although I felt like the regular interruption with percussion instruments were a bit off-task, I think it is wonderful that the girls were still stimulated by a lesson that happened a week ago. The fact that the girls just wanted to make sure we play this again made it feel like the lesson was a success.

What worked?

The parachute was a huge hit, the girls loved it.

What did not work?

Although I feel like every lesson in work in progress and one improves continuously, I had to make the contours within the music more pronounced. I felt like once the parachute was in the picture the girls lost sight of the parachute must go up when the melodic contours upwards, and downwards when the music gets lower.

Interpretation:

I think the way the lesson started with singing hello to every single child was a validation strategy, I think the girls immediately felt acknowledged, seen and safe. The girls were smiling out of enjoyment, and I think this had an effect on the immediate participation of the whole class. With the love I received from Tara and Amy I really felt like we had a special relationship and that the girls feels at ease in the music room. Stella felt that she was in a real parachute, she was so high that she could see the Statue of Liberty from the top. I think this could be interpreted that she felt empowered, in control. Like she is big, and the world is small. Zara's interpretation of being on top of a cloud, does this means she is ecstatic? Happy? Overjoyed? Could it have something to do with the enjoyment of social interaction? She continued to say her mom and her little sister were on the ground, "because my little sister loves mommy more than daddy". She explained "Daddy was with me because I love Daddy more than Mommy". Does the space remove her from her mom and sister while joining her with her dad?

Hadley lost interest the moment the girls sat down for discussion, she only participated when gross motor movement were involved. Emily built a full theory of how the parachute sounds, the wind it makes and connected it to a tree. I am not sure of the interpretation of this image. I think for Amy it makes sense that a person can follow with

your body what happens in the music. The girls understood that communication is not always verbal but nonverbal cues can also communicate.

20 March 2024 – Mrs K

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nice breeze". "Molly your hands been up, use a nice big voice because I'm getting old, I can't hear so well anymore". "Oh no, you are not getting old Mrs Quinn" the girls shouted. Aria commented on the hello activity at the start of the lesson "I loved singing hello to my friends, and my teacher". Yola said she loved learning Music with her friends, she said it felt very "loveful". I have never heard that word before but to me it says so much, could it be 'filled with love'? Yola added that her "friends are family". Jenny said "when the parachute went up it felt like it was going into my stomach". Hazel said, "it was actually very easy for me to talk with my eyes because I can do lots of things with my eyes", she pulls a face and rolls her eyes, while laughing. Julie was very busy with the pop it toy, at least she didn't proceed to interrupt everyone talking or screaming and crying in the corner. Aria says, "you can do a lot of things with eye contact, you can even play a game with eye contact". Gianna believes "you can also use your eyebrows to talk", she frowns. Cath concluded the discussion by saying "sometimes when you can't use your voice to talk, you can use your eyes, your eyebrows or your nose".

What did I think?

As with the previous lesson, the fact that the girls learned about communication, melodic contours and listening to the music while they enjoyed it, feels like the lesson was successful.

What worked?

I found that with me starting to sing to introduce a new activity was very effective. I think a music teacher should limit speaking as much as possible and integrate songs as introduction for new activities. I also found that there is a positive reaction if you tell the class that communicate – give them the big possibility and then put boundaries and limits in place instead of just saying "right, you can only talk with your eyes".

Interpretation:

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that discipline needs to be creative. Traditional reprimanding falls on deaf ears. Children needs to be approached creatively to get them on board. Discipline and order is also depended on variety of different pitches, on variety of games and movement. It must be something where there is buy in from the children.

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3 April 2024- Miss T

What happened:

I walked to the Grade 1 classroom; as usual, it took a while to line up all the Grade 1 girls. "Fire order, fire order!" the girls are shouting. Fire order means the girls have to line up in alphabetical order, which is how they line up when they practise for evacuation drills. I got the girls into order and quickly marched all the way to my classroom, constantly aware that there was barely enough time to get through the lessons, not even to get into fire order and walk down. We arrive in the music room five minutes into the lesson. "Hello, hello, good morning, friends. How are you today?" I started singing as we got into our usual circle formation. I quickly demonstrated that if I cross my arms over my chest, I need a hug; if I raise my one hand, I need a high five. And if both my hands are in the air, I need a wave and a wiggle. We started singing our hello song while walking around the classroom. The girls were all walking in different directions. When a girl with crossed arms identified another girl with crossed arms, they quickly hugged each other. After each verse, the girls could change their 'need' (hug, high five or wave and wiggle). I saw lots of happy smiles as I glanced back towards the girls. I marched around, and as I put my hand up for a high five, the girls quickly changed their actions to match mine and hugged me, a high five or a wave and a wiggle.

Everyone had a turn to be acknowledged and an opportunity to fulfil a need. I paused the song and reviewed our lesson from last week. "Girls, can you remember our lesson from last week?" Instantly, girls started sharing, articulating how hard it was to have a conversation only with your eyes. I told the girls a story about the Tawny Owl and how they respond with a twoo to a twit. The girls were fascinated and had never heard of the twits or twoos. I quickly told them we called a call and a response. I tried to bring a musical concept into my lesson. We brainstormed on different ways to call and respond.

In the class, the girls said, "Let's do a call by wiggling our noses". "Yes, and we can answer by sticking out our tongues". "Yes, let's stick our tongues out twice, like this", Zara adds. I spontaneously started singing, "Up and down, up and down, the parachute goes up and down". As the girls joined in, I started wiggling my nose at Zara. At first, she was startled, but soon, she clicked and started signalling by sticking her tongue out twice. When the song got to "the parachute goes up..." I shot underneath the parachute, and Zara understood my actions, and we swopped around.

The parachute game just carried on without any further explanation. It was so uplifting seeing all the cute facial expressions and the girls communicating and smiling at each other. There weren't any issues and fewer misunderstandings last week as the girls were more intentional and directed with their non-verbal communication. Zara wanted to add more actions for the hello song; she wanted to add a dancing move, while Ashley wished to add a move where you showed two fingers (like the peace sign), which means kissing someone's cheek. She added, "To be more fancy". Amy wanted to add a boogie move. Hadley has been sitting in a corner, wholly withdrawn.

Emily said walking around and acknowledging friends while singing made her feel "like we were at a party, greeting each other". Everyone loved being acknowledged and greeting their friends. While reflecting on the song, girls were still 'inventing' different moves to share with each other. Tara said, "It made me feel special when everyone was greeting me". Zara wanted to click her fingers next time. Tisha said, "The hello song made me feel happy, it made me feel excited, and it also made me feel responsible". Sindi said, "I feel so relaxed and safe". Rosa took the talking stick and said, "It made my bucket feel full". The grade 1 girls attended the assembly earlier during the day, where the theme was 'building each other up'. The term bucket filling meant building each other up, fulfilling needs, and acknowledging each other. Sandra said she also felt happy and "full". Rory felt that communicating without words made her feel nervous. Ashley and Amy confirmed that she felt more confident with the parachute game because of the straightforward communication. Tisha took the talking stick and said that she felt more at ease with the parachute game and communicating with the other girls in her class because "I knew who was responding, I could 'call' and someone could 'respond', like the little owls, I could say twit and someone else could say twoo". Olga said, "I felt more sure in my heart". I called on Tina and said, "Tina, I haven't heard your voice today. I would like to hear what you think". She responded, "I have gone quiet today, but I liked the parachute because this time I knew who I was making eye contact with me". Emily said, "It felt like I was going under a huge plane when we swopped". She said it was much better and easier to respond when their friends communicated with facial expressions and sticking their tongues out. Hadley was still sitting in the corner. She didn't want to participate. Madison also found it more manageable. One by one, the girls came closer. They wanted to touch my hair, my hands and my feet. Zara concluded the lesson and said, "I loved hugging friends that I haven't hugged before".

What did I think?

It was beautiful to see how the girls were still busy creating moves for the hello song during reflection time. They were enjoying the song and maybe reflecting on their own validation language.

What did I feel?

The concept of non-verbal communication was successful within a Reggio-inspired music lesson where girls could 'create' their own cues. These cues contributed to the classroom relationships with peers, the music teacher, and possibly even with themselves.

What worked?

It helped the connection within the lesson when the girls could choose how they preferred to be greeted: by a hug, a high five or a wave and a wiggle. I think this immediately validated everyone's needs and feelings. I also found that making a music concept, in this case, 'call and response,' vivid to the girls worked as they were fascinated but immediately understood it. The girls were eager to contribute and make their own 'calls' and 'responses'. The girls' creativity reminded me of Anderson and Krathwohl's taxonomy, where the children create to show understanding and knowledge acquisition.

What now?

With the funny facial expressions observed as part of the non-verbal communication, I found that humour and being playful were one of the success factors within a lesson. The girls connect through humour. The girls felt safe to connect with me by trying to play with my hair and my hands.

Interpretation:

Zara's conclusion, "I love hugging friends that I haven't hugged before, " makes me think that children (and human beings) are made for connection. They want to connect with friends and make new connections.

3 April 2024- Mrs K

What happened:

I walked over to the Drama classroom to drop off the previous grade 1 class and to collect the next class. The drama lessons always seem to go over time a bit. I quickly dropped off the class, and we were linked together with each other and walking like a train. The other girls asked, "Can we also be a train, please??" "Of Course, all aboard!" I shouted. Chookoo train, chookoo train, we are on our chookoo train," I repeated as we were 'driving' to class. Once again, we arrived in the music room five minutes into the lesson. "Where is Julie?" I said when we got into the classroom. "She's crying," the girls said. I quickly ran back and got Julie, who was crying out loud and stomping her feet. "Come, my Julie, come with me. I really want you to be part of my lesson. I need you to come and have fun." I saw a little smile emerge, and she took my hand. Then, we went off to the music classroom. "Hello, hello, good morning, friends. How are you today?" I started singing as we got into our usual circle formation. I quickly demonstrated that if I cross my arms over my chest, I need a hug; if I raise my one hand, I need a high five; and if both my hands are in the air, I need a wave and a wiggle. We started singing our hello song while walking around the classroom. The girls were all walking in different directions. When a girl with crossed arms identified another girl with crossed arms, they quickly hugged each other. After each verse, the girls could change their 'need' (hug, high five or wave and wiggle). I saw lots of happy smiles as I glanced back towards the girls. I marched around, and as I put my hand up for a high five, the girls quickly changed their actions to match mine and hugged me, a high five or a wave and a wiggle. Everyone had a turn to be acknowledged and an opportunity to fulfil a need. I informed the girls that there would only be two more actions, and then we would move on to another activity. As we finished our last verse, Julie stormed out of the class and stomped her feet. I was apprehensive because my classroom overlooked the church parking area, and I didn't want girls running outside. I quickly ran to find Julie. She was leaning on the wall outside my class. The thing that surprised me most was that there was a little smile in her mouth. She was mischievous, not that upset. " Julie, why did you run out? I was so worried about you," I said. "because I didn't get a last hug," she said. I took her back to class, and we started our parachute activity. I asked the girls if they could remember last week's lesson?" Instantly, girls started sharing, articulating how hard it was to have a conversation only with your eyes. I told the girls a story about

the Tawny Owl and how they respond with a twoo to a twit. I quickly told them we called that a call and a response. We brainstormed on different ways to call and respond. The girls wanted to point to a friend by sticking out their tongues and responding by blinking three times. When we reflected, I asked Julie to come and sit next to me. This way, I can help her regulate and check on her needs to fulfil or guide her. She added in a sorry voice that everyone thinks she's a bully. Cath thought the hello song felt good, and she felt relaxed. She added, "I love giving hugs to others because it makes some feel better". Julie commented on every girl's response: "I hated it.... It felt horrible". I asked her why she didn't enjoy it as much. She said, "I didn't like it because everything is too loud". I asked her what would help her. "Would earphones help Julie? To block out some of the noisy bits?" She seemed satisfied with the solution. Oakley thought it was amazing. She said, "My friends and other people made me feel happy and special". Julie was sitting on the floor with me, putting her head on my leg. I was touching her hair gently. Luna loved swopping, "I loved getting signals from other people", she added. Gianna liked being with her friends and enjoyed communicating and listening to them. Aria loved the cold air. She said it felt like "snowballs were kissing me". Molly loved the big hugs she got "because they make warm on the inside". Sienna said she had an aircon feeling: "I felt relieved". Lola said, "It felt nice, and I loved it. I had a warm feeling". Hazel loved receiving high fives. Annie also wanted to share her experiences. The game was "refreshing, and I liked seeing everyone pulling funny faces to signal to their friends". Annie also liked the high fives and hugs because "everyone was being nice and kind to each other". Carla, a timid little girl, said, "It was very nice, I felt very loved". Yola suddenly started crying because her tooth was sore, and "I just don't feel like myself", she said. I dried her tears, and she came and sat close to me. She started feeling a bit better instantly.

Lorna put her hand up. "Can I please have the talking stick, Mrs Quinn?". Julie started wailing out loud again. " Julie, come here, please", I said in a loving voice. "Noooo!" She shouted. "Nobody loves me!" she screamed. " Julie, I love you very much," I said. In the meantime, the bell rang, and I sang "Goodbye Grade 1's", using So-Mi patterns. I could now turn all my attention to Julie. Yola also didn't go. She still wanted another hug from me. As I sat down, Julie wormed her way onto my lap. She put her little head on my shoulder. Julie was wailing like a little two-year-old. "I'm scared that I will get into trouble," she said. "Why will you get into trouble?" I asked. "Because I almost broke your piano," Julie said. She told me she had walked into the piano and thought she would break it. "I care more about you, Julie than my piano. Did you get hurt?" She shook her head. I could see relief in her little tear-stained face. I walked her to her class. We got her lunchbox out, and she felt better.

What did I think?

What I realise is that as a teacher, and especially a music teacher, playfulness is vital. It is about how you receive the kids. Are you grumpy and strict, or are you playful and imaginative? The lesson is more successful when I approach the girls playfully.

What did I feel?

I honestly feel exhausted and hopeless with Julie some days. I realise that she has ADHD, but I feel like she desperately wants to be the centre of attention. I am trying

hard to validate her, but she is playing with me as if she enjoys interrupting. Is she genuinely sad because she didn't get that last hug, or is it to get my attention? Maybe I am wrong. It is the end of the long term, so perhaps some exhaustion clouds my mind. Julie 's comments, "I hated it.... It felt horrible, " don't feel valid to me because she participated only at the end when she ran off. Was this the first lesson where she couldn't finish her drawing, which made her hate it? I understand the overstimulation of noise when she said, "I didn't like it because everything is too loud". I will ensure to have noise reduction earphones readily available for our next lesson. There is definitely fear present in her reactions. Why was she so scared to break my piano? Has she been in trouble before for breakage? Is she afraid to disappoint me? Was it a fear of disapproval?

What worked?

Being able to help Julie with regulating during reflection enabled me and the order in the classroom. The children loved connection, connection with peers and with the teacher.

What did not work?

I have no idea how to improve it, but I find it challenging to keep Julie focused and happy while trying to win the other girls. A class of approx 23 girls can be a handful. I am balancing keeping the music space safe and brave without losing the whole class of girls.

4 April 2024- Mrs K

What happened:

I collected the girls from their class after their second break for the day. They were way more eager to line up than before. We arrived in the class. Without any instruction, I started singing, "Can you make a circle, circle, circle, can you make a circle as I count to 10? 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10!". Everybody was in the circle and smiles and relief flooded their little red faces from running around in the sun during break time. I immediately started the lesson by singing, "Copycat, copycat, can you do this and that?". The girls were familiar with this song, as I use this song for a focus activity now and again. 'Copycat' is always a winning song in my class; sometimes, I even add an accelerando to make it more exciting, and the girls are always up for a bit of 'what they appear to be' a challenge. After the song settled down, I grouped the girls in groups of 4. This was just as they were sitting within the circle. I quickly handed every child a disk numbered 1 – 4. I started singing to the melody of "if you're happy and you know it", If you have a number 1, have a run (on your spot), If you have a number 2, say boo, if you have a number 3, stand up and touch your knee, if you have a number 4, touch the floor (melody of "If you're happy and you know it". "Can we do it again?" the girls shouted. "Sure, let's go one last time" I replied. After I sang the song the second time, I quickly went into explaining how we will do "copycat". Every number will get a chance to be the leader and make up actions that the rest of the group must copy. Julie asked, "can I please get the pop-up bracelet?". I responded with "just now, you are going to use your hands first, and then you can get it when you feel you need it". They

set to work very eagerly. Every child was wholly engaged in their group work. Some girls tried to make more challenging actions for the rest to copy, while others, like Julie, tried to be funny. She put her finger in her left nostril and then in the right nostril for the girls in her group to copy. They were laughing.

When every girl got a turn to lead her group, I asked all the 1's to share, then the 2's, etc., until everyone got a turn to share. Julie said, "I loved doing this. I got to be their leader and do silly things". Gianna loved helping her group to do actions and thought it was important to take turns. I quickly handed Julie the fidget toy because she was talking non-stop while the girls were sharing. Molly loved "being in charge". Julie shouted, "I was very good being in charge". Oakley loved that she could make up actions. She said, "My sister never copies me because she is much older than me, and today I got to make up actions, and everyone copied me. I loved being in charge". Luna loved "doing very hard actions". More than one child added that they loved being in charge. Lola thought the most important thing was "working and learning together, and also I was very good at being the cat". Yola said, "Teamwork was dreamwork. I did this step by step". Hazel thought it was awesome "because everyone got a turn, and no one got left out". Tori felt like everyone listened to her, but she found it hard to listen to everyone else because she thought she had better ideas.

Jenny said, "It made me feel happy when the group listened to me". Bailey said, "Laughing with my friend makes me feel happy and good". Amber said she loved listening to her friends' ideas. Ava felt sad that some of her friends didn't listen to her. Annie said, "I liked that we all got along". Lola and Julie were still talking and making up actions. Cath didn't enjoy being in Julie's group. She said, "She was doing silly things, and I don't like it". Bailey loved that everyone was being kind to each other.

What did I think?

I enjoyed seeing the girls excited to participate and engaged in the music lessons. I feel like I am giving them the skills and materials they need to create their knowledge socially. They love working together. As a teacher, I often think that girls don't care about who is talking and listening; this is so challenging, especially when working in the art and music department where the kids 'expect' to have fun and often struggle to regulate. I have learned through my observations that the girls also like the others to listen when they talk. The basic communication skills of listening and speaking were enforced in this lesson.

What worked?

I found that giving the disks and doing an activity to make the number fun worked. The girls also took ownership of their roles within the group. When we reflected on the activity, I found it way more organised, calling the 1s to share and then the 2s, 3s and 4s. Everyone got a turn to reflect on their social learning, the communication within their groups and how they enjoyed the lesson's content.

What did not work?

I think the silliness observed from Julie maybe wasn't exactly what I envisioned for this lesson, although I am always up for humour within a lesson. I am unsure how to draw the line to limit silliness in my classroom.

What now?

I want to repitch this lesson to observe more social behaviour from the girls while they follow the leader.

10 April 2024 – Miss T

What happened:

It was time for Music again. It is the end of term, and everyone is tired and irritable. The girls have friendship issues, and the class has a bad vibe. I collected the girls from their class. I pretended we were little fairies flying to the music class to calm the anxiety and vibe. I let the girls fly into a circle formation. I started singing, "Slowly, slowly, slowly in we go, back again, and back again and back again we go". This song immediately gets everyone into a neat circle. I sang, "Sit down, sit down, sit down, everybody". As the girls were sitting down, without a word, I started singing, "As I was walking down the street, down the street, down the street....Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go, away we go....." I chose a girl to skip around with. The girls sang out loud, and the game continued. Today, Sandra was grumpy and didn't participate at all. Hadley decided not to do the circle song as she was glued to the wall. I grabbed her hand as we sang and drew her into the circle. With the rig-a-jig-jig, I chose Sandra. I know she is not usually grumpy, and maybe our dance can cheer her up and include her in the lesson. Sandra chose Tina as her partner. The real Sandra was back. Sandra had no more grumpy face and a dropped lip. She felt better and had a smile on her little face. I prepared the girls as the song ended. I said, "Three more turns left". The song ended, and I immediately said, "I want you to get into pairs as I count down from 5!

Five.....Four.....Three.....Two..... One.....". I sang the countdown in so-fa-mi-re-do. The girls were in pairs, but one girl didn't get a friend. It was Hadley, the only one who didn't want to participate either. It was awesome because it allowed me to work with and include her in the activity. I handed out ribbon scarves to everyone. The girls were sitting, mirroring each other.

In every pair, one person had to stand up. I named that person number 1 and asked them to sit down. The other person in the pair had to stand, and I called them the number 2s. I quickly explained that number 1 would start and lead the moves while person 2 mirrors/copies the moves of person 1. When they hear the little bell ring, they need to swap to the other person making up the moves. I switched "Africa" on by Toto. The girls loved it. Hadley was my partner, and she participated by making up her moves. She was creative and had a smile on her face. She enjoyed being part of the class activity even though she wasn't so sure initially. The other girls in the class were on-task and enjoyed feeding off each others' ideas and moves. As the music stopped, Zara shouted, "That was beautiful music, by the way". I asked Hadley to be my special helper and take all the scarves. The rest of the class sat down as Hadley collected all

the scarves. The class was quite rowdy at this stage, and I had to sing to let them calm down.

Tara said she was so proud of the moves that her group made. Aurora loved making her scarf shake, while Emily loved dancing. She also said, "The thing I loved the most was standing up and dancing". Hadley even volunteered to share, "I loved spinning around and making my scarf jump up and down". Tisha said, "I loved copying someone, and someone copying me... it was just the best". Tina said, "I liked making moves together...I just loved the game. I was just so excited to see what the new actions would be". Olga said, "It was so much fun to make music with other people and to interact with a new person". Amy said she struggled to copy her friend, "it was a bit hard because my friends' actions were a bit hard".

Ashley loved mixing up ballet and wild moves. Rory said that she struggled to understand the activity. She thought she had to make up two moves. Zara said, "I liked some of the moves I made up". Rosa felt proud "that everyone was calm. When it's wild, it stresses me out". Lucinda said she learnt a lot of new moves because she was struggling to make up her own moves". Zara also said, "I learned how to make cool moves from my friend Madison". Tisha asked, "I just wanna know, is an elephant the king of the jungle or the lion, because Stella says it's the elephant". She felt annoyed. Ziva also said she loved learning from friends, "I want to learn everything" she said. Nola said she connected with her friends. Emily said "Mrs Quinn, I made up my own copycat game at home". Nola decided that there should be level two in the game. She thought the music must get louder. The moves should get harder for level 2. She wanted a more significant challenge. Sandra said "I feel better after the lesson because I have a new friend, I did music with Tina, and now we are friends". Hadley added that she is also feeling better "I had fun". She continued to say "I loved being part of the dance and doing it with someone, it made me feel happy".

What did I feel?

I felt the power of music without sounding like a cliché today. There were tangible friendship issues as the girls walked in, and they walked out in a good space. Music had the power to transform Sandra's mood and the status and quality of her friendship. Music and dancing enabled her to make a new friend. Using music to dance transformed not just Sandra but everyone's moods in the class. Music created order in the room.

What worked?

I enjoyed being able to work on one with Hadley. This allowed me to try to make it fun and exciting for her. I could focus on her.

Interpretation:

Hadley is a shy and withdrawn girl who struggles at school. She needs extra help with speech therapists, learning support, psychotherapy, Occupational therapy and physiotherapy. She was born with an extra chromosome and had faint similarities to a down-syndrome child. As I tried to read into the situation, Hadley felt like she was part of the lesson, probably for the first time. She strikes me as one who sulks because she will

not participate unless someone takes her by the hand and lures her in. The most surprising is that Hadley enjoyed participating. I especially enjoyed it when Hadley shared that she loved "spinning around and making my scarf jump up and down".

Children love dancing and moving to music. They love learning with their friends, and as Tisha said, "I was just so excited to see what the new actions would be". They love learning from and with others. Maybe I should have explained the activity better, especially to Rory. However, she was the only child in 2 classes who struggled to understand. Maybe next time, I should try and find an extra way of explaining, maybe demonstrating more clearly.

I loved how Nola interpreted this activity as a 'computer game' with levels and audio that escalates with the levels. The most significant transformation for me in the class was when Sandra said, "I feel better after the lesson because I have a new friend. I did music with Tina, and now we are friends". Withdrawn, Hadley, who had fun, which is not something she has often, added that she also feels better: "I had fun". She continued, "I loved being part of the dance and doing it with someone. It made me feel happy".

10 April 2024 – Mrs K

What happened:

The girls were still busy in the Drama class when I went to collect them. "Please just give me 3 minutes to finish this activity," Miss D, the Drama teacher, asked. We flew into the music classroom like little fairies 5, minutes late for our music lesson. I guided the girls into a circle formation. With a melodic voice, I started, "Slowly, slowly, slowly in we go, back again, and back again and back again we go," ushering them into a tidy circle effortlessly. "Sit down, sit down, sit down, everybody," I sang softly as they settled into their places. Then, without preamble, I launched into "Happy birthday to you... Happy birthday, dear Oakley....." A smile erupted as little Oakley felt so special for her birthday.

"Are you 1?" I sang.... "no!" everyone shouted. "Are you 2?" "No," everyone shouted. Are you 3, are you 4, are you 5, are you 6, are you seven? "YES!!!" everyone shouted. Then, without preamble, I launched into "As I was walking down the street, down the street, down the street... Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go, away we go..." Choosing a companion, I twirled with her as the girls joined in the spirited chorus, everyone singing, and the enchanting game unfolded. I handed out the ribbon scarves as the girls sang so as not to waste more time during the music lesson. The girls hooked up and skipped around. When the girls were doing it in the wrong direction, hooking up left to left, there was always a girl coming to the rescue, helping and explaining.

Julie was the last to participate in Rig-a-jig-jig before continuing to the next activity. I demonstrated to the girls how to sit and mirror their friends before doing the final countdown to get into pairs. I ended up with Gianna, who didn't have a partner, to be my partner. In every pair, one person had to stand up. I named that person number 1 and asked them to sit down. The other person in the pair had to stand, and I called them the number 2s. I quickly explained that number 1 would start and lead the moves while person 2 mirrors/copies the moves of person 1. When they hear the little bell ring, they

need to swap to the other person making up the moves. I switched "Africa" on by Toto. There were giggles all around as the girls loved dancing to the music. Eager movements were present. I rang the bell pretty often, giving the girls shorter spurts of movement. The girls were concentrating, trying to make up new movements to the song.

Aria was proud of trying her best and proud of her partner for trying her best in music today. Cath rushed around the music classroom, and she eventually found my talking stick pinned on the wall. "Cath, you are the saviour of the day", I exclaimed. She was beaming with pride. Sadie said she was proud that "my partner was doing the right thing and that she was trying her best". Lola said, "I was proud of Yola because some of my moves were so tiring. She tried everything she could, and I am proud of her". Julie interrupted "you are bissis Quinn, and Fissis Quinn". I jokingly interacted. "No, I'm not Dissus Quinn, fissis Quinn or Bissis Quinn. I am Missus Quinn", I said entertainingly. Julie enjoyed the joke. While the other girls were talking, Julie drew on my lesson plan. She wrote the word "run". Julie was giggling throughout, sucking my pen until I told her that her tongue would turn blue from the ink. Cath tried to make her movements easier so that Molly could follow her. She encouraged her throughout the lesson. Julie ran out of the class again. I ran after her. "Julie, it is tough for me when you run away. Please come back to my classroom". "I'm right next to you; all you can do is answer the other girls," she said. "I'm sorry, Julie," I said. "Can I try again, please?" I asked. "Madam, Julie wants to share her thoughts," I said as I walked into the classroom, handing her the talking stick. She loved the attention. Julie was giggling. Julie added, "It was so cool working with my friend today". Julie started playing on the piano, even though I asked her not to. "Julie, please help me," I asked. "I always give you a turn, but please help me too". By this stage, Julie is beside herself, licking chairs and girls. It feels like chaos at this stage of the lesson. Julie is laughing uncontrollably. Sage learned that you can make your moves, look at someone, and think it's the mirror. In the meantime, Julie is licking the girls, causing complete chaos. Cath saw the need and got the fidget toy on the piano; she handed it to Julie. Luna learnt that "if you listen to people, they will listen to you". Luna started batting her eyelashes at me. Sage came up to me. "Yola is in a bad mood," she said concerned. Annie added, "I thought that I connected to my friend by trying to listen to them and watching what they do. We respect each other by listening, by making eye contact". She was very excited to connect with someone who was already her friend. I chatted with Yola, who said she was not having a good day. I walked her back to class, which made her feel better.

What did I feel?

I find it hugely frustrating when the classes are late. With such a limited amount of time, being late is really not conducive to the music lessons.

What worked?

I always try to make a child a bit more special, and for me, it is vital to recognise a birthday. Oakley enjoyed getting that little extra attention when we sang for her birthday.

Interpretation:

As the girls hooked up and skipped around for Rig-a-jig-jig and went in the wrong direction or faced the wrong direction, their friends' help was tremendous. It wasn't a bossy kind of help but genuine care. The girls who were helped also didn't perceive the help as invading or negative. With time constraints, I sometimes only do a few turns with a song and not everyone gets a turn. The last girl chose Julie, and I knew I couldn't stop the activity. Julie had to choose a friend; otherwise, we would have had Julie running out of the class again.

The girls enjoyed the activity and loved movements, dancing, and music.

When we were reflecting, more than one girl reflected on their partners concentrating on trying their best, and I could see that the group work was successful. I found that the girls are starting to care for each other. I loved how Cath was looking out for Julie to hand her the fidget toy when she saw Julie that she wasn't coping or regulating. Cath also said she simplified her moves. She regulates the discipline or communication in the classroom by looking for the talking stick and handing it to the person sharing it.

I love humour, but I find Julie 's humour exhausting at times. I find it off-task distractive and interrupting. I try to speak to Julie in a loving and acknowledging way, but I am unsure if her running away is trying to escape or get attention. I playfully made her the centre of attention when I said "Madam Julie wants to share her thoughts", but presenting a lesson to evolve around one child is truly exhausting.

Some girls understand the communication element in the lesson, like when Luna learnt that "if you listen to people, they will listen to you". And when Annie connected with her friend by listening and making eye contact.

8 May 2024 - Miss T

What happened:

"Can you make a circle? Can you make a circle? Can you make a circle as I count to five.....". All the girls started to count out loud....." one.....two....three....four....five!" "Slowly, slowly, slowly in we go, back again, and back again, and back again so slow". This activity always seems to create unity and participation in my classes. I felt like the girls were a bit more hyper than usual. Maybe it is because they just returned from a three-week holiday, a holiday that included late nights and an overdose of sugar. I quickly let the girls sit in their circle. Sandra went to sit in the corner. I approached her, took her hand, and guided her to sit beside me in the circle. "Today I have a very special book for you," I said as I opened 'Say Zoop' by Hervé Tullet. The first page had yellow, blue and red dots. Zara shouted, "it's primary colours". The girls were captivated by this strange book that requires you to point to dots and make 'oh' sounds depending on the size of the blue dot. The dots made rhythmic pattern sounds. Crescendos, decrescendos, accelerandos, and other musical elements were also present. Everyone participated as we read the book, which was very animated.

I told the girls we would design a page in our own 'Oh' books. The girls needed to get into a partnership with someone else. The two girls have to choose one colour to represent their group. The groups had to make big, more significant, small, and smaller

circles to show the class. This activity aimed to illustrate dynamic changes in terms of circles.

The girls quickly sat facing each other as I handed A3 papers out. As I walked around, I assisted the groups. The girls were making thousands of dots all over the paper. Once again, I feel like my instructions were not clear enough. I quickly stopped the whole process and told the girls they had eight dots in their group to make their pattern. We were all on the same page again. Emily showed me her two tiny and medium ohs, which she and Rory worked on. Sandra was working with Amy. Sandra was very keen to show me that they have two small dots, a big dot, and then two small ones and a medium dot. Amy was not happy at all. She suggested a smaller circle, and Sandra made it more prominent.

Sandra had the blue pencil for the group, but the two had a communication problem. Amy wanted to make sure it was a pattern: two small, one big, two small, one big, while Sandra wanted to start with two small dots, then a big, followed by two small and a medium dot. Amy wished to leave the medium dot out. We discussed how many dots it would take to make Sandra's idea a pattern versus Amy's. Sandra was entirely on board. "OHHHHH goodness," I said as if I was rereading the book, "I LOVE your ideas". They both smiled from ear to ear.

The girls loved the 'oh' humour and jokes that I made. They were so creative and so keen to create. I said to the girls when the music stops, all the pencils should be in the bag.....I played a few chords on the piano. When I finished, all the pencils were packed away. The girls found it hard to work together because it was hard to find a sized oh that they both liked. They suggested they should not work together during group activities to avoid conflict. I calmly told them that they needed to be able to compromise to make it work. I added, "What if you were the last two people left on Earth, and you need to save it?" To compromise, you must take turns; the one chooses the colour, and then the next person makes the first dot. They understood what I said. Zara said she loved working with her partner.

Nola and Olga were partners, and they made a beautiful orange crescendo with dots. They said working together was easy because they listened to each other's ideas. Tina and Tisha were so excited that they made their book. They made a crescendo and a decrescendo. They said working together was fun and wanted to publish their book. Ashley and Ziva reflected and said they disagreed about the colour – they decided on orange because both wanted another colour first. The girls were adamant that they needed the talking stick before they could share, and I think this almost gave them the certainty that their classmates would respect and listen to them. Rosa and Hadley were partners today. Hadley was smiling and confident about sharing their work with the class. Hadley was so excited to be part of a group and part of an activity.

What did I think?

I enjoyed teaching the girls music concepts, such as dynamics through visuals. I thought they all understood the crescendos, decrescendos, piano and forte. Although it is a strange way to teach dynamics, I think it worked effectively. The girls loved working with friends, although there were some negotiation issues on the colour and sizes of the dots they used. The playfulness and humour in the class bring enjoyment, a non-

threatening element to the lessons. Hadley was part of a group and contributing – this is a first. She is usually very withdrawn, but today, she cooperated and collaborated.

8 May - Mrs K

What happened:

"Can you make a circle? Can you make a circle? Can you make a circle as I count to five.....". All the girls started to count out loud.....one.....two....three....four....five!" "Slowly, slowly, slowly in we go, back again, and back again, and back again so slow". This activity always seems to create unity and participation in my classes. The girls sat down once they all made a circle. I locked the class door to ensure no one ran out of my class. I opened 'Say Zoop' by Hervé Tullet, "Today we are going to read a very special book together". Julie went to get the pop-up bracelet before we even started. Not everyone could see the book because some girls moved forward, but Luna said, "We need to make the circle bigger so everyone can see". "You are such a problem solver, Luna!" I said. We started by pointing to all the Oh's in the book. Julie blocked her ears when they got very loud but participated throughout. Julie was sitting with her friend Ally again, excited to start. Jenny didn't find a friend. She always picks Molly so that she can domineer her. Molly stood up for herself and said she wanted to go with someone else today. I had to support the idea of girls choosing different partners, especially in domineering partnerships where they couldn't make any decisions for themselves. I was so proud of Molly for speaking up. Jenny were partners with Cath – also quite a strong-minded girl. By now, Julie was chewing the pop-up bracelet and banging on the piano – luckily, it was short-lived, and she soon returned to work. I handed out a coloured pencil in this class to eliminate the colour issue. Jenny wanted to draw horses, even though I explained clearly that every group had eight dots of different sizes. Ally and Julie enjoyed working together. One drew the dots while the other one coloured in. I gave Julie's group the pink pencil because they had asked for it. I wasn't prepared to lose her over the colour of a pencil. Jenny took over in her group, but she didn't take any advice or consider the feelings or input of her group. She took over and didn't let Cath have a say or a turn. I asked them, "So how can we make the whole group happy?" Cath said, "You have to take turns, like Jenny, me, Jenny, me....". After the activity, I asked Julie to take all the pencils to reflect on and share them with the class. Julie took her job very seriously. She counted to ten to get the girls to hand her the pencils. I was ready to give the sparkle stick to the groups to share. The first group was Molly's group. They decided to split the eight o's in two so everyone could make four ohs of their preferred size. It ended up being a long crescendo and a shorter decrescendo. "That was Oh-some", I applaud; the girls loved my corny jokes. Annie found it easy working in her group. She said, "I just gave the pencil to Kinsley, and she could draw a dot, then she gave the pencil to me, and I could draw a dot, but it couldn't be the same size as hers, and then it was her turn again..." Shy little Kinsley, was just smiling, she didn't like the spotlight, but she did so well sharing her and Annie's project. Julie wanted to share her crescendo with the class. They also did one dot by Julie and the following dot by Ally. I realised I had locked the door when Sage wanted to go to the bathroom. Julie had not even attempted to run away. I think it was a good lesson for her.

What did I think?

From observing Julie, I think she was utterly overwhelmed by the sounds (loud noises) in the music class. I feel very proud of her for getting up and getting the pop-up bracelet. She took control and self-regulated. Although I always support making new friends and working with new partners – it would be too much for Julie. Ally understands her, and they are best friends. To have Julie participate in my class, I must compromise a bit by giving her extra responsibility and making her feel in control of her own space, adding to her experience and everyone's experience in music.

I also feel very relieved that Molly saw this as a safe space where she could stand up for herself. She didn't want to be domineered by Jenny; she wanted to contribute and participate in an activity with agency and knew she could do it in my class. I saw some problem-solving in my class when the girls split their eight ohs so everyone had an equal opportunity to create.

9 May 2024 - Miss T

What happened:

After the girls sang the Hello Train song, they moved into groups of four. We continued reading 'Say Zoop' by Hervé Tullet. Another dot was introduced, Ah. They imagined Oh and Ah as two people doing something, interacting. They picked their two colours to represent the two sounds. Sandra wanted to do everything independently but decided she wouldn't join a group. Sandra said she wants to be independent because it will be much quicker. "But why will it be quicker?" I asked. She replied, "Because I can just do my own thing without arguing. I don't want to waste time". She sang an oh and ah song on the melody of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. "Oh Oh Oh Ah Ah Oh Ah Oh...." Nola's group decided that the Oh would walk down the aisle, and the Ah would walk down the aisle, and then they would be married. Tina shared her idea – the dots were fighting. Zara, Rosa, Ziva, and Hadley made a song based on the melody of Mary Had a Little Lamb. Seeing that Hayley contributed to her group's work was so lovely. Kendra, Olga and Mpiyo decided to climb up a mountain with their two dots, the black dots, also known as "oh", ascending and the orange dots, known as "ah", descending. They worked as a team and had no issues working in a group. Tisha, Sindi and Arrissa had fighting dots, and they said it wasn't too bad, but they had a little "problem fighting over colours". The Grade 1's were excited to design their books and their interactions with the "oh's and ahs".

What did I think?

Sandra struggles to communicate and negotiate, and I think she wants to avoid conflict by doing her work on her own. I could have forced her to work with a friend, but then again, like with Julie, I think I might have ruined it for everyone. Sandra also tends to sulk (quietly, not out loud like Julie), and her mood tends to affect those around her. I loved hearing and reading about the girls' worlds, their imagined interactions, and how they could put a song or dynamics to it.

9 May 2024- Mrs K

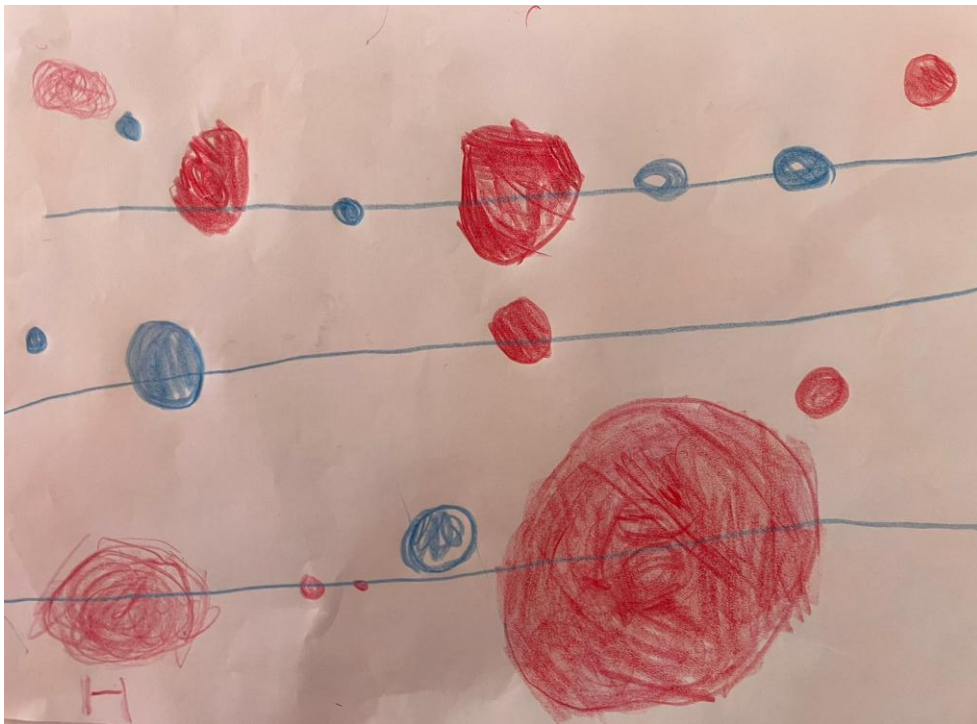
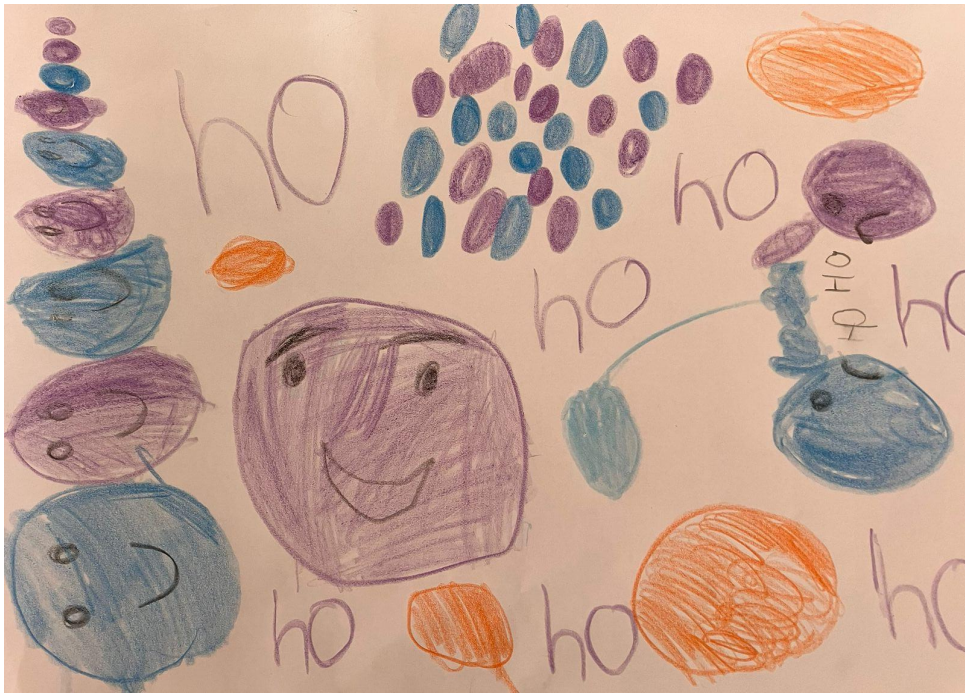
"The good morning train is coming; how are you? Choo choo," I sang as we walked into the music classroom. The girls formed a circle, and I pulled the "Say Zoop" book out again. I need to introduce the girls to the two different colours and sounds. The girls quickly chose a friend and had two pairs combined and four girls in a group. They chose their two colours and started working. I told them I wanted them to think of their two colours as two people and that the two people needed to interact with each other. It was noisy in the class. Yola was sitting in the corner crying and had been crying for the last few lessons. I took her outside the class to console her, and she murmured that I struggled to hear her. She just wanted to hug me. She said she misses her mommy. "Can I be your music mommy?" I asked her. As we walked into the class, Julie approached Yola and gave her the pop-up bracelet. She started calming down a bit. Julie was very cooperative today. I allowed her group to share first. Their Ohs frightened their Ahs, so it was quiet with a very big Szforzando at the end. Julie was very proud of her work and her group. I realise that Julie wants to be listened to. She is okay negotiating with her group if they allow her to share.

Annie said they couldn't finish their project because they argued over the colours. They also didn't decide what kind of interaction the dots had. Although Luna said, "They were definitely talking about chocolate". Bailey and Aria had blue and orange dots that were fighting. They used their voices to make angry "oh's" and replying with quick and angry "ah's". I took a photo of their beautiful work. Molly worked with Tori. They made a song, "the oh-ah song". The dots were all on the same line but with different sounds. It looked and sounded so beautiful. I also took a photo of their fantastic work. Cath and Carla's ohs were fighting, and then they made up – they even drew faces for the dots. It was gorgeous, and I think it depicts the interactions they experience in their groups daily.

What did I think:

Yola's emotional state is worrying me, and I am not sure whether it is a performance anxiety issue or a communication issue. She is not a first-language English speaker, so communicating with a group may be problematic.

Julie's compassion blew me away. She identified with Yola's emotional turmoil and gave her the pop-up bracelet because she knows from experience it has a calming effect. Julie wants to be heard. I have had good dealings with her since she can regulate and has positive attention. The girls were so creative that I enjoyed observing their learning.





15 April 2024- Miss T

What happened:

Can you make a circle? Sandra was sulking again, so I asked her to come and make a stand next to me in the circle. Hadley didn't want to join initially, but I grabbed her hand and drew her into the circle. "Reach up high, up to the sky.... Reach down low, touch your stinky toes....". The girls all laugh while doing the high and low dance. All the girls closed their eyes. I started telling them about going to the park, imagining all the equipment and all the jungle gyms. The girls were so excited but quiet, listening to hear the rest of our imaginative play. I started singing "up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up" on a major scale. I swooped down with my voice back to the tonic. "What did I go on, girls?" The girls shrieked in delight. "The slide, you went on the slide," they all said. We did the trampoline and the swing with our voices, making lovely melodic contours. We then started playing charades in my music classroom as a class. This time, we learned to be a big group, not in smaller groups. The girls had to play on the jungle gym equipment with their voices, and then the class had to guess what the sounds depicted and the

described melodic contours. Hannah did the monkey bars, "up, up, up, across, across, down, down, down, down".

The hands were up, and the girls confidently guessed. Rosa guessed it right, and when it was her turn, she went up the ladder and down the fireman pole. Zara's melodic contours depicted the swing, and the girls got the hang of it. Tara was eager to show her jumping castle vocal contours. The imagination took the girls to rock climbing, see-saws and diving boards with a big splash at the end. Aurora even did a giant jungle gym where she climbed up, walked across, and jumped down. Sindi was sitting close to me today. She said that she was not feeling too well. Everyone carried on sharing their ideas with the class. The class was entirely fascinated by the activity. No off-task behaviour was evident, as everyone enjoyed the lesson. Upon reflection, Tisha found it a bit hard to hear what jungle gym she heard. Zara thought it was so much fun because she loved moving and letting everyone guess which jungle gym she was on.

What did I think?

Imagination is essential in a class and transports the girls to a happy place. Watching their faces during this activity showed their fun and joy of playing. Using the park is a great way to teach contours in the music class, and it also allows the girls to use and experiment with their voices without feeling aware of themselves. This lesson was fun and playful.

15 April 2024- Mrs K

"Can you make a circle? " Yes, we can", the girls sang back in a so-me-do pattern. So many girls were not feeling well. Many kids were absent due to swine flu, so many girls still attending didn't feel a hundred percent. "Reach up high, up to the sky... Reach down low, touch your stinky toes..." The girls all laughed as they did the high and low dance. Then, everyone closed their eyes. I began describing a visit to the park, imagining all the equipment and jungle gyms. The girls were excited but quiet, eager to hear more of our imaginative play. I started singing "up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up, up" on a major scale and then swooped down with my voice back to the tonic. "What did I go on, girls?" They shrieked in delight. "The slide, you went on the slide," they all said. Julie interrupted. She wanted to give Oakley the pop-up bracelet. It is like she knows you can have it when you are not feeling well. Upon asking why, she said, "Because my granny died". She gave her the bracelet to make her feel better because she was despondent. After everyone told me about how they lost their dogs, cats, aunties and birds, we visited the park. Julie was still very concerned about it. I gave her agency, and when she felt someone needed to regulate, she could hand them one of my self-regulation toys. When I did the melodic contour with my voice of the monkey bars, Julie was the first to raise her hand and excitedly shout out, "Monkey bars". Julie explained that she could hear it because she had listened so carefully. She said, "I knew it was monkey bars because you didn't do a whoooooop (like a swoop). I also didn't hear footsteps. I could hear it was the monkey bars". "Well done, my Julie, you are listening like a rock star", I said. It was Julie's turn to do the melodic contour, and she wasn't so sure. She rather gave her turn to Annie because she didn't feel too sure of herself. I told her it was fine and she must tell me when she wanted to use her turn. Annie volunteered to go.

Annie did a beautiful climbing up, walking across, and sliding down the contour. Julie guessed that it was a jungle gym, and she was right. This class was adamant that the rest had to close their eyes while the 'it' person did their vocal contours. Every single girl was completely engaged in the lesson. Julie was ready to take her turn but was scared that the other girls would peep when she did her contour, so she insisted on turning around and facing the wall while creating her vocal contour. Julie started. The girls were excited to guess. She went on the swing and sang beautifully, "whoooooop, woowoooooo, whoooooop, woowoooo". "See Julz, you don't even have to be shy, and you did so well", I tried to encourage her. Julie came to sit on my lap, very comfortable. She needed to feel my love and my approval. It is much easier with this sense of control in my lesson, where she does not interrupt the whole time. The very withdrawn child, Kinsley, raised her hand to volunteer her melodic contour. She made a slide with a lovely voice, first climbing up the stairs and then swooping. The girls were ready to guess, and Kinsley was proud of herself. Upon reflection, some girls said doing the jungle gyms was a bit hard because they felt scared and shy. Julie got off my lap and started spinning on the floor. Oakley quickly gave her a pop bracelet to help her regulate, and within a few seconds, Julie was sitting still, listening and contributing to the class again.

What did I think?

I enjoy seeing Julie's compassion towards the girls in her class. She has a very gentle, caring side that comes out when she is not overwhelmed and overstimulated. Being empathic also gives her confidence; she feels like she is in control and does not need to regulate herself. This enables Julie to participate in the music class because she is very musically proficient. Julie was also willing to perform or share her ideas but was anxious. This could only be dealt with when she could turn around and didn't need to face everyone. She felt a bit overwhelmed, but with the help of a regulation tool, Julie could be present again.

16 April 2024- Mrs K

The grade one girls practised for their concert, and during their music time, one of the classes had to attend a movement workshop with a professional choreographer. The other class arrived in my class, ready to do a group work activity. I prepped them before they arrived. This was to save time and to have more time for music. Jenny told me no one wants to be in a group with her. She told me she realised it is because she is bossy, and in her own words, she said, "It is because I never share and because I don't take turns". We had a good conversation, and she decided she wanted to try to share and give everyone a turn to participate in the group. The girls got ready in their groups to create one jungle gym they could play on with their voices. They will present this to their class. The girls were so excited. We reiterated that the main idea of group work is sharing, teamwork, and, most notably, taking turns. The class was quite rowdy at this stage from pure excitement. After I reminded the girls to use inside voices, they calmed down and started working on their projects.

I went to collaborate with the different groups. Julie was quite worried because she had torn a piece of paper by mistake, so I gave her another piece. There was more noise in the air than usual. I could see that the noise was a bit too loud for Julie. I next went to

Jenny, Bailey, and Amber's group, and they were taking turns creating. "Well done, Jenny, I am so proud of you", I whispered to her. Hazel and Kinsley were busy making horse-inspired see-saws that go "up, down, up, down", she demonstrated. Luna, Anna, Sage and Oakley made a slide that goes up and down.

Annie and Cath were very excited to make a slingshot of you lying in it. It pulls you down, and the next moment, you fly so high that you splash into the pool. Cath said, "We are working together nicely because Annie is talking so nicely to me". Yola and Aria made a rainbow slide. They were smiling and were so proud of their teamwork. Lorna was bouncing around from pride. Julie and Ally made two slides on the piece of paper that they wanted to connect with a zipline. The noise became unbearable for Julie as she stood up and tried to run out of the classroom. I stood by the door so that she couldn't escape. She had a little mischievous smile on her face, she started shouting and went to sit under my desk. The lesson was over, and I had to take her from under the desk. Once I got her from under the desk, I gave her my rose quartz stone to rub. She calmed down but said she didn't want to share her jungle gym with the class.

What did I think?

I think that Jenny's ability to reach an understanding of teamwork and the role she plays in a group was significant. She understood that everyone wants to be part of and contribute to a group. She also started to understand the importance of communication and sharing.

Julie was overstimulated by all the noise and excitement in the class. She was able to regulate.

17 April 2024- Miss T

I only had one class of grade ones again. The classes had swopped, and Mrs T's class had gone to the specialised choreographer. The class started by keeping a steady beat on the knees. I told them we must point and make eye contact to pass the beat around the circle. The girls had to focus and be aware of where the beat was. I switched Jason Mraz's "Have It All" and started keeping the invisible beat. I quickly changed the direction of the beat; this confused the girls a bit, but they quickly caught on. After they got used to keeping and sharing the invisible beat, I told the girls that they were allowed to change the direction twice and that everyone had two invisible change the direction cards in their pockets. The girls were nowhere at a time and rolling around while waiting for the beat. I made the beat more tangible and got a ball out to pass on the beat. This kept the girls more present, although they were flopping everywhere. Our next game was to pass the ball the first beat of every measure in a 4-meter song. I switched "Geronimo" on from Sheppard. The girls loved the music and were keen to keep the beat with their feet while waiting for the ball. I quickly introduced more balls to be passed around. There was excitement everywhere. This activity would be a bit easier with children with a strong sense of beat, maybe older kids. It was good fun, though. The girls had to respect the girls sitting next to them and show respect with a pass. The girls also had to be aware while preparing to receive and pass. This was a good exercise for non-verbal communication. The girls started to chant when the music

stopped "IT IS FUN, IT IS FUN" for a several times. Stella said it was a bit hard because of the "too many balls". Sindi was overstimulated entirely and was rolling around the class. I quickly got one of the regulation toys, which seemed to calm her down.

Rory said she loved it and wanted to do this daily activity. Amy said that she would make it easier for the other classes by saying, "It gets faster, and you need to watch what is going on both sides". Tisha suggests you "pass on the ball and concentrate on what's happening around you". Olga also said, "You must watch". Hannah loved all of it. She said she didn't have a favourite part. Emily thought it was fun and funny. Stella felt she understood her friends better because she knew what they were doing with the ball. Ziva said, "It was too fun, and I started understanding my friends". Rosa excitedly noted that it was fun because she had to take the ball and pass it "super fast".

What did I think?

Keeping the beat is very important and something that has not yet been fully consolidated. The grade 1 girls found it hard to maintain or count a steady beat, especially when they had to pass a ball (something physical). They loved the lesson and had lots of fun. This activity had valuable communication and relational lessons, such as respect and non-verbal communication.

ADDENDUM P: ATLAS.TI 24 COPY BUNDLE: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GRADE 1 REGGIO-INSPIRED MUSIC CLASSES

It is not vital to open the ATLAS copy bundles for examination. It is only additional information.

Link: [The Role of the Teacher in Relationship-driven Teaching and Learning in Grade 1 Reggio-inspired Music Classes](#)

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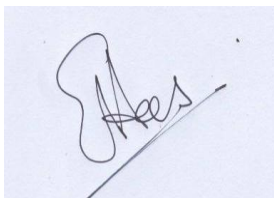
9 November 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I assisted **Ms Selmari Quinn** with the language editing of her doctoral thesis while she was preparing the draft manuscript for examination at the School of Music, North-West University. The title of the thesis is **The Role of the Teacher in Relationship-driven Teaching and Learning in Grade 1 Reggio-Inspired Music Classes**. Her promotors were Prof. Liesl van der Merwe (North-West University) and Prof. Mignon van Vreden (North-West University).

I went through the thesis making corrections and suggestions with respect to language usage, and restricted my editing to addressing such issues. Given the nature of the process, it is not necessary for me to see the final version, but I always remained available for consultation as long as necessary.

I may be contacted at the number/address below for further information or confidential confirmation.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature is stylized, starting with a large loop and ending with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

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26 July 2023