Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools: Building the capacity of teaching staff to deliver classroom music

A collaborative framework for establishing a creative music program in a special school in Sydney, NSW

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Signed

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Abstract

Music therapy has been shown to be adaptable across diverse areas of health and education. Some research has shown how collaboration between music therapists and educators in special school settings can grow an engaging musical culture, however there is little research about collaboration with support staff. Feedback was gathered from the teaching staff of three classes at a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) in NSW. Within an Action Research framework, participants collaboratively designed a classroom music program. Data was collected via focus group discussions, weekly online surveys and triangulated with the researcher's reflexive field journal. Thematic Analysis was applied to the data generating four over-arching themes about: listening inside the musical culture of a school; building capacity by accessing the music child; musicking for brain care and removing barriers to success. The research framework developed may be a useful model scaled up across similar settings. A set of 'delivery skills' were identified to be crucial to developing the capacity of the teaching staff to deliver the music program. These skills can be targeted and rehearsed within the developed framework in order to develop a practice of 'delivery without fear' amongst participants. The study could prove useful for pre-service teacher training and in the field of professional development in schools.

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Study Acronyms and Terms

Study Acronyms	
SLSO	Student Learning and Support Officer
SSP	School for Specific Purposes
NSW DoE	New South Wales Department of Education
AR	Action Research
CIQ	Critical Incident Questionnaire
NMT	Neurosequential Model of brain development
WSU	Western Sydney University
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FJ	Researcher Field Journal / field notes
TA	Thematic Analysis
Study terms	Definition
Knowledge transfer	Sharing of professional knowledge
Delivery skills	Simple skills required to deliver a music session
Pre-service training	University training for teachers
Teaching Staff	Qualified teachers and support staff

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the background and rationale for the study and an overview of the objectives and proposed Methodology. A brief summary of the following chapters is provided.

Rationale

A collaborative approach to the transfer of knowledge between allied health professionals and educators is a developing area relevant to music therapists working in the area of disability, especially in special education. This study explores how a music therapist can share their professional knowledge within an action research framework to address an observed need for quality support and training of teaching staff to deliver music programs in a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) in Sydney, New South Wales.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 The why: What inspired the investigation

Whilst employed as a teacher at this school, I have observed amongst colleagues a general reluctance to teach classroom music due to a perceived lack of confidence in their own musical skills. Research has shown there is no consistency in the pre-service training of generalist primary teachers in preparation to deliver music in the Tertiary Institutions of Australia (Hocking, 2009) This is partnered with the diminishing presence of music in the primary curriculum as a subject in its own right down to just one of five domains within a Creative Arts subject. This decline is

occurring despite the growing body of evidence that music is supportive of brain care and brain development (Collins 2014). The timing of this project's dissemination will approximately align with the projected rolling out of the long awaited NSW Department of Education's Creative Arts Syllabus and provide support for teaching staff to navigate this new syllabus with greater confidence. Knowing how music can access the students in an engaging, authentic and interactive way, I designed this study to explore how to build the capacity of the teaching staff in my own workplace to better support their students using music.

1.1.2 The how: What was involved in the study

I have been a registered music therapist employed in the school as a classroom teacher for three years, at the time of the study. It is common for music therapists to occupy a researcher as practitioner role due to the developing nature of the profession. I have experience in the reflexivity that this role requires, having completed a research project in a previous role. This study involved researching with colleagues at my place of employment, which introduced a level of complexity to the study. This may be viewed as a positive aspect as I have cultivated trusting working relationships with all potential participants, but also an aspect that will require considerable critical reflection. The study recruited participant teaching teams consisting of a teacher and their Student Learning & Support Officer (SLSO) with their classes, to design a classroom music program for their ongoing use and adaptability for other classes. This involved a process of knowledge sharing within a collaborative research framework that preferenced the experiences of participants, situating them as the experts.

1.1.3 The where: Description of the research setting

The site at which the research was conducted is a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) in Sydney, consisting of 61 primary and secondary students aged between 4 and 18. SSP school students account for less than 1% of the mainstream population in NSW Department of Education Schools, according to the mid-year census taken by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2019). SSPs provide intensive levels of support in a specialised educational setting. Learning support plans are collaboratively developed, implemented and monitored for individual students. All 61 students who attend this school have an intellectual disability and other associated support needs. Thirty one percent of students are second language learners, whilst many of the students have communication impairments. Students are placed at the school through the recommendations of a Department of Education placement panel in consultation with families. Classes are small, ranging from 4 – 8 students across 10 classes, each class is led by a teaching team consisting of a teacher and Student Learning and Support Officer (SLSO).

The primary classes cover Kindergarten to Year 6 including students age between 4-12. The teachers make relevant adaptations and adjustments to the mainstream NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) K-6 curriculum to afford the students the best access the curriculum content possible for their abilities. Secondary classes (years 7-12, students aged 12-18) follow the NSW DoE Life Skills Curriculum, with adjustments made to remove barriers for students to access content that is relevant to their learning needs. There were approximately 12 full time teachers and 15 full time learning support staff employed at the school at the time of the study, plus a number of temporary and casual teaching and support staff. Music is often embedded in the

delivery of other subjects at this school – in order to enhance counting skills, counting songs are played on the interactive whiteboard for example. External providers are engaged on a regular basis on a user-pays system funded by parents, so that the students can attend specialised musical experiences such as large group djembe drumming. It is common practice in a NSW public school to engage specialist music services to augment the music curriculum taught in the school. Students also attend signing choir led by teaching staff and some classes receive group music therapy sessions as part of my Relief from Face-to-Face teacher role.

1.1.4 Neurosequential model of brain care embedded in school

The school has a history of collaborative participation in professional learning and research. They have been a pilot school for developing a program collaboratively with another SSP and a Speech Pathologist. The program called the Passport for Learning is an assessment tool that comprehensively maps the learning progressions of all the students with complex intellectual disabilities across the domains of receptive and expressive language, and social and cognitive skills. This is a strengths-based evaluation system and forms the basis of planning and implementing content in order to deliver deeply personalised, meaningful and relevant learning programs for each student. The Communication Passport has been developed from the Neuro-Sequential Model (NMT) of brain development developed by Dr Bruce Perry, a child psychiatrist specialising in childhood trauma. The trauma-informed underpinning of the program provides an evidence-based approach to support students to self-regulate when their brain is in a state of hyperarousal (fight or flight) which is often accompanied by dysregulated behaviour.

The Passport for Learning is embedded across the school into every subject and learning area and all staff receive regular professional learning about implementation and assessment. As a result, the school has a highly specialised and experienced teaching staff (both teaching and support staff) when it comes to supporting students who have become dysregulated. The ethos at the school is to view student behaviour through a trauma-informed lens and how best to support healthy brain development for each student. Staff are also trained to get students 'In the Zone' an Occupational Therapy framework designed to support learning which focuses on how increased or decreased physical movement and sensory input can bring a student into a state physically and emotionally where they are best ready to learn. This program was another collaborative project with the same SSP and an Occupational Therapist. The school is already a recognised hub for collaborative research with embedded programs that will support the research aims of this study.

1.1.5 How music can support self-regulation

Approaching learning from a healthy brain development viewpoint means there is a focus on self-regulation in order to avoid or disrupt fight or flight messages from the primitive brain to the body. The NMT model recommends the use of repetitive rhythmic patterning which sends signals to the primitive brain that it is safe. Staff and students are regularly seen chanting rhythmic rhymes together as they walk in time around the school, patting knees, clapping or stomping feet to regular rhythmic beats together as a way of co-regulating. The researcher has observed how quickly the students respond and can regulate their responses. A lot of the students present with sensory processing issues and the rhythmic patterning embedded into how the staff approach to dysregulated students, is often an effective means of deescalating

potentially destructive behaviours. In group music therapy sessions with the students at school, I have noticed that the students are best able to engage as a group during drumming activities, especially those that feature simple rhythmic patterning. Being part of a group interaction is a challenging concept for the students with Autism who make up a large percentage of the school. I utilise drumming facilitator techniques from a Rhythm2Recovery facilitator course (Wood & Faulkner 2014) which is an Australian drumming program developed from the principles of Perry (2009). This study was developed out of an interest in investigating how to share this knowledge effectively with other teaching staff to further enhance their approaches to dysregulated students.

1.2 Study Aims & Objectives

Aims Statement

The study aims to support some of the teaching staff in a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) setting, to design and deliver a sustainable classroom music program.

Study Objectives

1. To provide timely support for educators to feel confident to use new musical techniques that might be initially beyond their skillset
2. This study aims build the capacity of the teaching staff to support their students with self-regulation using music.
3. To design a sustainable classroom music program that can be utilised across the school by other classes

The study aims and objectives will be explored in Chapter 2 locating where they fit in the music therapy and education literature in order to refine the research questions for the study, presented at the end of Chapter 2.

1.3 Proposed methodology

An action research framework (Stige & McFerran 2016) has been chosen to explore the objectives in this study. Action research is an approach that gives agency to participants to design their own program and be positioned as co-researchers in a project that is about them. Collaboration within action research shows respect within this process towards research participants and positions the researcher as a collaborator rather than an expert. Key to the cyclic nature of Action research is collecting data to inform the next stage, a very common approach in education (Brydon-Miller & Maguire 2009), therefore focus group discussions and online surveys have been chosen to collect data over the course of the project. The focus group discussion format has been chosen to encourage a team approach to delivering classroom music. It is anticipated this approach will elicit deeper verbal collaborative responses than individual interviews.

Brief weekly online surveys have been selected to capture meaningful moments in the music therapy sessions. Critical incidents captured in this way for each participant are able to be triangulated with data from a reflexive field journal, which will also provide key guidance for planning for further sessions. Focus group discussions and online surveys have also been chosen in order to be mindful of time restrictions of teachers and support learning staff and as such takes into account the research burden of the project. Teaching teams comprising the teacher and SLSO from three classes were recruited to participate in the study which took place over 9 weeks in Term 4. The students from each class were also involved as non-research participants as they attended the music sessions each week. No data was collected

from the students at any time and full permissions were sought from parents for their participation. Further explanation and description of the chosen Methodology will be outlined in Chapter 3.

1.5 Summary of Chapters

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the background, setting and rationale for the study, providing the objectives and some key terminology pertinent to the study. Chapter 2 explores and addresses the relevant literature across the music therapy, education and allied health fields, culminating in the presentation of the research questions. Chapter 3 details the methodology of the study and describes the cyclic nature of Action Research. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, Chapter 5 explores the findings in a discussion format and Chapter 6 responds to the research objectives, evaluating the study including limitations and implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of the literature is in two parts, firstly an overview of the research to form a theoretical base for the study and secondly a review of the relevant methodological approaches that led me to the design best suited to explore the research questions.
The first section is divided into three parts – part 1 explores the literature around music as therapy, the second, music in education and the third a combination of both – towards musicking for health in education. The second section of this literature review explores the collaborative research methodology literature in the fields of allied health, education and music therapy, culminating in the chosen research questions for the study.

2.1 Music as therapy

This section will situate where the study sits in the fields of music therapy and music education. A brief historical background to the field of music therapy is included as well as an overview of the main research branches of music therapy and also the particular philosophies in which my training and practice are grounded.

2.1.1 General introduction and the history of music therapy

Music has been used throughout the history of all continents to enact well-being and support health in human communities (Davis & Hadley 2015). Thousands of years before the term music therapy was coined in the mid-20th century, music was used to fulfill spiritual, religious healing and social roles in ancient societies (Beyers 2016). From the ancient Greeks through to contemporary times, physicians have written

about using music as part of medical treatment (Horden 2000). Using music therapeutically as a modern profession was evident in hospital wards early in the 19th century in different countries around the world. After the second world war musicians were in high demand to assist recovery and provide support for pain relief of returned injured soldiers in the US (Davis, Gfeller and Thaut 2008). In the 1950's the first professional music therapy organisations were formed in the United States and the United Kingdom, Europe, (Reschke-Hernández 2011), with the Australian Music Therapy Association established in 1975. Early pioneers of the music therapy profession in Australia included Ruth Bright, Denise Grocke and Enid Rowe to name a few (Grocke 2005).

Music therapy is defined in the Australian Music Therapists' Association (AMTA) as a research-based allied health profession in which music is used to actively support people as they aim to improve their health, functioning and well-being (AMTA website). Music therapy can help people of all ages to manage their physical and mental health and enhance their quality of life. Research has shown music therapy can improve mental health and wellbeing (Segall 2018), improve memory, attention and cognitive function (Detmer 2018), improve speech, communication and social skills (Leung, 2008), improve pain management (Magill-Levreault 1993). Music therapists work across medical, educational and a multitude of settings and many different branches and theoretical approaches have developed over the last century. Some examples of different theoretical approaches to music therapy are humanistic approaches, neurologic music therapy, community music therapy, developmental approaches and cognitive behavioural approaches (Wheeler 2015). Much research has been published across these domains and will be outlined in the next section.

2.1.2 Prevalent research approaches in music therapy

Music therapy has a proud tradition of evidence based practice and research has been published internationally across the domains of music therapy, medical, psychology, education (Baker 2015). Research has been conducted in a diverse range of clinical setting from Neonatal ICU (Maitre & Arnon 2020) to Oncology (Aasgaard 2000), Surgery recovery (Short, Gibb, Fildes & Holmes 2013), Stroke rehabilitation (Silveira, Dorsch, Thompson, & Tamplin 2020) Schools (Rickson 2010 & 2012), refugee programs (Hunt 2005) and Family centered settings (Jacobsen & Thompson 2017).

The challenges of empirical investigations with complex populations is a hallmark of music therapy research (McFerran, Lee, Steele & Bialocerkowski, 2009). This is a reflection on the diversity of the client base for music therapists employed at diverse institutional settings, spanning every stage of life, as well as the private and community settings as outlined in the previous section. Similarly, a wide spectrum exists in the literature ranging from the binary logic of objectively studying music (as a stimulus similar to pharmacology trials), to the generation of complex experiential knowledge arising from connecting moments of musical transcendence (Ansdell & Stige, 2018). The pursuit of evidence in music therapy has traditionally been linked with the medical model (Miyake 2014). For the purposes of this study the term medical model means a treatment-centered approach, modelled on the positivist medical culture of research that treats the pathology of an individual in order to enact change. The majority of music therapy authors, practitioners and educators in the mid-late 20th century aligned their approach with research that generated evidence for the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions, in an attempt to prove that the developing

music therapy profession was a valid intervention (McFerran, Hense, Medcalf, Murphy & Fairchild, 2017). Ansdell (2002) describes this approach as the consensus model and describes how a more flexible ecological understanding of the relationship between music and people, their health, illness and wellbeing is now evolving (Ansdell 2016). Aigen (2005) describes some of these approaches as music centered approaches which will be presented in the next section.

2.1.3 Humanist music therapy approaches

Several music-centered approaches have emerged alongside the mainstream medical treatment models, focusing on positioning music as the essential element in music therapy, an aspect that Aigen (2005) believes has been diluted by the abundance of consensus model research. These are generally acknowledged as humanist approaches that place great value on the inner voice and relational perspectives (Ansdell & Stige, 2018). These branches of music therapy challenge the ethos of using music as an intervention to alter symptomology or achieve a developmental goal. In music therapy, some of these approaches are: Community Music Therapy (Pavlicevic & Ansdell 2004), Resource-Oriented Music Therapy (Rolvsjord 2010) and Culture-Centered Music Therapy (Stige 2002) & Music Centered Music Therapy (Aigen, 2005).

One of the music-centered approaches to music therapy is Creative Music Therapy (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007). This improvisational approach featuring careful listening and musical responsiveness within a therapeutic relationship, builds on the belief that every human being has an inborn capacity to find meaning in musical experience, sometimes referred to as the music child (Nordoff & Robbins 1974 & 2007).Tacit

musicality is another term for this concept of the music child (Noone 2020). Another feature of creative music therapy central to this study's focus on positioning support workers as co-researchers, is the importance of a co-therapist to assist and support in the sessions (Fachner 2016). The creative music therapy approach positions the music therapist researcher as a facilitator in a collaborative process rather than an expert who requires consulting (Ansdell & Stige, 2018).

Section 2.1 has provided an overview of the music therapy literature leading to this study, Section 2.2 will examine the role of music in education and musical pre-service teacher training in generalist teacher university courses.

2.2 Moving away from music education in the classroom

Section 2.2 will examine the literature surrounding the worldwide trend in the reduction of music taught explicitly in schools, particularly in primary education, with a focus on the Australian education system and the current state of pre-service training in music for generalist primary teachers.

2.2.1 Diminishing Music in the primary classroom

The priority that music education is given in schools worldwide is trending downwards. (Petrova 2012, Russell-Bowie 2009) In Australia, this is shown by the decline of music being taught in primary classrooms first as a subject in its own right from the late 1800's up until 1994 in NSW, when it became 1 of 5 subjects rolled into one Creative Arts subject (Stevens, 2018). Queensland is the only state where music delivered by a specialist music teacher (Letts 2007), all other states in Australia expect generalist primary teachers to deliver the 5 separate specialist subjects of dance, visual arts, media arts, music and drama within the Creative Arts subject. In NSW, the Education Standards Authority (NESA) recommends 30 minutes a week of

curriculum time be spent teaching these subjects a week. This is a reflection of the increasing emphasis on what are considered the core subjects (Literacy, Numeracy and Science) to the detriment of other subjects such as music that are not tested using standardised tests (Petrova 2012). In contrast, research has shown learning an instrument improves academic results and wellbeing (Collins 2014, Crooke 2016, Edwards 2011, Batley 2018).

NSW primary educators are currently waiting on the rollout of the K-6 Creative Arts syllabus, which according to a draft consultation report (New South Wales Education Standards Authority 2018) gives early indications that the amount of time spent teaching music in classrooms is not likely to change. Thus, leaders of music education in schools must adopt a spirit of change-readiness (de Vries 2018) and work within the system to identify how to use latent resources such as music therapists working at schools who are already musical specialists.

2.2.2 Pre-service classroom music teacher training

A significant contemporary issue for music education in Australia and globally is how little training tertiary institutions provide the generalist primary teacher to deliver classroom music (Capaldo, Muscat & Tindall Ford 2014, Sinclair, Jeanneret & O'Toole 2009, Rohwer & Henry 2004). This is also not a new issue (Broudy 1990, Ernst 1962). In Australia, music as a subject is considered secondary to Literacy, Numeracy and Science (Ewing 2011, Bamford 2006). The specialist nature of music education and the associated musical instrument skills, goes some way to explaining why some teachers avoid delivering music (Holden & Button 2006, Seddon & Biasutti 2008). The quality and content of the primary music curriculums across

Australia are not so much the issue as is the amount of training that is received as part of teacher training courses. The New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) provides a guide that 2.1% of teaching time is spent delivering classroom music (approximately 30 minutes a week), yet a 2009 Federal Government report found that nationally pre-service teacher training courses spent only 1.5% of their coursework on music (Hocking, 2009). The study found a huge national discrepancy between universities ranging between 0 - 52 hours for pre-service music training for their entire course, with the average being 17 hours.

Another national report noted that the hours of pre-service training in Australian Universities have contracted significantly over the last ten years (Pascoe, Leong, MacCallum, Mackinlay, Marsh, Smith, Church & Winterton, 2005). As noted in Jeanneret & Ballenger (2013) it is the lecturers at these institutions who are deciding what to teach to students who range from little musical knowledge to instrumentalists with sound knowledge of musical concepts, before releasing their graduates to teach what is already a crowded curriculum (Pascoe et al 2005). Generalist teachers are expected to deliver a comprehensive music course in the NSW K-6 Creative Arts syllabus (2006) with outcomes for older primary students including the ability to read notation and compose simple melodies (Munday & Smith 2010). In order to teach these concepts, you have to you need to understand these concepts and read basic notation yourself (Jeanneret & Stevens -Ballanger 2013). One Australian study found an increase in pre-service teacher confidence when the focus was experiential involvement in creative music and moving away from teaching pure musical content (Heyworth 2011).

2.2.3 Lack of teacher confidence to deliver classroom music

Confidence is a significant factor worldwide impacting on how prepared generalist primary teachers feel to adequately deliver music in the primary classroom (Collins 2014, Russell-Bowie 2009, Hallam et al 2009, Stunell 2010). Self-perception of musicality and beliefs about musical skill levels play a large role here (de Vries 2018, Russell-Bowie 2009, Austin & Reinhardt 1999, Randles & Ballantyne 2018). This plays out in a larger scale in the community, how, in the Western World, music has become the domain of the talented expert, an object to be venerated or sold as a product (Ansdell 2016). Studies have found that graduates who feel more confident to teach have come from a background of formal musical training (Jeanneret 1997, Hallam et al. 2009). This increased competence is highlighted by Bartel, Cameron, Wiggins & Wiggins (2004) when they report that with minimal tertiary training, pre-service generalist primary teachers are expected to teach music when it was likely their scant 'formal' classroom training stopped around the age of 12. Bainger (2010) echoes this sentiment when she writes

> Today's teachers are a product of their own arts-poor education system. Having not been the recipients of good music education, teachers do not have the background skills or understandings of their own about music to draw upon, as they do in other learning areas. This also reinforces their low levels of confidence (Bainger, 2010, p.18).

Whilst teacher confidence and competence has been linked across multiple studies to musical background and training, a few researchers have proactively provided supplementary pre-service training (Collins 2014 & Thorne & Brasche 2020).

Section 2.2 outlined the current diminishing state of music education in schools in Australia and the huge variance across pre-service training at Australian Tertiary Institutions education

courses for generalist primary teachers. Research was also presented about the ensuing lack of confidence to teach music in the classroom, which is one of the issues this study aims to address. Section 2.3 sets out to further situate the study at the junction of music in therapy and music in education, introducing the musicology and music therapy concept of 'musicking' into this review.

2.3 Towards Musicking for health in education

Section 2.3 presents literature about the background of music therapy in schools to date as well as introducing the concept of a trauma-informed approach to education, significant to this study as the location of this study was at a school grounded in this neurorestorative approach to learning and well-being. The research field that is growing in this space is how the unique characteristics of Small's (1999) concept of 'musicking' can support healthy brain development, which is explored in 2.3.3.

2.3.1 School based music therapy

Music therapy has been utilised in schools worldwide over the last 50 years to support students to make progress in their educational program (Nordoff & Robbins 1971, Mcferran & Elefant 2012, Swanson 2020, Bunt 2003, McFerran 2015). In the UK for example, about half of the 700 registered music therapists in 2012 were working with children and most of them were working in school settings (Tomlinson et al 2012). In 2016, 22% of Australian music therapists worked in schools (Jack, Thompson, Hogan, Tamplin, Eager & Arns). A large number are working in special education (Ref). As a result of music therapists working in schools, literature has appeared delineating the differences between music education and music therapy (Woodward 2000, Smith 2018) and also where they interface (Bunt 2003, Salvador & Pasiali 2017). A school of thought has emerged about training music therapists or teachers

specifically to deliver music therapeutically in schools (Robertson 2000) as there are so many crossovers between the two. It is common for music therapy practitioners to also be qualified educators in this space, (Woodward 2000, Hall 2012,) such as Langan (2009) who developed a model linking music therapy outcomes to NSW Board of Studies Life Skills outcomes.

Traditionally music therapists working in special education provide programs with a focus on developing educational or therapeutic goals such as communication and physical skill acquisition (McFerran et al. 2009). Music therapy in special education has been grounded in the expert model, where the students are referred for music therapy interventions delivered by the music therapist to meet non-musical goals within a delineated therapy space and consistent session time (Bolger, McFerran & Stige 2018). Rickson (2010) notes that music therapy practice in schools is moving beyond the withdrawal-for-therapy model towards an ecological approach where "therapy is integrated into naturally occurring school tasks and routines" (Rickson, 2010, p.60).

2.3.2 Trauma-Informed approach to education

The school where the study is situated operates around a comprehensive communicative assessment system based on the Neurosequential Model of brain development (NMT) mentioned in Chapter 1 (Perry, 2009). This model has grown out of years of research with traumatised children and is one of three influential models in the domain of what is now termed the Trauma-Informed approach (McFerren et al 2021) The NMT model is based on the sequential way the brain organises from the 'bottom up' at birth – from brainstem to cortex with a sequential organisation and

functional capacity of the corresponding neural systems. When exposed to stressors, the brain will bypass any higher order functioning and operate solely from the brainstem which is focused entirely on survival. This is why children who are exhibiting over-sensitised behaviours are unable to perform any higher order functions such as modulating impulsivity or aggression which is also known as self-regulation (van der Kolk 2014).

In Australia, the NMT informs the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM), who provide ongoing training and professional development for educators both in mainstream and specialist settings to facilitate students' cognitive and behavioural change to improve both their academic and emotional and social wellbeing outcomes. In a SSP school, such as the one in this study, a whole school trauma-informed approach to learning based on Perry's NMT model, can positively impact across the four major communicative domains of cognitive, expressive, receptive and social interaction skills (Bloom & Bhargava 2004). The Trauma informed lens is relevant in a special education setting because of it's emphasis on safe relationships and calming the brain's sympathetic and parasympathetic responses to stressors. More about music and brain care is presented in the next section.

2.3.3 Using music to support healthy brain development

As more is known about how trauma impacts the brain, research has been appearing about the effects of music, especially rhythmic interventions, on the neuroplasticity in the brain (Stegemoller 2014, McFerran et al. 2020) More research is being published about how to use music in a trauma-informed way (Wentling & Behrens 2018). Perry's (2009) emphasis for intervention is on "somatosensory interventions that provide patterned, repetitive neural input" (p.243), using repetitive music and

movement interventions to address self-regulation problems and support healthy brain development. The use of music as a therapeutic medium is not exclusive to music therapy research or practice and a recent article (McFerran et al 2020) has explored the problematic nature of a 'trauma informed' approach using music therapeutically with vulnerable populations without evidence based practice to guide practitioners. As an attempt to bridge this gap this study proposes to encourage teaching staff to use music in a trauma informed way by approaching the making of music together through Small's (1999) concept of *Musicking* as being a verb rather than a noun, meaning to take part in whatever capacity in a musical performance – the meaning of which lies in the relationships established by the participants in the performance (Small 1999). Using music in this way, to model and practise and create safe, predictable, motivating interactions has the potential to help children develop neural plasticity, higher order processing and self-regulatory behaviours (Steggemoller 2014).

Outlined above is a comprehensive background to the study, signalling the gaps in the theoretical literature this study aims to address. The aim of the study is to build on this existing research about how a music therapist can collaborate with generalist classroom teachers to design and deliver a trauma- informed classroom music program. The next section explores the methodological literature for the most fitting collaborative approach for this study to adopt.

2.4 Towards Collaboration

The second part of this review of the literature examines the methodology of collaborative research in the fields of allied health, education and music therapy, with a focus on approaches for sharing professional knowledge. Some areas in the literature are identified as

gaps that can be built upon, leading to an outline of the primary and secondary research questions and chosen methodology.

2.4.1 Collaboration and knowledge transfer

Collaborative practice has long been an established feature in the field of allied health and an expected standard of practice for health practitioners as a widely acknowledged solution facilitating more effective and appropriate patient care (Seaton, Jones, Johnson & Francis 2021). Allied health professions include but are not limited to occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, social work, podiatry and pharmacy (Turnbull, Grimmer-Somers, Kumar, May, Law & Ashworth, 2009). Most recently in Australia, music therapy is now professionally accredited with Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA). Allied health professionals often work in healthcare and education settings as part of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary teams depending on the amount of different professions involved and the level of professional knowledge that is being shared (Short & Heiderscheit 2016). Collaborative research between professionals in allied health is common practice, as they are often involved in a holistic team approach to patients, students and clients depending on the setting. Some examples of collaborative allied health research involving music therapy are physiotherapy and neurologic music therapy (Rice & Johnson 2013), music therapy and gynaecology (Short, Andreadis & Cheung 2020), music therapy and occupational therapy (Twyford & Watters 2016) and music therapy and speech pathology (Leung 2008). Short, Holdgate, Ahern, & Morris (2009) report that working in an interprofessional research group can be more rewarding and productive than working alone. Some music therapists in Australia are working and researching collaboratively within transdisciplinary teams in special education. An exploration of the dynamics within a

transdisciplinary team from a music therapist viewpoint, reflected on the benefits of developing trusting working relationships with support staff as being as important as those that are developed with other professionals in the team (Arns & Thompson, 2019). References to support staff working in special education or other disability settings being engaged as research participants are infrequent in the research literature (Strange 2016), which seems counter-intuitive considering they are the usually the main communication partner for students who are often non-verbal.

The concept of Knowledge Transfer or Knowledge Translation or role-release is a feature of many collaborative investigations in allied health (Scott, Albrecht, O'Leary et al, 2012). Role release occurs when different professionals actively support other professionals to become proficient in selected methods from their own discipline (McFerran, Thompson & Bolger, 2016). This isn't a new concept, (Lyon & Lyon 1980, Dunn 1996). King, Strachan, Tucker, Duwyn, Desserud, & Shillington (2009) go so far as to say that a team is not truly transdisciplinary in practice until a process of role release is occurring. Role release requires sharing of expertise, valuing the perspectives, knowledge, and skills of those from other disciplines. King et al (2009) suggest this can occur on a spectrum from role extension, role enrichment, role support, role expansion, role exchange to finally role release. The occupational therapy program In The Zone utilised at the school where the research is taking place is an example of collaborative practice and research involving significant role release in terms of occupational therapy techniques being imparted to teaching staff to apply in their everyday practice.

2.4.2 Collaborative research in education and Action Research

Educators have collaborated in practice and research for decades. In what used to be called team deliberation, Lieberman (1986) reports on half a century of organisational change that was affected when teachers worked and researched collaboratively. The education sector is full of research in the search for what is termed 'best practice' often defined as evidence based and data driven (Biesta, 2007). Christianakis (2010) notes that classrooms are not scientific laboratories but complex social settings, better suited to collaborative research than limiting experimental approaches such as Randomised Control Trials, instead breaking down historical divisions between academic institutions and public schools. From a pre-service teacher point of view, a systematic review of the education action research literature concluded that shared inquiry is shown to create less hierarchical partnerships between pre-service and in-service teachers in a way that expands the pre-service teachers' knowledge (Willegems, Consuegra, Struyven & Engels 2017). Clinton, Aston & Quach (2018) review collaborative research in education in Australia in terms of knowledge translation and dissemination - where the researchers are practitioners (teachers) who are involved in the design and implementation of the research. In another systematic review of teacher collaboration, a continuum or spectrum of collegial collaboration was conceptualised from the literature and acknowledges that the challenges of collaborative research are outweighed by the benefits to student learning (Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes & Kyndt 2015). Some of the challenges of collaborative research in education in Australia were revealed to be lack of experience in collaboration or collaborative research, lack of time and resources (Clinton et al 2018).

Action research in education can involve a single practitioner but it is more often a collaborative enquiry focusing on bringing about change in practice, improving

student outcomes and empowering teachers (Mills 2017). Action Research has played a major role in educational research in Australia (Bobis & Erwing, (2017). Manfra (2019) explores how the successful efforts to change practice through action research have demonstrated the value of engaging teachers as active participants in education research. Manfra explains that as part of the cyclic nature of Action Research (AR), teachers are situated as learners. When teachers are situated as self-reflective learners such as when evaluation is combined with action research this becomes reflexive practice and when put in the context of Action Research forms a valuable combination (Badia 2017, Aspland, Macpherson, Proudford & Whitmore 1996). Brookfield (1995 & 2007) was a pioneer of critically reflective teaching practice and developed a Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) for educators to gather feedback about their teaching and reflect on their practice (Brookfield 2006).

2.4.3 Collaborative research in music therapy, Action Research

In a comprehensive review of the literature of music therapy school consultation, Rickson (2010) describes collaboration in music therapy as the process of working jointly with others, sharing the responsibility for systematic planning, joint problem solving and exchanging of resources. A review of the interprofessional collaborative literature concluded that more interprofessional collaborative research is needed to continue to advance the field of music therapy in the future (Short & Heiderscheit 2016). Some examples of collaborative research in music therapy can be found at the interface of neuroscience and music therapy (O'Kelly, 2016) engaging clients with a disability (Molyneux, Koo, Piggot-Irvine, Talmage, Travaglia, & Willis, 2012), families of clients (Procter 2005), Psychology (Lightstone, Bailey & Voros 2015), music therapy with marginalised young people (Bolger 2015).

Action research is an umbrella term for a collaborative research approaches dealing with needs for change in lay and professional practice (McFerran & Stige, 2016). Action research is often chosen as a collaborative approach to research in music therapy that can involve a whole team of professionals or participants as co-researchers. The notion of participation prevalent in Action Research is focused on fostering capacity and removing barriers in order for participants' voices to be authentically heard (Stige & McFerran 2016). Some examples of Action research in music therapy are (Elefant 2010, Hunt 2010, Rickson 2009, Williams 2006 & Baker 2007). Rickson and McFerran (2014) have developed an approach which involves reflecting on participants' stories to understand how they might be engaging with and/or sustaining music therapy practices in schools. The voices are captured in cycles of action and reflection within a "relational musicking approach" (Rickson and McFerran, 2014, p.50).

2.4.4 Building Capacity of research participants and the link to sustainability

It has been demonstrated in a small scale study (deVries 2015) that Australian generalist primary school teachers can and are willing to teach music, if provided with an environment that facilitates this teaching. Other studies have shown the impact of formal musical and pre-service training as well as existing conception of music education and musical self-efficacy on the capacity of teachers to deliver music in Australia (Collins 2012) and the United Kingdom (Hennessy 2000). Action Research, can build capacity in research participants as the researcher is not positioned as a detached scientific expert but as a collaborative research partner and advocate for change (Nelson, Poland, Murray & Tyndale, 2004). Knowledge sharing or knowledge

translation has been shown to occur in the action phase of this type of research (Bennett et al., 2016). Bennett et al. identified a major barrier to successful knowledge translation between allied health professionals as being participants' beliefs about their capabilities and how understanding barriers such as this was crucial in an approach to any collaborative research. Steele, Crooke & McFerran (2020) conducted a comprehensive Critical Interpretive Synthesis of the literature related to music therapist teacher support programs, unearthing an unbalanced focus on student needs and outcomes. They recommend this focus be trained on the teachers, their wellbeing and agency, in an attempt to sustain the outcomes after the music therapist support program has finished. In the context of special education there is little research about how including support staff in music therapy teacher support projects can affect sustainability and success of programs.

McFerran, Hattie & Crooke (2018), outline factors that are crucial for sustainability for/of school arts programs, some of which are resources, school leadership support, student and staff capacity, and community connections. Bolger, McFerran & Stige (2018) note the importance of deliberate and careful relationship development, in order to establish participants to *buy in* to a collaborative program. In an earlier article Bolger (2015) explored how participants' concepts of ownership and commitment can be fostered in a meaningful way, being involved as a collaborator in research that is about them, but most importantly how her research could continue to have an impact after the project had finished. The abovementioned research aspects are core components of Action Research, which have led me to engage with this sustainable and collaborative approach as a suitable methodological framework to investigate the research questions that are outlined in the next section.

2.5 Research Questions

Some small gaps in the research have been identified at the junctions of music therapy research, critical reflective educational research, transdisciplinary research and research about the trauma-informed approach to education. The research questions have been designed to address and bridge these gaps, they are presented below.

Primary Question

An exploration of how a classroom music program could be developed and implemented collaboratively by a music therapist in a special school setting.

Secondary Questions

1. How could a collaborative approach build the capacity of teaching staff with the confidence and skills to deliver an engaging classroom music program?
2. How might a collaborative approach to planning a classroom music program support over-sensitised students with self-regulation?
3. What could be the factors needed for the program to be implemented in a way that is sustainable and replicable across the pedagogy of this school setting?

A review of the literature in the fields of music therapy and pre-service teacher training and education, has revealed collaborative research to be a common approach to reflective practice in these domains. Chapter three will outline the methodological approach of Action Research and the rationale around the chosen approach to data analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The study research questions have been outlined in Chapter 2 along with an overview of the methodology in Chapter 1. The following chapter provides further details of the research design, ethics approval, data collection and analysis processes comprising the methodology utilised in the study to address the research questions.

3.1 Rationale for Action Research

Action Research (AR) has been chosen as the methodology best suited to address the research questions. It gives participants a role as well as a voice in the decision making process that is ultimately about themselves. Kurt Lewin, a German / American social psychologist presented the first theory of action research in the early 1940's (Greenwood & Levin 1998). With an emphasis on the authentic nature of stakeholder knowledge, AR combines research and action through a process that cycles through an action phase, a critical reflection phase and a planning phase, before repeating again and again as required. Participants become active-researchers instead of passive information providers, creating more "horizontal relationships" between professionals and colleagues (Anderson, 2017), which is synonymous with the concept of knowledge transfer in Section (2.4.1). For the researcher practitioner, AR can provide deep insights into the context of the research, however a reflexive stance must be maintained in order to balance the tensions that can arise. Tensions for the researcher practitioner could emerge around being uncomfortable critically reflecting one's personal practice and how much impact existing interpersonal relationships with colleagues have on the collaborative approach. Another possible tension is the issue of ample time and the

barriers to adequate time given to the research, such as timetabling constraints or enabling factors such as supportive leadership staff. Issues of time were addressed during the ethics phase of the study.

Action research is relevant in educational settings and brings about more meaningful learning and change for staff and students than traditional research (Jacobs 2016). Following in the tradition of music therapy researchers and education researchers who have used AR as an approach as mentioned in sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3, allows the findings of this study to be compared to a large body of collaborative research. Following is a description of the setting and overview of the design of the study incorporating the Action Research approach.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Study Overview

The project was designed to take place within a school term for the duration of 10 weeks. Three 30 minute focus group discussions (FGD's) were conducted in weeks 1, 5 & 10 with the 6 teaching staff participants (3 teachers and 3 SLSO's). I facilitated a 30 minute music session with the 3 class groups each week and gradually handed over to the teaching team to lead the sessions as they felt comfortable. See Table 1. Further data was collected via weekly online surveys after each music session in addition to field journal entries for reflection and to inform subsequent sessions.

Table 1

Overview of Study Timeline

Week	Action Research Phase
1	**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 1**
2	AR phase 1 Music Session 1
3	AR phase 1 Music Session 2

4	AR phase 1 Music Session 3
5	AR phase 1 Music Session 4
5	**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 2**
6	AR phase 2 Music Session 1
7	AR phase 2 Music Session 2
8	AR phase 2 Music Session 3
9	AR phase 2 Music Session 4
10	**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 3**

3.3 Music therapy sessions

3.3.1 Background

The students in the participating classes have all over the past two years been participants in group music therapy sessions with me in my role as Release from Face to Face (RFF) teacher. The age range of the students was 4 – 12 as all the classes were recruited from the primary section of the school. All 3 of the SLSO participants in this study have assisted as co-therapists in music therapy class sessions over the two years leading up to the study and are familiar with the structure of some of my preferred musical activities. The teachers were not present in these sessions and unfamiliar with most of the musical material and activities presented in the study's music sessions.

3.3.2 Structure

The sessions were clearly framed with a greeting and a good-bye / finish song to signal the beginning and the end of the session. All the sessions included elements of singing, playing small hand percussion instruments and movement activities to live or recorded music. The sequence followed was always a greeting song – a movement

song – a small hand percussion ‘shaking’ song – a drum song – goodbye/finished song. The music was a mixture of new and familiar music. Table 2 provides an example of some of the songs and activities of a typical music therapy session in this setting. An extra visual and physical cue for the session being finished was the use of the parachute in the goodbye song.

Table 2

A Typical Music Therapy Session for a Special Education Setting.

Musical Activity	Description	Notes / Purpose / Examples
Greeting Song	A familiar hello song where each student has opportunity to say/sing/play hello to staff and peers.	Signalling the beginning of each session to provide structure and opportunity to practise verbal greetings, eye contact and group interaction.
Movement or Body Percussion song	Live songs or recorded music, structured to encourage movement	A warm-up song to get ‘In the Zone’ for music eg. Shake your sillies out, Let’s go fly a kite, Kye Kye Khule.
‘Shaking’ song / Hand percussion	Using small hand percussion eg. egg shakers or hand / wrist bells	Working on stopping together, watching and listening for musical and visual cues
	Drum song for small hand drums and soft beaters. Either a single drum is passed around or all students hold their own.	Working on turn taking, waiting, listening and repeating drum patterns
Parachute songs / activities	Students either lie down underneath parachute or hold the outside	A physical / visual cue (parachute) signalling the end of the session. Using slow regular breathing paced songs or recorded music to bring the session to a close in a calming way. Eg – I can sing a rainbow, Twinkle, Carnival of the Animals (Aquarium).

3.3.3 Research participant involvement

Over the course of 8 sessions, each teaching team and their students were introduced to and taught the correct way to play the simple untuned percussion instruments utilised in the classroom music program. The opinions of the participants were actively solicited with appropriate questioning (if possible, in real time) about what worked and what didn’t. Some common prompts and questions were ‘Do you think this (musical activity) works?’ ‘What do you think student A finds dysregulating

about this (musical activity)?' and 'How do you feel about leading this (musical activity) next week?' Research participants were encouraged to sing as they were playing and moving, a little more each week as their comfort levels improved with familiarity of the content and structure of the sessions. By week 7 of the study, each teaching team were running the sessions themselves.

3.4 Resources

Research scholarship funding from Western Sydney University (WSU) was used to resource the project with new musical instruments, some of which I gifted to the school in the form of three class percussion kits after the project had finished, in acknowledgement of the time and energy the staff volunteered to the project.

3.4.1 Music therapy resources

Small hand percussion instruments used in the project included wooden claves, castanets, egg shakers and hand bells. A set of djembe drums and an assortment of small hand drums were also utilised each session. Two of the djembes were borrowed and six smaller stackable djembe drums were purchased in order for each student and participant to have their own large drum. The school provided a sturdy trolley from the school for storage, ease of transporting and packing away the instruments, as well as a access to a locked storage facility.

An important digital resource was the Notebook software program for the Interactive Whiteboards which are placed in each classroom and used extensively across the school. This program is essentially a word processing software program compatible with the touch screen capacity of the whiteboards. Each class was provided with their own music file stored on the school's shared drive, tailored to their music session.

These files featured Boardmaker pictures (a software program utilised in special education featuring simple symbolic representations of objects) and links to YouTube or pre-recorded videos, essentially acting as a visual timetable when displayed on the whiteboard. Figure 1 shows a typical slide. I used iMovie (an online move creation app) to create rolling karaoke like text for some of the videos, making it easy for staff to see the lyrics if they had forgotten them. A video was also recorded with me leading the 'Shaker Song' to provide some support for a well-loved song amongst the students, that can only be presented with the guitar as the accompanying instrument. One teacher did learn it herself on the guitar and did not require this level of support.

Figure 1.

A Typical Notebook File

3.4.2 Research resources

Focus group discussions were recorded using the Voice Memo app on my iPad device. Due to Covid-19, the first of these discussions was conducted remotely using Zoom instead of face to face. The recordings of these sessions were transcribed into Excel and later Word onto my laptop. The online surveys were created using Qualtrics software, an online qualitative data survey generator accessed via Western Sydney University (WSU) researcher resources. A link was created in Qualtrics to text to the

participants' mobile phones after each session to prompt them to complete the brief survey using their own portable device for convenience. Field notes were kept by the on an iPad using the Notability app and a digital pencil. These handwritten notes were converted to digital text by Notability and imported into Word at a later date. WhatsApp (a mobile device group communication app) was also utilised to schedule focus group discussions and sort logistics out as a group when they arose. I had access to online NVivo software, accessible through WSU research resources, for manual coding in the data analysis phase of the project.

3.5 Participants and recruitment

3.5.1 Participants

The breakup of classes and further demographic information about teaching staff follows. Classes are grouped according to learning needs and do not necessarily follow the usual division between primary and secondary as found in mainstream education settings. Each class has a teacher and SLSO. Some of the teachers are generalist primary trained, some have secondary teaching qualifications, others again have a post graduate Masters degree in Special Education. The SLSO's have a Certificate 3 or 4 in Education Support as well as various certificates in first aid, specialist medical feeding procedures, manual handling training and are well versed in the Passport for Learning language and framework. The teachers are responsible for the programming and delivering of the curriculum whilst the SLSO'S support them in this role by managing the physical needs as well as supporting the students in their learning. In my observations working at the school, I have noticed how thoroughly these teaching teams are familiar know their students' needs, communication cues. It is this shared knowledge and co-operative relationship that led me to invite both

SLSO's and teachers to participate in the project. Two class teaching teams were initially selected as per the recruitment process described in the next section. These two classes were comprised predominantly of students being taught from Stage 1 and 2 of the NSW DoE Primary curriculum.

3.5.2 Recruitment Process

The school leadership team (Acting Principals and Assistant Principals) were verbally briefed on the project as well as provided with a more detailed information sheet (Appendix 1). A recruitment email and information sheet (Appendix 2) was sent to all permanent and temporary contract staff responsible for a class, providing them with the opportunity to register their interest via return email to the school leadership team. Relieving or casual teachers not responsible for programming curriculum content were excluded from the project. The school leadership team initially selected the staff from two Junior classes from the expressions of interest received, based on availability, suitability and least disruption to the school timetable. The decision was made as part of the ethics approval process that the executive team would select participating classes from the expressions of interest so Icould remain at arm's length from the process. The selected participants were provided with a more detailed information sheet and explanation of the details of extended consent as well as the consent form and given a week to consider and return (Appendix 3).

After the first focus group discussion, an amendment was made to add another teacher and SLSO group from the expression of interests in order to provide a richer data pool and enable triangulation of the data collected. This third teaching team were responsible for the youngest class in the school, comprising students being taught from Early Stage 1 of the Primary curriculum.

3.5.3 Non-research participants

No data was collected from the students in the classes but due to the vulnerable nature of these students, and also being a NSW Department of Education requirement, the parents and carers of the students in participating classes were provided with an information sheet and consent form for their children to be present at the time of the research. (Appendix 4). These documents explained that at no time was data being collected from, or about the students and that if a student indicated verbally or non-verbally a wish not to be part of the music therapy sessions, that this request would be respected and accommodated.

3.5.4 Additional Key Informant group

An amendment was also sought for an additional group to be added to the project after the data collection had commenced. The Principal and Acting Principal were invited to participate in a short (30 minute) focus group discussion as Key Informants, forming a fourth Focus Group Discussion (FG4). Their input was sought to further contextualise the project by providing more information about the development of the music culture in the school. As university qualified educators, both with a post graduate Masters degree in special education, their information was added to the data about the music component of their pre-service training.

3.6 Ethics approval

The study was approved by the Western Sydney University Human Resources Ethics Committee and the NSW State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP).

3.6.1 Ethics approval process

Processes were put in place to ensure the highest standard of ethics was adhered to, especially as the study involved children and young people who were also considered a vulnerable population (people with a cognitive impairment, intellectual disability or mental illness). Even though the students were considered non-research participants, their parents / guardians were provided with an information and consent form (Appendix 5) to read and complete, in order for their child to be able to be in the same room whilst the research project was occurring. Other processes such as deidentifying transcript data and providing the option for participants to review, reword or withdraw any of their direct quotes planned for use in this report, were put in place to ensure the participants felt in control of their level of anonymity given the small amount of participants in the study. For further information about the extended consent the participants gave in writing before the study commenced, please see Appendix 6.

3.6.2 Risks and Benefits

One of the risks identified by the ethics processes was the time burden on the teaching staff and their respective classes. The original design was revised down from two sessions to one a week during the ethics approval process to match the current allocation time for music in the school's curriculum. It was also agreed during this revision process, that the time spent collaboratively planning a unit of work actually ended up saving time for these participants and their non-participant colleagues who gained a unit of music ready to adapt for their new class in the new year.

Another element of risk identified was that participants may feel uncertain about their musical ability and level of comfort singing and playing instruments in front of others. I addressed this uncertainty by modelling and demonstrating what worked with the

students and giving non-threatening opportunities for participants to explore these as part of an interactive group setting. Including SLSO's as participants was a deliberate strategy to encourage a team approach to classroom music delivery. The risk of discomfort for teaching staff was lowered by having a partner to practise singing and leading the class with. The potential risk of spreading infection by sharing musical instruments was mitigated by following the strict Covid-19 procedures the school already had in place, such as wiping instruments down after each session with disinfectant wipes and having enough instruments so students didn't have to share.

3.7 Data Collection

Data collection occurred throughout the study via focus group discussions, online surveys and reflections on weekly sessions kept in my field journal.

3.7.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are a valuable tool in collaborative qualitative research (Smith 1995). The semi-structured, open-ended questions of the focus group discussion format was chosen to preference authenticity and experiential knowledge in keeping with the Action Research approach. This was chosen to elicit deeper verbal collaborative responses than individual interviews. Three focus group discussions were planned to coincide with the beginning, middle and end of the data collection phase, framing the 2 x 4 week cycles of reflection, planning and action, see Table 1. The use of semi-structured interview guides are standard practice in focus group discussions (Smith 1995). Broad questions were asked to generate discussion about participants' personal musical backgrounds, knowledge, formal training and skills to ascertain their level of confidence in regards to using music in the classroom. Questions about the quality and content of the teacher participants' pre-service music

training led into questions prompting recollection of how prepared they felt to deliver classroom music upon graduating university. Another broad area of questioning was designed to make the participants reflect on their observations of student self-regulation and dysregulation and if they had noticed anything specific to music in this regard. Scripts for all focus groups can be found in Appendix 7. All focus group discussions were scheduled to be 30 minutes in length and conducted in person in the school library after school, at a mutually convenient time.

3.7.2 Online surveys

A brief online survey was provided for the participants to complete after each music therapy session. The same five questions were asked each week modelled on the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) developed by Brookfield (1995) as part of his model of critical reflection for adult learners in education. This tool was chosen this tool to complement the critically reflective environment fostered already in the school. The original script of the survey was slightly adapted to reflect musical activities instead of learning activities and asked the participant to briefly note the moments they felt the most engaged, distant, affirmed, confused and surprised by the musical activities in the sessions, see Appendix 8. The intent of the CIQ was to pinpoint meaningful moments for participants in the sessions to cross-check with the field notes. Responses were anonymous in an attempt to encourage honest feedback about all the meaningful moments, including when the participants felt distanced from, surprised, confused or puzzled by the musical activities. Qualtrics was chosen for the survey collection tool as recommended by WSU for reliable data privacy and security, but also for ease of creating a mobile friendly format, which was anticipated to collect more responses by virtue of convenience.

3.7.3 Researcher field journal

Immediately after each music session, 20-30 minutes was spent writing about the moments and levels of musical engagement I noticed, as well as what moments in the session I felt distanced, surprised and confused about, loosely matching the framework of the CIQ for greater ease of cross-referencing the CIQ survey responses. The field journal was also used as a tool to reflect on the preceding session and plan for the next session.

3.7.4 Data storage and security

No data was generated on paper during this study, all collected data was digital and stored according to a data storage plan approved during the ethics process. The main aspects of this plan were that for the duration of the data collection and analysis period, all collected data was stored on my password protected and biometrically secured laptop. All the data was deidentified and uploaded after submission to WSU's Cloudstor storage facility where it will be stored for five years before being securely destroyed. At the time the data was uploaded, all data files were permanently erased from my laptop. The data was gathered from three sources, individual online surveys, focus group discussions and researcher field notes in order to capture different dimensions of the participants' experiences and reflections for triangulation in the data analysis phase of the study.

3.8 Data analysis approach

The small scale of this study meant that I was immersed and involved in the whole process of data collection, transcription, coding and analysis and dissemination. Being a researcher

practitioner, I was situated inside the study by design, meaning that the approach to all aspects of the study was informed by the same conceptual philosophies as I apply in my music therapy practice. As mentioned in Section 2.1.3 my training was centered within the Humanist music centered approach of Creative Music Therapy, with a focus on accessing the music child within everyone. This is a strengths based, inductive and intuitive approach with an emphasis on reflexivity, which is what is required when acting as both a researcher and a practitioner and this is the lens I employed to approach the data analysis.

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) is an umbrella term for the many different approaches for capturing patterns or themes across qualitative datasets (Braun & Clarke 2019). The transcribed data was analysed according the principles of Clarke and Braun (2013) and Braun and Clarke (2006), following their 6-step process outlined below.

1. *Familiarisation with the data*: focus group discussion audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher. The scripts from the Focus Group Discussions and the Online Critical Incident Surveys were read a number of times to become familiar with the responses. This was an active process which allowed for meanings and patterns to emerge from the data. These initial ideas were noted in the field journal.
2. *Generating initial codes*: all data extracts were manually organised into meaningful groups, to develop some initial codes. Care was taken to include all extracts and some extracts were coded multiple times as well as to avoid simple summarising of the data, know as domain summaries.

3. *Searching for themes*: the data analysis was re-focused at a broader level and codes organised into possible themes using a mind-map. Relationships between codes were identified and combined, to form central themes.
4. *Reviewing themes:* Emerging themes were reviewed and refined using a mind-map. The entire transcripts were re-read at this stage to ensure the refined themes aligned with the data set.
5. *Defining and naming the themes:* The final themes were refined and defined using a detailed written analysis which identified the essence of each theme.
6. *Writing up:* The results were placed in context with the current literature and a detailed written report completed including examples from the data set as evidence for important and interesting ideas that emerged during the course of the thematic analysis.

3.8.2 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2020) reflected on how their Thematic Analysis model had developed since 2006 and have clarified some of the phrases and the approach, renaming it Reflexive Thematic Analysis in order to facilitate better practice. The steps remain the same, however the authors emphasise the importance of the researcher's subjectivity as an analytic resource and their reflexive engagement with theory, data and interpretation. What this means is researchers need to signal what theoretical assumptions are informing their analysis and to acknowledge through what lens the data is being firstly coded and then interpreted.

3.8.3 Coding and analysis process

During the initial familiarisation the focus group discussion transcripts were entered into Excel, making initial transcription notes in another column. Critical Incident

Questionnaire and Field Journal data were exported into separate Excel spreadsheets for familiarisation as well. During these first few read throughs, I coded the data semantically for surface meanings. At this point of familiarisation, 'I-Poems' (Kara 2015) were created for all participants. All the 'I' statements from each participant were grouped together into a poem (see section 5.2.1 for an example) as a creative way of engaging with the data on a deeper level by foregrounding the voices that participants use to talk about themselves.

After some broad general themes were identified, the data was uploaded into NVivo for initial auto-coding by speaker the data was coded and re-coded as themes and patterns began to form as part of an inductive approach to theme generation. See Figure 2 for examples of coding and recoding from January 2020 to March 2020 as meanings became clearer with subsequent engagement with the data. The themes were transferred to a mind-mapping software application called Miro (Figure 3) for visual representation and further review (Braun & Clarke 2006 step 4). The data was revisited, re-tagged and reorganised as the final overarching themes were refined and defined (Braun & Clarke 2006 step 5) to capture the meaning of their smaller component themes.

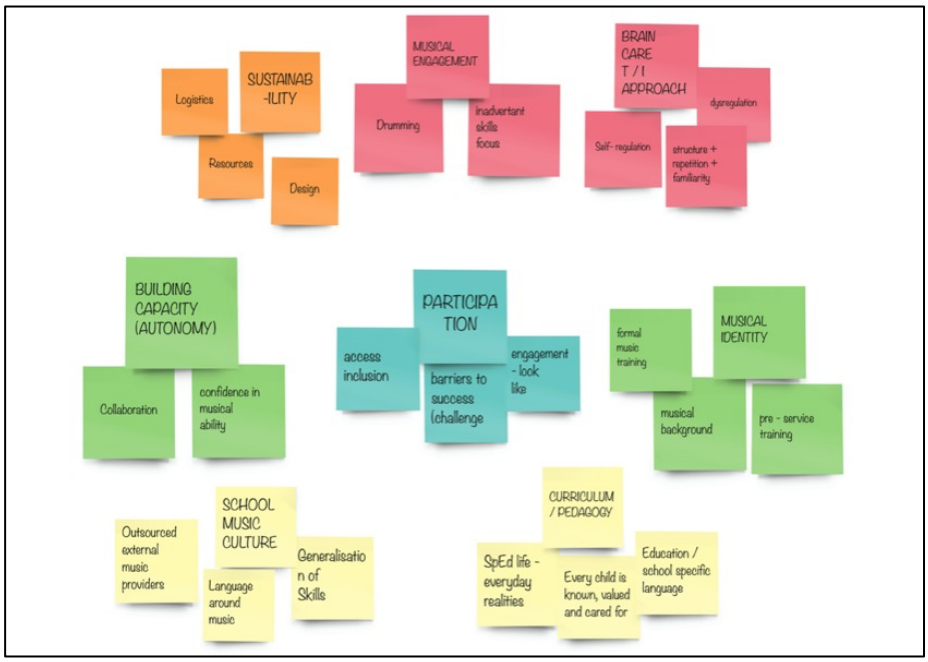
Figure 2

Screenshots of NVivo Code List Two Months Apart

Screenshot from NVivo 15 January 2021	Screenshot from NVivo 15 March 2021
challenging students dysregulation engagement - looks like participation self-regulation capacity & autonomy confidence in musical... musical identity formal musical training musical background access & inclusion musical engagement skills being focused on Collaboration Curriculum Pedagogy SpEd lyfe - everyday re... design pre-service training restorative neurology School music culture structure and repetition sustainability	participation access & inclusion barriers to success (challenging behaviours) engagement - looks like building capacity & autonomy Collaboration confidence in musical ability musical identity formal musical training musical background pre-service training design Logistics Researcher Musings - code better Resources sustainability brain care, trauma informed aproach dysregulation self-regulation structure and repetition and familiarity musical engagement Drumming skills being focused on inadvertantly as well Curriculum Pedagogy Every child is known valued and cared for School specific language SpEd lyfe - everyday realities School music culture Generalisation of skills Language around music outsourced external music providers

Figure 3.

Themes in March 2021 Transferred into Miro Mindmapping Software



During this intensive data analysis phase, four overarching themes were generated from the data, each with their own themes and sub-themes, some of which were further broken down into elements. Rereading and reconnecting with the data regularly, meant that I was able to remain reflexive throughout the process and that the themes that were developed were consistent across the entire data set.

3.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the rationale for Action Research as the methodology of choice to explore the research questions. It then described the data collection methods of focus group discussions, online surveys and researcher field journal. A description of a reflexive approach to the thematic analysis outlined how the overarching themes were developed. The final overarching themes and their analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

LISTENING INSIDE A SCHOOL'S MUSICAL CULTURE: THE FINDINGS

Chapter 3 identified the methodologies that were selected to investigate the research questions. This chapter reports on the outcomes of the data gathering phase. The data was collected in an action research framework and analysed using a reflexive thematic approach in order to address the overarching focus of the study:

> *An exploration of how a classroom music program could be developed and implemented collaboratively by a music therapist in a special school setting.*

Integral to this exploration was the notion of listening to the school's musical culture as a first step in the action research cycle. This information was used to generate further secondary questions around a collaborative and sustainable approach to the study.

i. How could a collaborative approach build the capacity of teaching staff with the confidence and skills to deliver an engaging classroom music program?
ii. How might a collaborative approach to planning a classroom music program to support over-sensitised students with self-regulation?
iii. What could be the factors required for the program to be implemented in a way that is sustainable and replicable across the pedagogy of this school setting?

The teaching staff were positioned as co-researchers within an action research approach to data collection. This was a collaborative study, where the participants and myself worked together, sharing knowledge over a series of 8 interactive music sessions to plan and deliver a

classroom music session they could continue to use when the study. Information about the participants' confidence levels, moments of engagement and detachment and anything they noticed about student self-regulation was collected during focus group discussions and weekly brief online surveys. The data collected was used to inform the next weekly music session for each class in small cycles of planning, action and reflection as well as develop a final session structure for dissemination by the teaching staff participants with a new class in the new year.

4.1 Overview of the project so far: Some data collection logistics

This study was conducted during 2020 whilst Covid-19 was impacting on a global scale. In New South Wales the Department of Education issued regulations and procedures that had to be adhered to in order for any research to continue in schools. There was no significant impact on this study apart from a term (10 week) delay to commence data collection. Two of the focus group discussions were conducted remotely on Zoom to comply with the NSW DoE's meeting restrictions at the time, but this did not seem to affect the quality of the data that was being collected.

The data collected via the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) was delivered in a convenient way to participants via a link to their mobile phones after each music session. As each music session coincided with the end of the school day, sometimes the surveys were not completed until later that evening or the next day. 35 surveys were returned out of a possible 48 responses. It became evident after two weeks that some of the participants were answering the questions from the students' perspective and not their own and some participants expressed some confusion about the wording at the end of the music sessions. Whilst a brief set of instructions were given about the survey's questions in the first focus group, this was insufficient and the survey instructions were not explanatory enough. Clarification was given

during the middle focus group discussion in week 5, that participants were to note the meaningful moments they felt were engaging, distancing, surprising and confusing from their own perspective. Responses submitted after this focus group consistently reflected participants' experiences rather than their perceptions of student experiences.

The data was deidentified and participants were coded as T1, T2, T3 for the teachers, S1, S2, S3 for the SLSO's and P1 and P2 for the Principal key informants. For the purposes of this section, focus group discussions will be abbreviated to FG1, FG2, FG3 & FG4 and my field journal notes will be referred to as 'FJ, Name of class, number of session' (FJ, Hippos,1). Class names have also been deidentified to address the risk of participants' contributions being identifiable from such a small participant group. My contributions are coded as JW.

The data collected from the four focus group discussions and online survey questionnaires was transcribed and triangulated with reflections from my field journal in an initial inductive phase of thematic data analysis. During the process of reflexive thematic analysis, four overarching themes were developed and will be presented in the next section.

4.2 Introduction of Overarching Themes

Four overarching themes (OATs) were generated during the reflexive thematic analysis, they were:

OAT 1. Listening inside the school musical culture

OAT 2. Building capacity of teaching staff: Accessing and activating their music child

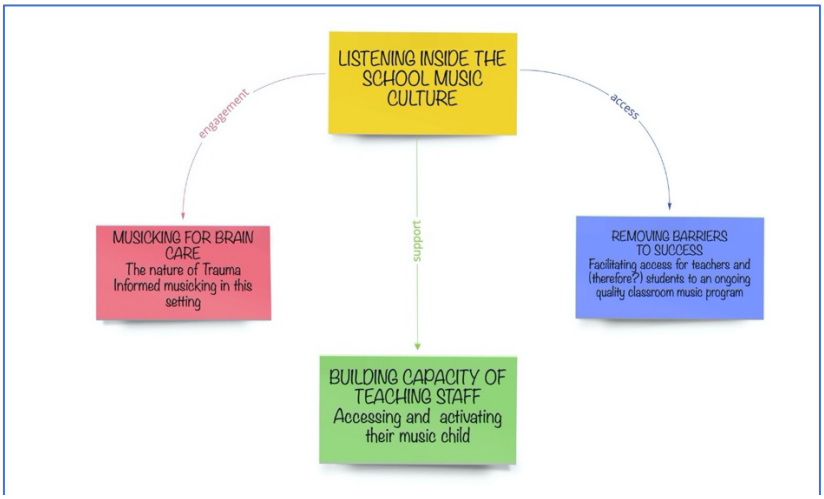
OAT 3. Musicking for brain care: The nature of trauma informed musicking in this setting

OAT 4. Removing barriers to success: Facilitating access for teachers and students to an ongoing and quality classroom music program

See Figure 4 For a visual representation of the themes that were developed from the data. Within each of the four overarching themes, constituent themes and sub-themes were identified. These themes will now be addressed, commencing with the OAT that forms the foundation of the study *Listening inside the school's musical culture.*

Figure 4

Four Overarching Themes

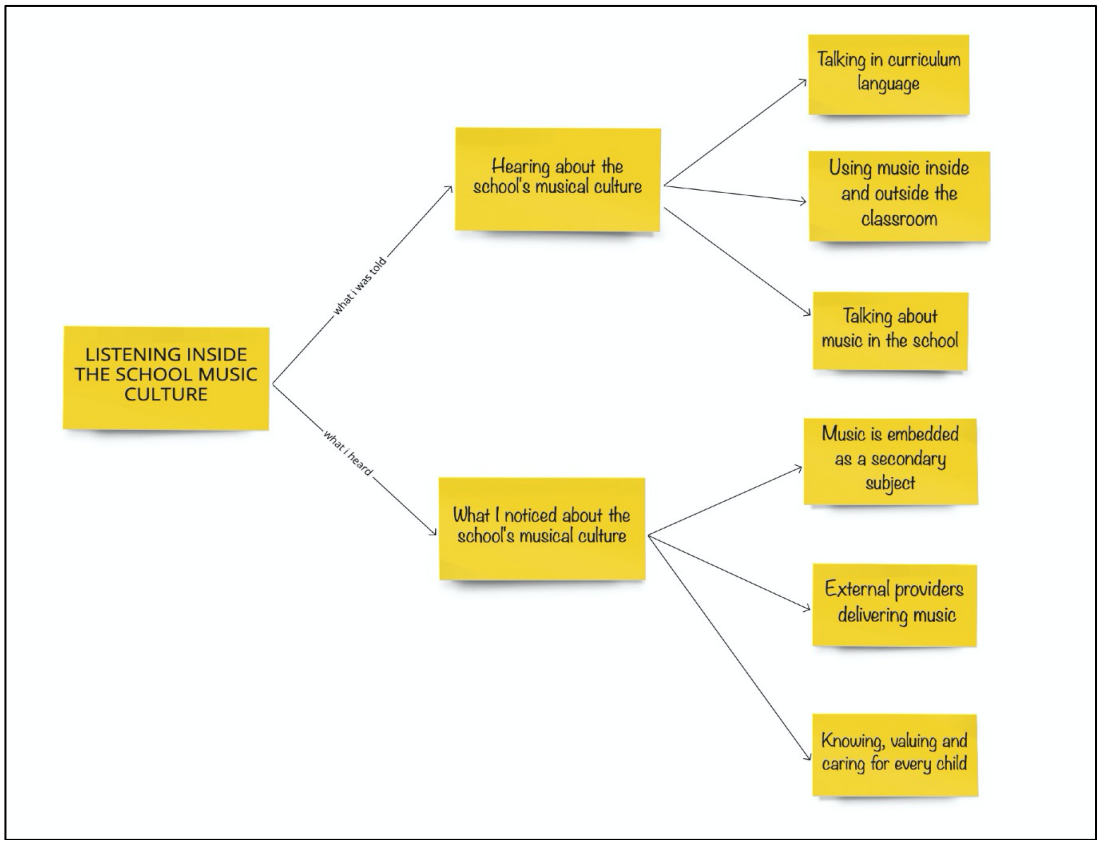


4.3 OAT 1. *Listening inside the school music culture*

As a music therapist I have been trained to listen to all sound, not just musical sounds, but to really listen behind and around seemingly incidental background noise and remarks made by the people in the environment around me. This overarching theme could also be considered an 'umbrella' theme as it permeates the entire data set. is about how I made sense of what I was told by the participants and also what I heard and understood in the school about the use of music. The two constituent themes were formed from this premise.

Figure 5

OAT 1. Listening Inside the School Music Culture



4.3.1 *Hearing about the school's musical culture*

The first constituent theme, *Hearing about the school's musical culture*, was understood as gathering comments about music from the participants and their understandings of uses in the classroom and playground. This constituent theme formed a domain summary (Braun and Clarke 2006?), about how music is conducted and perceived in the school, in order to create the resulting sub-themes that reflect the different ways music is talked about in the school. In the process of analysis three sub-themes were identified within the constituent theme of *Hearing about the school's musical culture*. They were

1. *Talking in Curriculum Language*

This sub-theme captured comments from both teachers and SLSO's used when talking about how music occurs in classroom programs. School specific jargon such as In The Zone and talking about student colours in the Passport for Learning (Section 1.1.4) or school structures. One teaching participant, when commenting about a student said "He's very musical and, he really, stands out in a music lesson, that's really understanding what he's meant to do, you know when he's In The Zone, which is more often in music than other times." One of the Principals explaining about what worked and what didn't with an external music provider, commented "look, our students, you can't actually give an instruction, that's say a yellow or green instruction that everybody can follow it. They need a lot of modelling, a lot of explicit direction." Yellow and Green are Passport for Learning colours indicating the level of comprehension a student may exhibit when given an instruction for example. These types of comments are woven into many responses in the data as these programs are embedded in the school's curriculum and feature often in everyday language about the students. It was helpful and interesting for me to hear how the staff spoke about music in relation to these school specific programs.

2. *Using music inside and outside the classroom*

This sub-theme was generated to represent the comments in the data about all the ways music is utilised in the school. Teachers and SLSO's appeared to contribute to this equally with comments such as "We have used music as a cue for meal times in the past. We do employ live singing such as pack away and good bye songs and made up songs when walking students around school." (T1, FGD 1) and from another teacher: "We use music a lot in my classroom. Sometimes it is incidental. We sometimes sing a walking song. We sing a pack away song." (T3, FG1). An SLSO also commented that "he actually has like, classical baroque music playing the whole

time, like in the background." (S1, FG1). All the comments about music in the data indicate music is used as a tool, secondary to the activity being supported by the use of music.

3. *Talking about music in the school*

   This third sub-theme, *Talking about music in the school*, encapsulates value comments made about the use of music in the school. For example "we do definitely have a morning circle, like a hello song, you come sit down, play the hello song, it's a really strong start to the day." (T1, FG1). Another SLSO commented that "music is an integral part of our kindy class and we use the interactive whiteboard and YouTube for music videos/play songs and nursery rhymes on regular basis." (S3, FG1). Music was certainly valued in the school at the time of the study, again as a means to support non-musical goals and other non-musical subjects.

4.3.2 *What I noticed about the school's musical culture*

The second constituent theme is *What I noticed about the school's musical culture*. This theme encapsulated my interpretation of the words and sounds I heard around the school when I was listening as a music therapist. Four sub-themes developed within the constituent theme of *What I noticed about the school's musical culture*. They were:

1. *Music is embedded as a secondary subject* is about the lack of teaching music explicitly as a stand-alone subject. Some comments from the leadership team directly referred to this

> So as to whether we as an executive or as leaders within the school, do we all sit down and go 'what are we doing for music this year?' No, I don't think we look at it in that way. (P1, FG4)

The teaching staff also often referred to the secondary way music is presented in the school's curriculum, for example commenting that "some of the skills that we are working on with our students include things like imitation, um, allowing them an opportunity to engage with music and work on those skills at the same time." (T1, FG1).

2. *External providers delivering music*

This sub-theme was collated to reflect how participants viewed the use of external providers to deliver music in the school. The comments were generally positive in terms of student enjoyment and perceived engagement, for example "I think they really missed out this year not doing Drumbala I think they would have all loved it." (T1, FG2). When talking about a long running drumming program, one of the Principals spoke about how "they all have to produce their own sound and you can see some of them are super proud of themselves, so, you know, for the part that they contribute." (P1, FG4). Some issues that arose around external providers were also reflected in this sub-theme, such as overpitching for the ability of the students, being unable to adapt music so that it was accessible by all the students, because of a lack of understanding or experience with students with complex needs. An example of this in the data was when one of the Principals reported that staff came back "sort of saying it was too chaotic, and because it wasn't a set pattern and a set structure, the kids didn't know how to engage deeply and meaningfully with it." (P2, FG4). Leading into the next sub-theme, the other Principal mentioned how "you've really got to know our

kids, how they engage and how they benefit from the program, as opposed to coming in with, um, a different lens on music." (P1, FG4). Whilst most of the talk about external providers was positive from a student engagement point of view, I did hear some comments like this that indicated a level of frustration from the staff about the external providers missing the mark with their program.

3. *Every child is known, valued and cared for*

This sub-theme echoes the meaning of a phrase from the Wellbeing Policy of the NSW Department of Education's (DoE) Strategic Plan for 2018-2020 and reflects what I noticed about how deeply each student is known by the staff at the school. Each teaching team of teacher and SLSO made comments that showed how they knew their students from many angles – behaviourally, academically, socially and their family and cultural backgrounds, for example:

> Yeah to music, apparently before he started school, they couldn't play music in the house, he used to scream or run away and cover his head whenever they put music on, apparently Dad's trying to get them into, what's the rock band, apparently it's some really heavy metal rock band. (T3, FG2).

Given the small numbers of students in each class and the intensity of support they require, the staff know the sensory, social, behavioural, cognitive, communication needs or the students in their care. This knowledge was useful throughout the project as a means of learning about musical preferences.

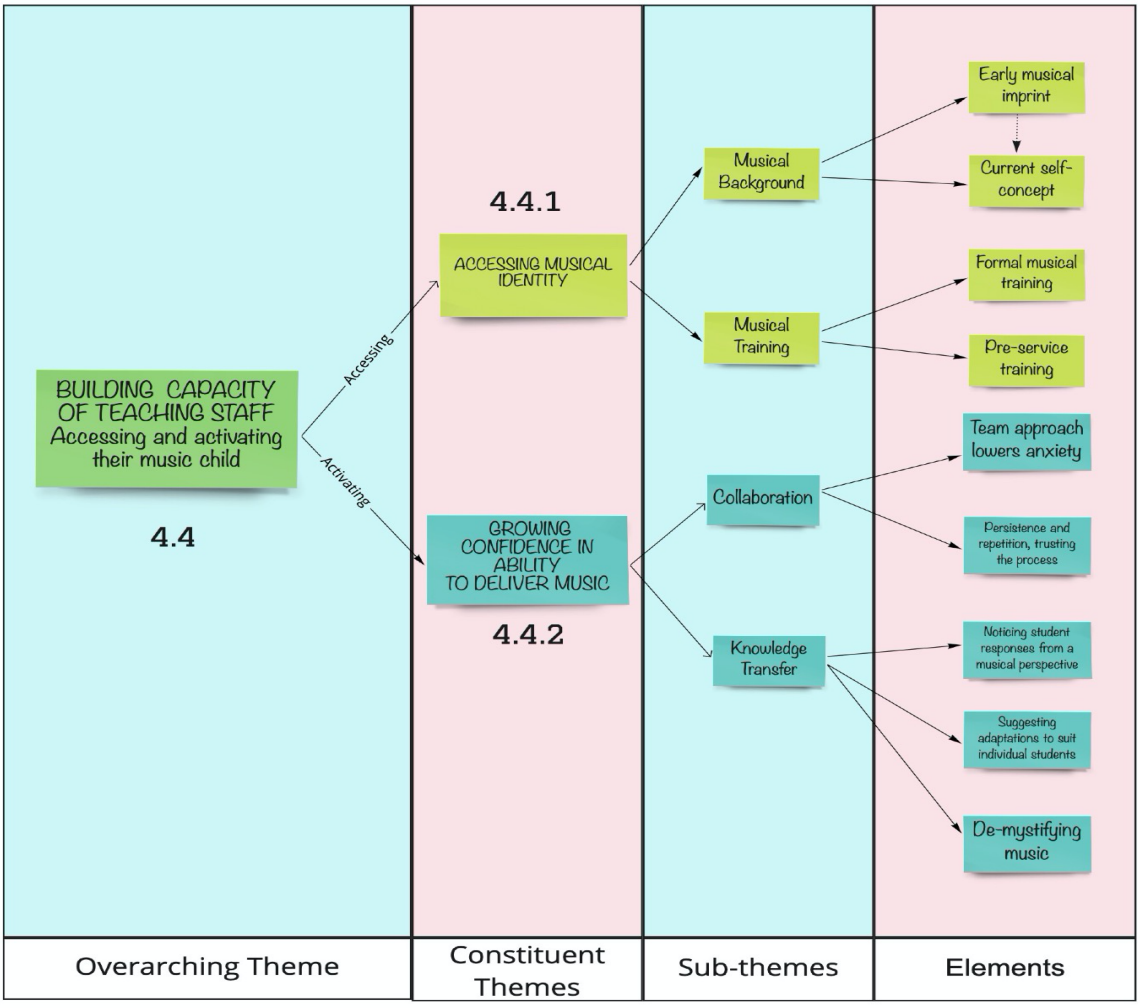
4.4 OAT 2. Building teaching staff capacity: Accessing and activating their music child

This theme is the most comprehensive theme and perhaps the most relevant to be drawn from the data. The concept of the internal music child in everyone can be found across the Humanistic music therapy literature as discussed in Section 2.1.3. For this project, which is a

melding of music therapy, special education and professional support, it is important to draw together this concept from different schools of thought and practice. Key to the concept of the music child in this context is how the careful use of music and encouragement enables access to the music child within the teaching staff. Similarly, the deliberate sharing of professional knowledge may have built their capacity as an educator, confident to deliver live music to their class. Two constituent themes of *Accessing musical identity* and *Growing confidence in ability to deliver music*, have been identified within this overarching theme as shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6

OAT 2. Building Teaching Staff Capacity: Accessing and Activating their Music Child



4.4.1 *Accessing musical identity*

The first constituent theme of *Accessing musical identity* contains all aspects of where on the musical spectrum the teaching staff perceived themselves to be. Most of this data was captured in the first focus group in response to a direct question about musical background, but other comments were scattered throughout the dataset.

Two themes were identified within the constituent theme of *Accessing musical identity*, each with their own sub-components:

1. *Musical Background*

   The sub-theme of Musical Background captured all the comments teaching staff made about their musical upbringing including what their families of origin focused on, for example S3 mentioned “We always had Bollywood music playing at home either on Radio or music player. I still like to listen to Bollywood music and songs as it was a big part of our lives growing up” (FG1). This sub-theme has been broken down into two further elements to delineate data about early musical identity from current self-concept in relation to music.

   i. *Early musical imprint*

      Each participant reported very different early family musical experiences, with recollections such as “There's another musical area I didn’t mention to you too Jenny is my mum took me to I think every single musical that ever came out, I think from the age of being very young” (P1, FG4), another teacher mentioned that she “was in the choir in primary school and have always enjoyed singing. I have often regretted not staying with piano or possibly learning to sing” (T3, FG1).

   ii. *Current self-concept*

Throughout the dataset, participants made comments, usually critical or self-deprecating in regards to their musical abilities and preferences such as: "Maybe I can start first (laughing) because it will be really short. Whenever I start singing, my son will tell me to shut-up" (T2, FG1), "I'm the opposite, I hate listening to soft calm music" (S2, FG1) and "So I like instruments, but like my singing voice is a bit off pitch" (T1, FG1).

2. *Musical Training*

This sub-theme captured data about participants' formal musical training and also what if any musical training they received as part of their tertiary teacher training. This sub-theme is thus divided further into two elements:

i. Formal Musical Training

Again the childhood experiences of music varied enormously between participants with some reporting "I learnt flute for gosh probably about 9 or 10 years, growing up I was always in choir and band" (P2, FG4), "I played piano for a really long time, I kind of self taught myself guitar but that's kind of fading, I used to play flute" (T1, FG1) and "I lasted one month and decided that it was a waste of money for me to learn piano" (T2, FG1).

ii. Pre-service training

A common response from the teaching participants in regard to their pre-service musical training was that at best, it was inadequate as this teacher reported:

> The music component of my teacher training was extremely inadequate. I only vaguely remember it, but it was combined with all the creative arts and was done over a few sessions only. I remember thinking that I would have to rely on any curriculum

> support documents or my own music lessons at primary school to be able to plan and implement any lessons. (T3, FG1)
>
> And at worst, non-existent as this teacher reported: "nothing at all because my course was a really short one, my general education was the one year one, no music, no art or visual art, nothing" (T2, FG1).

When asked about their confidence around delivering music heading into their first teaching assignment after University the responses ranged from "how well prepared was I? I think I would say I wasn't well prepared, had I not had my own musical background" (P2, FG4) to "I was not in any way prepared to teach music. I don't recall music lessons during my prac. placements" (T3, FG1), which certainly confirms the variance in what Universities around Australia offer as part of their pre-service training as reported in Hocking (2009).

4.4.2 *Growing Confidence in ability to deliver music*

The second constituent theme of *Growing Confidence in ability to deliver music* presents all the collaborative features that enabled knowledge transfer to occur over the course of the project. Two sub-themes were identified within this theme, each divided further into two or three elements, they were *Collaboration* and *Knowledge Transfer*

1. *Collaboration*

   This sub-theme captures the data, especially the type of language used to reflect the existence and quality of the collaboration that occurred throughout the project. It is important to note that these were often two-way interactions as per the nature of Action Research. Teaching staff recommendations about what works best for their class were taken onboard and respected, such as during this exchange in FG2

   > T3 I like the idea of the pictures you were just talking about
   >
   > JW yep

T3 But I want to kind of, I think we just need to do the same, I don't think we want to change

JW Yep, just to persist with what we've started with

T3 I want to move the things a bit closer to the board and try and

JW Yeah, I think for your class changing might not be,,,laughs

T3 A good option

This sub-theme was further broken down into the two main elements of *Collaboration:*

i) *Team approach lowers anxiety*

A level of anxiety about singing in front of others was evidenced throughout the data with comments such as "Jenny promised we didn't have to sing!" (T1, FG1). Live singing seemed to be a source of anxiety and was one of the reasons prompting this design to involve both teachers and SLSO's in delivering the program. This 'in it together' approach was apparent with exchanges between teaching teams such as "You play, I'll sing!" (FG1).

ii) *Persistence and Repetition, Trusting the process*

Over the course of the project new songs had become familiar, but not before they were embedded through repetition,

S2 And my only other comment was that first song we used to sing, um I didn't like that at the start, but now I like it

JW Yeah it felt really stilted didn't it

S2 That first song,

JW Funga Alafia

All (singing) Funga Alafya

S2 But I like it now

JW It turns into an ear worm

S1 we all know the words (FG3).

It is important to note here that we are all singing aloud together in the last focus group, there was no singing in the preceding focus groups.

2. Knowledge Transfer

This sub-theme captures the data that speaks about the process of role release mentioned in (Section 2.4.3) that can occur in collaborative teams, especially those in Allied Health. This sub-theme is further divided into three elements that indicate knowledge transfer has taken place over the course of the project:

i.Noticing events from a musical framework

T3 It was more than just tapping the table with the blocks, it was actually like with the rhythms, not, He's like that anyway, but I'm noticing it more now, that I've been doing your music

JW Yeah, yep

S2 It's got a tune to it now

JW It's got a shape to it, yeah

T3 it's got a shape to it, and he does like it if we sing um, getting faster getting faster (singing tune and then tapping)

ii. Suggesting adaptations to suit student needs

In a collaborative environment, everyone's suggestions are respected as each teaching team knows their class the best, they are the experts on their students and are making the most informed suggestions. This was the environment that was encouraged throughout the project, resulting in data such as:

"This song suggested by the SLSO was familiar from signing choir, SLSO suggested we go under the parachute" (FJ Numbats, 4) or "I want to try and

move things a bit closer to the board" (T3, FG2), "T3 suggested something on the whiteboard to engage Emma" (RFJ, Caterpillars, Session 5)

iii. De-mystifying music

This component is linked to musical identity and musical self-concept in that once the project had started, the 'I don't do music' comments changed to "I like the way Jenny is teaching cues to start and stop playing" (CIQ) and "I was squeaking back to him ,,, but he wasn't squeaking back to me…I thought we could have a squeaking conversation" (S2, FG2). The importance of providing a scaffold of structure and breaking music down into basic elements of pitch, dynamics and tempo has perhaps provided a safety net from which to launch into delivering their own live classroom music.

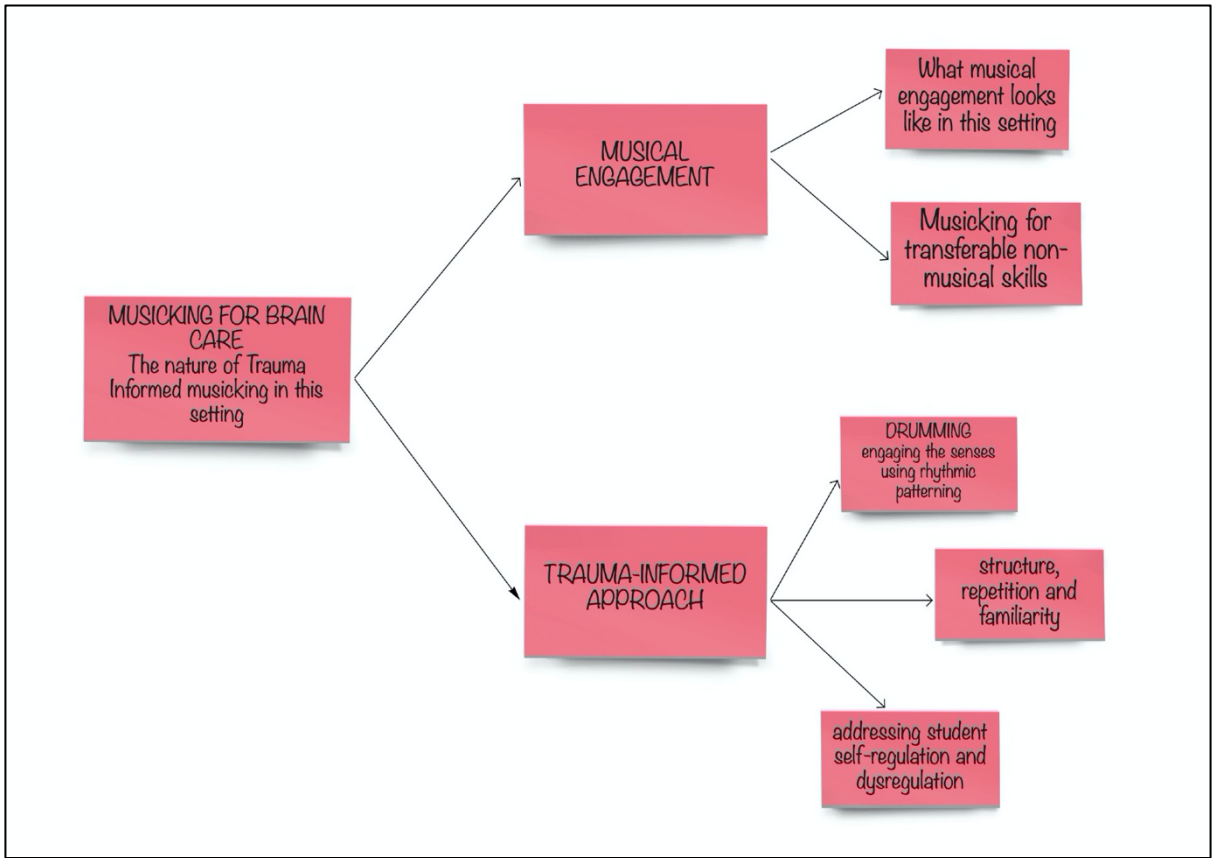
This comprehensive overarching theme was developed over many rereads of the dataset.

4.5. OAT 3 *Musicking for brain care, the nature of trauma-informed musicking in this context*

The trauma informed approach to students (Section 2.3.2) is embedded across the curriculum at this school as an approach to brain-care (Section 2.3.3) explicitly with the Passport for Learning program and incidentally due to the embedded nature of this program. This OAT was formed to reflect the many references to engagement, whilst musicking or otherwise throughout the data, of how this looks through a trauma-informed lens and what 'works' in this setting. The OAT was divided into two constituent themes, *Musical engagement* and *Trauma-informed approach*.

Figure 7.

Musicking for Brain Care: The Nature of Trauma-Informed Care in This Setting



4.5.1 *Musical engagement*

This constituent theme of *Musical engagement* is about what the teaching staff considered evidence of engagement and what kind of skills (musical or non-musical) they noticed or wanted to work on in this context. Two sub-themes were identified within the constituent theme, they were:

1. *What musical engagement looks like in this context?*

   This sub-theme incorporates the observations of teaching staff of their students when they were musicking together, often featuring comments such as “I saw more smiles on their face” (T2, FG2), “Rachel’s engagement in music is really good, like she's much more engaged by the instruments you've bought in, like, her little face lights up” (T3, FG2). Facial expressions featured across these comments.

2. *Musicking for transferable non-musical skills*

   This sub-theme is about what musicking can do in this school setting in regards to non-musical skills, such as turn-taking, attention span, imitation, purposeful movement to name a few. In FG2, S1 commented “they were actually trying to practise the opposite hand” and “we're just going to have fun, but they don't know that there is learning involved in that.” There appeared to be a synergetic relationship between musicking and other non-musical skills.

4.5.2 *Trauma-informed approach*

The second constituent theme of a *Trauma-informed approach* captures the embedded approach to students in this context across the school. Using the lens of approaching a student experiencing overwhelm or sensory overload with the knowledge that rhythmic patterning and repetition can help regulate the brain and therefore calm the student is an important feature of the way the staff in this context operate. One of the principals, when speaking about choosing an external music provider echoed this sentiment: “a lot of that comes from trauma informed practice and a deep understanding of the way um the kids' brains operate” (P1, FG4).

Three sub-themes were identified within this constituent theme

1. *Drumming*

   Most of the responses about feeling engaged in the CIQ related to drumming activities in some way, leading to this theme about engaging the brain using rhythmic patterning. Some examples of responses were “The drumming segment was affirming for those students who participated” (CIQ) and “This week’s drumming was a highlight. The children took turns to choose a drumming pattern, then we used it in

the song. The kids were really engaged by it and Roberta and Alison were doing a little imitation" (CIQ). One of the Principals mentioned that the drum was "an instrument that you can't fail in" (P1, FG4) and this is the key to success in this context.

2. *Structure, repetition and familiarity*

   This sub-theme reflects what every staff member in this context already knows - how important routine and repetition are for students to feel safe. One student had been expecting the same location for a session and became "distressed/anxious about different location for music" (CIQ). The importance of structure and repetition was a common view across participants with comments such as "I could see how repetition engages students" (CIQ) and "It's becoming a routine, they know what to do, they know the routine" (S1, FG2). As the sessions progressed it was noted in the field journal that one student was "starting to sing (over whole session) bits and pieces as becomes more familiar with routine and songs" (FJ, Hippos, 5). Students in this context appeared to thrive and continue to engage when everything was presented within a familiar and predictable structure.

3. *Self-regulation and dysregulation*

   The sub-theme Self-regulation and dysregulation captures comments about students in different stages of self-regulation (Section 2.3.2). A good deal of dysregulation was caused by sensitivity to noise or sound such as one student who "will still sing loudly at times I think to block out the sound of others. He is learning to request headphones to help him tolerate a wider variety of music and sounds" (T3, FG1). Due to the engaging nature of music, students in this context can become quickly overwhelmed and dysregulated, as reflected in a response to 'when did you feel most distanced'

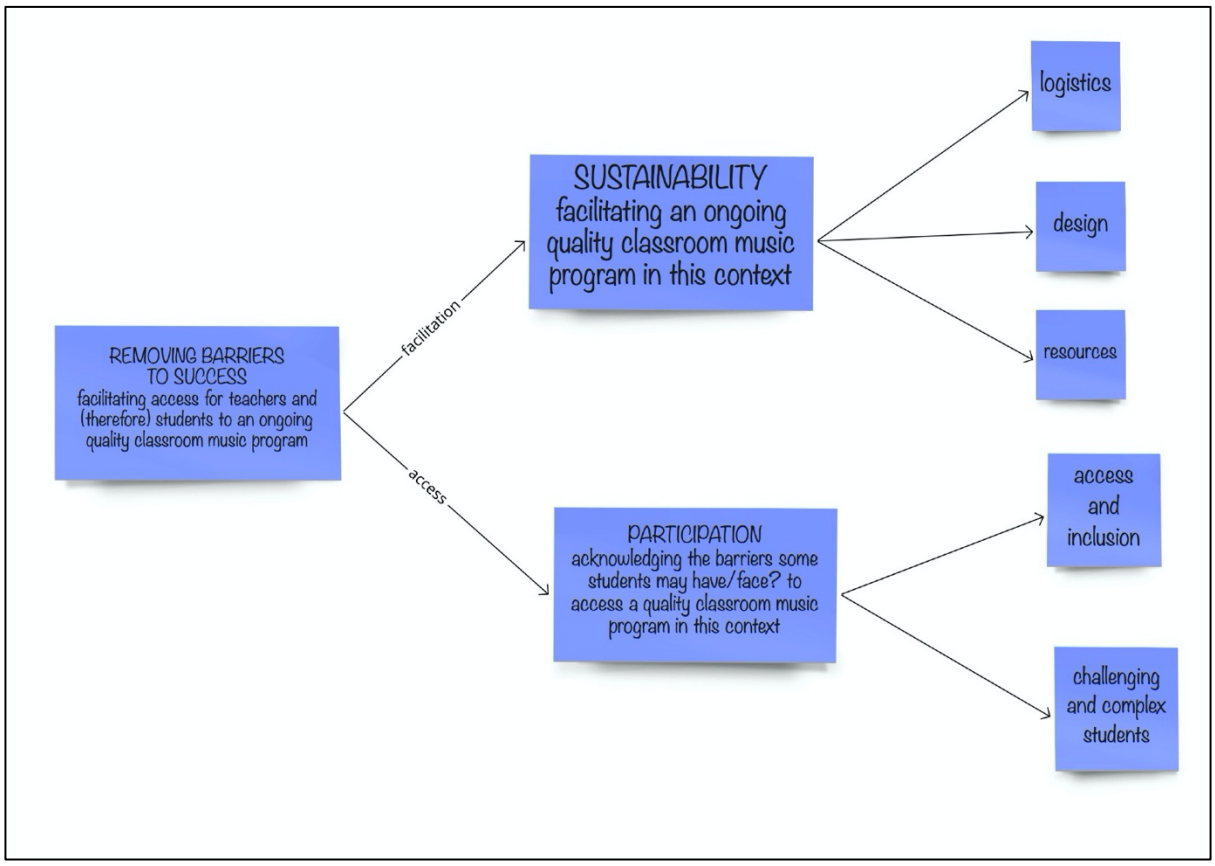
being “Trying to keep students seated/not playing with other things in the room” (CIQ). The teaching staff did see the regulating power of music as the sessions progressed and the students became more familiar with the routine with one noting they “Could see rhythmic beat calming/settling students” (CIQ) as a time when they felt most engaged in the session. A combination of repetition, predictable rhythmic patterning appeared to be the main reason for lowering the overwhelm of students in this context.

4.6 OAT 4. *Removing Barriers to Success – facilitating access for teachers and students to an ongoing quality classroom music program*.

Using the image of removing barriers, this OAT captured all the elements of project design that would be required to ensure a sustainable program for teachers and how this would in turn directly affect student access to the music program. The two constituent themes that were formed were *Sustainability: Facilitating an ongoing quality classroom music program in this context* and *Participation: Acknowledging the barriers some students may face? to access a quality classroom music program in this context*.

Figure 8.

Removing Barriers to Success – facilitating access for teachers and students to an ongoing quality classroom music program



4.6.1 *Sustainability: Facilitating an ongoing quality classroom music program in this context*

The first constituent theme of *Sustainability: Facilitating an ongoing quality classroom music program in this context*, captures all aspects of project design – both successful and limiting factors, what worked well and what would work better in subsequent project applications in this context.

Three sub-themes were generated within this constituent theme, they were:

1. Logistics

This sub-theme encapsulates the everyday considerations and class / student specific tweaks made by the teaching staff or myself so that a session might run smoother or that a student might experience more success with a different approach. The

researcher field notes kept the majority of the record of these adaptations or suggestions of what to try next time, for example “Getting on floor added to chaos, maybe keep big drums and sit on chairs, depending on mood of class” (FJ, Caterpillars, 2).

2. Design

The planning elements for future studies featured in the sub-theme of Design, acknowledging limitations or challenges in the initial design as they became apparent. Again, a lot of this data was captured from the field notes and my comments in focus group discussions such as:

> I'm interested in collecting data from teachers and SLSO's because it's music and I feel like both of you will be. very involved in the delivery of the CMP because I think it probably needs two adults in the room actively, um engaging the kids to get it to work . That's why I'm very grateful that India and Doris can come in and give me their information as well. (JW FG1)

3. Resources

This sub-theme was designed to reflect all the aspects of resources in the data – physical resources such as the interactive white board and musical instruments, electronic / online resources such as Youtube and people-related resources including time given and existing professional relationships.

4.6.2 *Participation, acknowledging the barriers some students may have to access a quality classroom music program in this context*

The second constituent theme of *Participation, acknowledging the barriers some students may have to access a quality classroom music program in this context*, contains references to all the challenges facing students and therefore their teaching

staff, who are charged with removing those barriers in order for them to be able to participate in the music program to the best of their ability.

Two sub-themes developed within this constituent theme they were:

1. Access and inclusion

This sub-theme is about how adjustments were made to ensure each student could access the music program to the best of their ability. An example in the data about physical adjustments was "Parachute, nice ending, whole class, Sonya included - on floor out of chair" (FJ, Hippos, 2). This theme also captures the many references made about the inclusive nature of music and how students could access engagement in music when they couldn't elsewhere and how important it was for members of the community to see that happening. One of the principals commented "you can't fail, there's just enjoyment, connection, love of music and no sense of failure, and the community got to see that, with kids that otherwise they would never ever have access to" (P1, FG4).

2. Challenging and complex students

This sub-theme occurred throughout the data set and speaks to the layer of difficulties facing some students and their teaching staff caused by their complex behaviours and needs. Some of the anonymous responses from the CIQ for Q4. (When did you feel most distanced in the session) included "Unfortunately they were very unsettled this week, so the first song was the pinnacle"…. "I couldn't take part in the music session as a student was crying and very unsettled"… "because often I'm just fielding Aston to where he's gotta go, and asking him to make good choices." All participants expressed some level of frustration at one point around the challenging needs of some

of their students impeding their access to the music session. This is the context of the study and the reality of working with students with complex needs.

4.7 Comments on findings: How listening carefully and reflexively will yield rich knowledge that everyone can share

These findings suggest the value in working and listening respectfully and carefully with colleagues. If this study had been presented in a way that emphasised the power imbalance between the researcher and those being researched, I don't believe the data would have been as informative. The participants, when situated as co-researchers felt free to advise and comment and suggest alternatives for what they felt would work in the context of their own class. Each classroom music program we developed was similar in structure but each was quite different in content to reflect the differing needs of their students. The next section will explore some findings that surprised me, some assumptions that I'd made about where my participants were starting from and some of the findings that affirmed to me that a music child is hiding inside everyone, it is knowing the building blocks that provide access points to build capacity and confidence to musick with others.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The study explored how a music therapist could support teaching staff to design and deliver a sustainable classroom music program in an SSP setting. Presented below is a commentary on the findings of the study, providing interpretations and possible explanations, whilst considering these in the light of existing research. A list of identified 'delivery skills' that may prove useful material for knowledge transfer between music therapists and teaching staff in future collaborations has also been included.

5.1 Overview of significant findings of study

The most prominent finding to emerge from the analysis is that the teaching participants confirm the research (Capaldo et al. 2014, Sinclair et al 2009, Rohwer & Henry 2004) about lack of pre-service training and preparation for delivering classroom music at a tertiary level. Despite all five teaching participants coming from varying backgrounds in terms of early musical experience and undergraduate degree, each reported feeling inadequately prepared to teach music upon graduation. The study also found an expected relationship between the more music experienced in the early years (OAT 2, *Early musical imprint*) and the musical self-concept of each participant. Dwyer (2012) calls for pre-service and in-service teachers to critically reflect upon how their values and beliefs about music are shaped by their own experiences of early music education. The more music the participants in this study had experienced and interacted with whether formal instruction, being in school a musical ensemble, or having a lot of music played at home - the more confident they were to approach this program and interact with music.

Another finding was how the use of structure and repetition both musically and logistically, seemed to provide a safe framework for the students to engage in the program. What was interesting, was how this repetition and structure provided a scaffold for the teaching staff participants to increase their capacity to initially be confident to participate and later to confidently lead the sessions. Essentially the brain-care approach (See section 2.3.3) to scaffolding the music sessions for the students' success, was also a successful access point to improving musical capacity for the adult participants. An unexpected finding in this study was the identification of certain skills that I took for granted as an experienced practitioner and educator that weren't automated for the participants. By breaking down music into basic components for the students, the study 'demystified' music for the teaching staff participants, many of whom had made reference in the data to the universal concept that music was for the domain of professional or trained musicians.

5.2 Commentary on findings

Section 5.2 discusses the significant findings summarised above, exploring how they support and build on the findings of previous research.

5.2.1 The musical self-concept: Breaking down the barriers to access the music child

A major barrier for teaching staff in this study was the belief that music is the domain of the formally trained or musically gifted, confirming the research from the community music therapy literature (Ansdell 2016). One participant constantly referred to how she wasn't musical in the focus group discussions, an excerpt from her I-Poem below illustrates this further:

I was very concerned about my skills

I never felt comfortable with my level of musical skill

I don't have musical knowledge

I never know how to incorporate them (instruments)

I don't know what strengths I would bring to a music session – probably knowledge of my students, but not music

I am anxious about having enough musical skill to keep my students engaged and to know what to do *(T3, FGD 1,2 & 3)*

This was the teacher who, after persisting with the drumming pre-activity and song, came up with the solution herself for merging the activity and song to suit the needs of her class (FJ, Caterpillars, 6). Another teaching participant who reported having no pre-service training for music in her university course and reminded me often that "you have a lot of work to do with me" (T2, FG2) consistently reported how some members of her class didn't 'do' music because they didn't match her performative concept of music as being able to sing solos.

A possible explanation for this mindset is the abundance of popular TV shows such as 'The Voice' or 'Australia's Got Talent' that showcase vocal performers. It is not much of a stretch to see how this teacher equates delivering classroom music as a performance with her students as a critical audience rather than musical partners. Equating the class with an audience and positioning the classroom as a stage could perpetuate an already negative musical self-concept and discourage attempts at live singing or playing with students (OAT 2, *De-mystifying music*). This study may have blurred these very black and white lines for some, if not all of the participants, as

evidenced by the ease with which all participants joined in singing an excerpt from the sessions' common greeting song 'Funga Alafya' in the third and final focus group. It was significant that there was no singing in either of the preceding focus groups except from me. As mentioned in Section 2.2.3 in many contemporary cultures, the stereotyped contemporary musician is an accomplished performer and 'everyday' people who are not 'gifted' or who have not spent hours learning to master an instrument don't have the access to performative community experiences of music that other cultures who may be still observing and performing their more traditional musical rituals.

A finding that can be interpreted in a similar vein was how the participants spoke about music in terms of engagement (OAT 1. *Hearing about the school's musical culture* and OAT 4. *Musical engagement*). All participants mentioned how they used music as an audio cue for other subjects, or to practice non-musical skills such as participation, turn-taking, waiting and maintaining attention using music. This is very common in education (Ewing 2011) and in the initial phase of listening to the way music was spoken about in the school, I only heard references to music or musical engagement that suggested that music was being used in a secondary way. This was also evident during the study when participants commented on the time they felt most engaged in a session as "When my students were all attending, e.g., the time when they take turn to play on the drum" or "During the Welcome song as all of the students were sitting in the circle chairs and were engaged in the activity" (CIQ). These findings are not to be interpreted as saying that there is something wrong with using music as a tool to elicit participation or to work on non-musical skills. Bamford (2006) notes the difference between education in the arts and education through the

arts, so using music as a tool to teach another subject. Delineating this is important, from an awareness perspective but again, not to be used as a criticism, which will dismantle any capacity that has been established to deliver music in any way in the classroom. Music is interactive and enticing by nature and does tend to incite greater levels of excitement amongst students, who for example may pay more attention to a story when it has music accompanying it. From a music therapy perspective, musical interactions that can occur between musical partners who have access to their music child, can create pathways for meaningful interactions with each other. Music is about what it means to be human, not how long you can sit for on a chair. Delineating musical goals as distinct from non-musical goals as part of developing musical literacy amongst teaching staff within a school, would be a helpful exercise in preliminary or ongoing discussions about music in similar future studies.

5.2.2 Using structure and repetition to build teaching staff capacity: A brain care approach

I did find it challenging not to change the program much in the first four weeks (FJ, all classes, 2-4), entering the study with the mindset that active collaboration meant changing songs and routines that weren't 'working.' As a whole, the staff requested to stick with the original program when offered changes with suggestions such as "I don't think that's the problem, I think we should stick with the routine we've got" (T3 FGD 2). Knowing their students the best, as they did (OAT 1. *Knowing, valuing and caring for every child*), I was guided by this expertise, despite my discomfort with the sessions not appearing to 'work' as well as I knew they could.

Consistently, for each class after session 5 or 6, the students were familiar with the structure and routine of the sessions and the comments in my field notes started to

change to “Isiah said 'again' so we did it again, that's a big deal for him to request and like something” about a student who rarely joined the group up till that session (FJ, Numbats, 6) or “Sarah starting to sing (over whole session) bits and pieces as she becomes more familiar with routine and songs” (FJ, Hippos, 5). For these particular students to be singing or joining in to an interactive and potentially overwhelming activity was a huge testament to their feelings of safety. Persisting and sitting with discomfort whilst trusting that repetition of structure and material and routine would eventually mean that students who were usually difficult to engage or access were joining in, was an important take away. It is essential for any researcher in this space coming to collaborate with school staff to listen to the experts and support their directives as part of a two-way sharing of knowledge.

There was not enough focus in the data about how a few dysregulated students who repeatedly chose not to engage or take part in any or many of the sessions (OAT 4.6.2 *Challenging and complex students*) were able to self-regulate in these music sessions to report any significant findings. Teaching staff expressed disappointment about individual students not participating, such as “One student was unable to participate in the music session this week due to being dysregulated - as this was our 4th session, I was more hopeful that the student would join in as he was watching from a distance and looked interested at times” (CIQ). As the teaching staff support was the primary focus of the study and the study wasn’t designed to collect enough data about students specifically in this respect, by the end of the study, most of the data about structure and repetition actually reflected how comfortable and safe the teaching staff were becoming with the delivery of the program. This was a surprising finding for me as I had designed a music program to break down the basic components of music

cognisant of a brain care approach, for the students to access in a repetitive and structured manner.

Reporting self-improvement such as the following examples could be explained by an increase in musical capacity (OAT 2. *Noticing events in a musical framework):*

> He used to do like banging the table, but randomly (T2, FG3) but this was deliberate (beating 1,2,click click) (S2, FG3)… it was more than just tapping the table with blocks, it was actually like with the rhythms…..but I'm noticing it more now, that I've been doing your music (T3, FGD).

The provision of opportunities for the teaching staff to first safely practice, master and then notice the basic building blocks of music through the use of structure and repetition could be responsible for building their musical capacity over the course of the study.

5.2.3 Building blocks for capacity and sustainability

The importance of the existing working relationship that researcher had with the participants cannot be ignored when examining the findings about building teaching staff capacity. The trust already developed as colleagues in this setting was vital to me, as I was well out of my comfort zone at the beginning of the study. Some excerpts from each of the first sessions clearly illustrate this: "Was so nervous. Glad it was at my school with people I knew and trusted, that was bad enough!" (FJ, Hippos,1) and "Think first session will always feel a bit off, thank goodness I know and trust these participants" (FJ, Numbats,1). Thankfully it did get better with researcher musings from later sessions more affirming and positive such as "went 300x better than last week" (FJ, Hippos, 5).

A large part of building capacity for the teaching staff was building trust into the process with the design and execution of the sessions, by creating a framework of predictable events (OAT 4.6.1 *Sustainability – Design* and 4.5.2 *Trauma Informed Approach – structure and repetition*). As part of building trust and confidence, I took a lead from studies in this field (Fachner 2016, Arns & Thompson 2019, Tomlinson 2020) deliberately designing the study to include SLSO's as co-researchers and fellow music program deliverers. (OAT 4.4.2 *Collaboration – Team approach lowers anxiety*). The existing relationships I had had with the participants certainly did assist with building the trust required for someone with a low musical self-concept to stand in front of others and start delivering a music program with live singing. This process went two ways as we were all well out of our comfort zones at times during the study.

Once capacity is built in teaching staff, it is important that the level of skill and confidence is maintained otherwise any program setup will not be sustainable (McFerran et al. 2018). It really is a musical case of use it or lose it. This can be explained because the participants in studies such as this who are not usually musically trained, lack the muscle memory developed by musicians over hours of practise to call on technical faculties to pitch a note correctly or recall and reproduce a rhythm a week later for example. The skills have not become innate or automated and need to be practised (repetition) in order to be maintained. A compounding factor in school settings such as these is usually that each year, the make-up of classes and teaching teams change. In order for the participants to continue delivering music programs in this new year, they have required support and reassurance to adapt the program to their new classes. Remaining accessible to participants has been an essential requirement for sustainability during this adjustment phase. I have been available for quick refresher conversations about 'how does that song go again' and

has also given some brief reminder sessions in the Junior Learning and Support meetings. All five junior classes are now delivering music once a week even though only 3 classes participated as the participants have been spread over these classes and are mentoring their teaching partner to deliver the program. Developing the skills of the SLSO's has been an essential part of the success in terms of sustainability and continued dissemination of this program.

5.2.4 Practice for delivery without fear

An assumption was made in the early design of this study about the level of musical skills the participants would be presenting with. What I hadn't realised was how everyone has a different starting point, dependent on their early musical experience. Some skills I didn't realise I had as a musician, required learning and practice for the participants to employ when they were delivering the music program by themselves. For the purpose of this study, these skills will be called 'delivery skills' and will be outlined in this section. Some initial comments in the field notes began to alert me to the challenges some of the participants were encountering during the first phase of the study, such as "Overestimated skills that I've internalised" and "Getting a sense that I've been assuming too much - as in I can retain a tune and an order in my head but these guys can't" (FJ, Caterpillars, 3). Perhaps the biggest barrier to developing teaching staff capacity and accessing their inner music child are these delivery skills, some of which include: being able to sing at the same time as keeping a regular beat, being able to stretch this beat or a phrase to wait for others, having a phrase structure in your head in the first place to do this, remembering song lyrics and remembering the songs or sections that come next, all the while singing or moving to a beat.

Table 3

A List of Simple Delivery Skills

Skill	How to address and rehearse the skill
Pitching a note	Audio cues on whiteboard
Singing and keeping a simple beat	Repetition of body percussion whilst singing
Predicting phrase structures	Repetition of rhythmic patterning in 4/4 time
Recalling song lyrics	Audio cues on whiteboard
Recalling program	Visual timetable on whiteboard
Reproducing rhythmic patterns	Repetition of rhythmic patterns during drumming
Waiting for a response	Modelling waiting another 4 beats

These skills need not be explicitly focused on, in fact it is better not to bring them to the attention of participants, some of the rhythmic patterning exercises build natural coordination and confidence with repetition as the key factor and the skills did just eventually become automated.

By breaking down the confronting aspects of music into their basic building blocks such as rhythm, pitch and melody and rehearsing them in non-threatening ways with the support of a music therapist, this framework has created a space where both students and participants can musick together and in doing so ‘practice without fear.’ Building capacity for these ‘delivery skills’ involved firstly developing trust, breaking down music into less overwhelming units and most importantly a repetitive structure that bred more familiarity and confidence as the weeks went on.

5.3 Further thoughts

As the focus of how music therapists work in education settings becomes more of an ecological approach (Section 2.3.1) we music therapists have to ensure we are fluid and adaptable. The first way to ensure we remain reflexive is to carefully listen to the musical culture in our school and remain open for access points to building capacity in teaching staff. This study has shown that enabling others to access their inner music child and share the joy of Musicking with another human can be achieved in a way that is respectful without drawing attention to musical skill deficits. There is abundant room for the development of generalist pre-service training for teachers in this regard but also further research in the area of continuing professional learning for in-service teachers.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore how a classroom music program could be developed and implemented collaboratively by a music therapist in a special school setting and found that in building the capacity and confidence of the teaching staff to deliver the program it was most important to acknowledge the different starting points of all the participants and break down music into it's basic components as an access point. This final chapter will revisit the aims of the study and consolidate the research space with a summary and evaluation of the methods and findings. Implications for the field will be presented alongside the limitations of this study, followed by recommendations for future research.

6.1 Looping back to the start: Revisiting initial aims, objectives and research questions

The study aimed to support some of the teaching staff teams in a school for specific purposes to design and deliver a classroom music program to their classes. In order to provide support for the teaching staff to feel confident to use new musical techniques that might be initially beyond their skillset, the study sought to explore how a collaborative research design might build the capacity of the teaching staff participants to deliver the music program to their classes. As a secondary consideration, the study set out to plan and deliver a classroom music program that would support over-sensitised students with self-regulation. The study also explored the factors needed to implement the program in a sustainable and potentially replicable way in the context of special education, more specifically a school for specific purposes (SSP). The school where the research took place is my place of employment as a special educator, so the research was undertaken with my colleagues within the framework of researcher as practitioner.

6.2 Looking inside: A consolidation of the study

This was a small-scale study and has the scope to be treated as a pilot study to be scaled up within this setting and possibly across similar SSP settings. The recruited participants ended up being all from the Primary (K-6) section of the school. This was an unexpected positive aspect of the design, as it meant that participating class groups were all relatable to the same syllabus document (The NSW K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus 2006).

The framework of action research (AR) was very useful due to the immediacy of being able to reflect on or action any suggestions made by the participants in the moment. Whilst transcribing the data myself, I was able to commence the reflexive data analysis process straight away. If this model was scaled up perhaps this would become a more overwhelming impractical factor for a single researcher practitioner, than a positive one.

The choice of Action Research has brought a focus on authentic participation and collaboration in order to build the capacity of the teaching staff as discussed in the previous chapter. However, some aspects of the delivery and design need attention if this study is to be replicated. Covid-19 restrictions did impact the dissemination of information about the study in a whole group setting- ideally the study would have commenced with an introductory whole staff session explaining the study in detail, including the purpose of the data gathering techniques. Emailing and digital information sheets were the forms of dissemination employed at this stage. Further clarification of the way the participants were to respond to the CIQ would have been helpful, as some reported the perspective of the student participants instead of their own. Informal exchanges with participants at the end of each session were more valuable than the CIQ in collecting information about ‘what worked and what didn’t’ and these comments were what I reflected upon the most in the field notes.

In terms of knowledge transfer, the choice of AR addressed the imbalance of power between the participants and researcher, which in this case was the concept of musical skills that could be accessed and shared. Framing the study to the participants as collaborative and all about sharing knowledge, meant that the study was presented in a way that was also respectful of the knowledge of the participants. In conducting research with my colleagues, this was an essential balance to get right.

6.3 Looking outwards: Implications and practical applications of the study

As part of the dissemination process that has happened in this new academic year (as mentioned in Section 5.2.3), the three participating teaching teams of teacher and SLSO were split up in the new year and given new student groupings. This means that this year, all five Primary classes in the school are currently being led by at least one participant from the study and include approximately half of the students who also attended the music sessions and are thus familiar with the program. Including SLSO's as part of the research team has doubled the number of participants who can deliver to a new class, than if it were just the qualified teachers included. If it was just the qualified teachers continuing into the new year, there would be only 3 classes instead of 5. This has set up the foundation for the successful continuation of the classroom music program into a new school year.

This study builds on existing literature addressing experiential researched solutions to the pre-service gap for generalist primary teachers to feel prepared and more confident to try to deliver music to their class (Collins 2014, Thorne and Brasche 2020). The fundamental design of this study could be replicated in a similar context whereby an available music therapist ideally already working in the school, could facilitate a similar collaborative framework for knowledge transfer. If replicated across a number of similar school contexts, a

scaled-up version of this study could provide further information knowledge and development on a larger scale. There is also the potential for a training program to be developed from the findings and taken to other schools for professional learning. It is anticipated for this to occur that the participants would be part of this dissemination process as well.

This study addresses the lack of access to musical professional learning for in-service teachers by providing a practical solution with a potentially untapped resource of a music therapist already working at or known to the school. The identification of delivery skills (Section 5.2.4 delivery without fear) whilst not a new concept, serves as a reminder to any music therapist looking to collaborate in this way. Being careful not to make assumptions about participants' musical skill level will ensure fundamental skills get addressed in such a way that captures those that need extra support to build their capacity and confidence to deliver music. Facilitating development of musical skills for delivery of the sessions without addressing participant skill deficits directly, was an unplanned feature of this study and one that I believe contributed to the increased feelings of confidence in the participants.

6.4 Looking at scale and stakeholders: Limitations of the study

This study was conducted on a relatively small scale to other studies in this area (Rickson & McFerran 2014), meaning the findings are unlikely to be generalised across the fields of music therapy or music education. This study was conducted within one school, collecting data from 8 staff members (5 teachers and 3 SLSO's). A decision was made early on in the ethics process not to collect data from the students of the participating classes due to the complexity involved in obtaining these permissions, considering the scale of the project. The

scope of the project changed to just focus on staff support and their delivery of the music program. I felt this limited the richness of the data, as although Steele et al. (2020) recommend focusing on supporting the teachers in order for their students to benefit, it is also true that the students should be having input into decisions about programs that affect them as they are the real stakeholders. It is recommended in subsequent studies that student data is collected to comprehensively inform the program.

As in any practitioner researcher model there is the risk that the researcher will not be sufficiently removed from the process to be both a reflective practitioner and a reflective researcher. Careful field notes and regular debriefs were undertaken with my research supervisor to ensure a continuity of reflective practice. Based on ethics and standard practice as a registered music therapist, my experience and training has enabled me to be subjectively involved in music sessions whilst taking objective notes.

Although this study took place within the limitations of the Covid pandemic, at the same time there were minimal effects on the actual delivery of music sessions to the participants and students. However there were some small changes and limitations in the data collection process, namely a delayed start and two of the focus groups conducted remotely via Zoom.

6.5 Looking forward: Recommendations for future research

As part of the dissemination process that has happened this year (as mentioned in Section 5.2.3), the three participating teaching teams of teacher and SLSO were split up in the new year and given new student groupings. This meant that the five Primary classes in the school were being led by at least one participant from the study and that approximately half of the students had also attended the music sessions, setting up the foundation for the successful continuation of the classroom music program into the new school year. It is recommended

that future studies include students from similar curriculum stages as well as support staff to further enhance dissemination of the findings of the study.

A recommendation arising from this study for researcher practitioners coming into a similar setting to build the capacity of teaching staff to deliver their own music programs, is to dismantle the myth of not being 'musical' from day one. Establish an alternative frame of reference for common attitudes and assumptions participants may be making about their musical abilities, by making explicit statements about how musical everyone is. Ideally this would be presented in an introductory information session, explaining how our bodies are made of rhythms and phrases and melodies and how we are all innately able to respond to music in some way, that music is not the domain of the gifted or formally trained and is an experience that is accessible to all of us. Further to this, delineating musical and non-musical goals would be a helpful exercise as well, especially in an educational setting where achieving non-musical goals may be all that music is being used for. Ensure this is not presented as a criticism, more as a discussion point to start teaching staff thinking about how they use music.

It is also recommended if the researcher is unknown to the school or participants and their students, that an extended period of reflexive listening (OAT 1. *Listening inside the school's culture*) occurs prior to recruitment, possibly with observation sessions built in.

If capacity for teaching staff to deliver music is built over a relatively short period of time as it was in this study, the delivery skills do not become automated and able to be called upon after a short period of time. It is recommended that the music therapist or researcher or whomever is providing staff support, does not leave the participants immediately after the

project is finished and that continued professional development in the form of refresher sessions that rehearse the delivery skills mentioned in Section 5.2.4 are conducted to ensure the sustainability of the program.

6.6 Final thoughts

From beginning to end, this project has been an interesting and inspiring undertaking, despite some small challenges thrown up by Covid. By looking at the needs of the students and designing a program that builds capacity in the teaching staff to further support the students using music, there is the potential to make a difference in the life of children who deal with challenges and barriers as part of their everyday life. Accessing latent resources in schools such as music therapists is potentially a cost-effective approach to professional learning for in-service teachers who may have received less than adequate pre-service training to deliver classroom music.

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Appendix A

Initial staff information

'Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools'

A collaborative framework for establishing a creative music program

in a special school in Sydney, N.S.W.

Project Summary

Some research has shown how collaboration between music therapists and educators in special school settings can grow an engaging musical culture. Building on an existing model of evaluation of musical engagement, feedback will be gathered from the teaching staff of two classes at Clarke Road School, a school for complex learners. Within an Action Research framework, participants will collaboratively design a classroom music program to be utilised as a pilot study to inform the introduction of a school-wide music program.

Facilitating the establishment of a music program designed and evaluated by its participants is a deliberate strategy to promote a relational approach to a musical culture in a school. It is anticipated this approach will underpin the sustainability of the program as well as addressing the lack of musical skills apparent in pre-service teacher training.

In plain language

I want to work together with the teaching staff from two classes over 8 weeks using music therapy sessions to collaboratively design a short classroom music program tailor made for your class and support you to deliver this in the second half of the project. I am interested in how we can address student self-regulation using music and if the music therapy sessions can provide the space to develop further confidence and skills for you to bring to your classroom music sessions.

Proposed design

- The staff participants, together with the researcher, will design the program in the first 3 weeks of the project.
- Weekly 25-minute music therapy sessions will be conducted during this planning time with the classes of the teaching staff, to test and practise music and activities for their suitability for inclusion in the classroom program.

- The teaching staff will implement the program in their classroom in consultation with the researcher during weeks 4-8 of the project. Music therapy sessions will continue during the implementation phase for further tweaking of the program and to rehearse skills or new songs for the classroom music program.
- Data will be collected in the form of 3 x semi-structured interviews at the beginning, middle and end of the project, as well as online surveys each week from each participant.
- The students are not part of the project, data will only be collected from the staff.

Recruitment

- Participants are asked to sign consent forms and are able to withdraw from the project at any time.
- Further information about the project and consent forms will be provided to participants prior to the project's commencement

Logistics

- Classroom instrument percussion sets are being provided for each participating class
- Proposed location of music therapy sessions is the school library
- Proposed days for music therapy sessions to occur are Monday, Wednesday or Friday
- Music therapy sessions are 25 minutes, once a week and can be included as programmed Creative Arts curriculum time

Benefits

- This is a pilot study with the intention of setting up a school-wide music program to coincide with the launch of the Creative Arts Syllabus whenever that may be.
- The classroom music program will be tailored to the colours within the Passport for Learning with a focus on supporting the students with self-regulation and communication.
- A written report will be provided to the school executive at the culmination of the project.

Appendix B

Email recruitment script

'Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools'

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

A collaborative framework for establishing a creative music program

in a special school in Sydney, N.S.W.

You are invited to lodge an expression of interest to be a participant in a research project being conducted by Jenny Whalan, a Masters of Research student at Western Sydney University and your colleague here at Clarke Road School.

Please read the attached information sheet and reply to this email address to register your interest in participating. **Please note your participation in this project is entirely voluntary.** You will also need to acknowledge you understand the extra time commitment involved:

1. to participate in the three Focus Group Discussions (30 minutes each)
2. for you and your class to attend 8 x 25 minute music therapy sessions a week in Term 3 (weeks 3-10)
3. for you to fill out a 5 minute survey at the end of each music therapy session
4. for you to deliver a short 20 minute weekly classroom music lesson in the second phase of the project (Weeks 6-10 Term 3)

Thank you for your interest in this project. If you are not selected to be a participating class, you will receive access to the 5 week music program at the beginning of term 4 for use with your class if you wish to use it.

Thank you for your time,

Jenny Whalan

Appendix C

Participant information sheet for teachers and SLSO staff

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

Participant Information Sheet – General (Extended) Teachers and Student Learning Support Officers

Project Title: Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools

Project Summary:
You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Jenny Whalan, Masters of Research Student, Western Sydney University under the Supervision of Dr. Alison Short, Senior Lecturer in Creative Music Therapy, Western Sydney University.
The research will investigate the music culture in this school and undertake the collaborative design of a classroom music program for use throughout the school after the project has ended.
How is the study being paid for? There is no funding for this project
What will I be asked to do?

- You will be asked to attend and participate in weekly music therapy sessions with your class for eight weeks to plan a classroom music program.
- After each session you will be asked to fill out a brief anonymous online questionnaire.
- You will be asked to deliver the classroom music program to your class in the second phase of the project (weeks 1-5 Term 4)
- You will also be asked to attend a focus group discussion via zoom or face-to-face three times over the course of the project.

How much of my time will I need to give?

- 25 mins a week for the music therapy sessions for eight weeks
- 5 minutes a week for the online questionnaire for eight weeks
- 30 minutes for each focus group discussion (there are three)
- 20 minutes for five weeks for delivery of the classroom music program

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?
A unit of work ready to add to your teaching program, support for the implementation of this program and ongoing consultation around delivery of this and future classroom music programs.
Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?
There is a risk that the time involved in participating in this study reduces preparation time for other teaching or class activities. The researcher will liaise with you as to the most convenient time for music sessions for your class and Focus Groups for yourself.
There is also the risk you may be identified by other staff members from any directly quoted material included in the final report. A summary of the pooled and de-identified data will be provided including any direct quotes planned for inclusion in the final report. If you feel at this stage this material identifies you and you are not comfortable, you may request to review, reword or withdraw the quoted material.
How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?
It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission. Names will be replaced with ‘Teacher’ or ‘Student Learning and Support Officer.’
Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researcher will have access to the raw data you provide. However, your data may be used in other related projects for an extended period of time. Your data may be used to inform a PhD project by the researcher and will be kept for a period of five years in secure University Cloud Storage before it will be securely destroyed.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason. You just need to email your wish to withdraw from the study to Jenny Whalan 13757595@student.westernsydney.edu.au

If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have already supplied via a focus group discussion or anonymous survey is unable to be withdrawn because all data is pooled and de-identified.

What if I require further information?

Please contact Jenny Whalan should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

Student Researcher: Jenny Whalan School of Humanities and Communication Arts, Western Sydney University. 13757595@student.westernsydney.edu.au

Supervisor: Dr Alison Short, Senior Lecturer in Creative Music Therapy, Western Sydney University. a.short@westernsydney.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H*[enter approval number once the project has been approved]*.

Appendix D

Information sheet for parent or carer

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

Participant Information Sheet – Parent or Carer

Project Title: *Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools*
Project Summary:
Your child is invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Jenny Whalan, Masters of Research Student, Western Sydney University under the Supervision of Dr. Alison Short, Senior Lecturer in Creative Music Therapy, Western Sydney University.
The research will investigate the music culture in this school and undertake the collaborative design of a classroom music program for use throughout the school after the project has ended.
How is the study being paid for? There is no funding for this project
What will my child be asked to do?
Your child will be asked to attend a weekly music therapy session during Term 3 delivered by Jenny Whalan as part of a professional learning research project with the teaching staff of your child's class. The sessions will include an engaging selection of group and individual musical activities planned and presented by the researcher in conjunction with your child's teaching staff and tailored to the needs of the class.
How much of my child's time will he/she need to give?
These sessions will run for ten weeks on (Day) and (Time) for the 8 weeks in Term 3 and will be programmed as Creative Arts curriculum time.
Children not participating in the study will join (insert class name) during the time the research is being carried out
What benefits will my child, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

- Your child will experience playing a wide range of small and large percussion instruments as the teaching staff and researcher explore musical activities that the class enjoys.
- These activities will be developed into a program that the teaching staff will deliver to your child's class in the second half of the term as a pilot program for the whole school to adopt in future terms.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for my child? If so, what will be done to rectify it?
There is no perceived risk or discomfort for your child, however you are encouraged to approach the researcher, the teaching staff of your class, or, the school leadership team if you have any concerns at any time.
How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?
It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that no student is identifiable from any descriptions.

Will the data and information that my child provides be disposed of?
There is no data or information being collected from your child or any students who are part of the participating classes.
Can I withdraw my child from the study? Can my child withdraw from the study?
Your child's participation in the study is entirely voluntary and they are not obliged to be involved.

Your child can withdraw at any time, or you can withdraw them, without giving a reason. Suitable arrangements will be made by the school executive team for your child to attend another class for the duration of each weekly music therapy session.
You can withdraw your child by either:

Informing the School's Principal via this email: clarkerd-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Contacting the researcher directly – 13757595@student.westernsydney.edu.au

What if I require further information?
Please contact Jenny Whalan or Rebecca Saunders (Principal) using the contact details above should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate

Thank you for your consideration of this Information Sheet.

What if I have a complaint?
If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au
Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
If you agree for your child to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher.
This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H*[enter approval number once the project has been approved]*.

Appendix E

Consent form for Parent or Caregiver

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

Consent Form – Parent or Carer

Project Title: *Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools*
This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H*[insert number]*
I, _____hereby consent for my child _____, to participate in the above named research project.
I have discussed participation in the project with my child and my child agrees to their participation in the project.
I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my child's involvement in the project with the researcher
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent for my child to:
☐ *Be part of the class for ten 30-minute standard music therapy sessions as part of a research project involving the teaching staff of my child's class.*
I understand that my child's involvement is confidential and that no information or data will be collected about them during their time in the music therapy sessions.
I understand that I can withdraw my child, or my child can withdraw, from the study at any time without affecting their relationship with the researcher, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.
Signed:
Name:
Date:

What if I have a complaint?
If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.
Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix F

Extended consent form for teachers and SLSO participants

Consent Form – General (Extended) Teachers and SLSO's

Project Title: Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H13878

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to:

☐ *Participating in three focus group discussions*
☐ *Completing eight online weekly anonymous surveys*
☐ *Having my information audio recorded*
☐ *Delivering the classroom music program in the second phase of the project*

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.
I understand information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use. The information may potentially reveal my identity.
I understand that my participation in this study will have no effect on my relationship with the researcher, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.
I understand that I will be unable to withdraw my data and information from this project as focus group information cannot be withdrawn.

Signed:
Name:
Date:

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.
Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix G

Focus group discussion scripts 1-4

Focus Group 1 - 'Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools'

The First Focus Group will take place before the study begins with the two teachers and two Student Learning Support Officers.

1. ***First of all, can you tell me about some of your musical backgrounds and experiences***

   (Did you learn an instrument growing up / wish you had? Were you part of any musical groups at school? Is/was there music playing in your house – what was/is it? What kind of music do you like to listen to? Do you play 'your' music in the classroom?)

2. ***(Teachers) – How would you describe the music component in your teacher training course?***
   (Was music taught as a one-off unit of work or throughout the course? Was there a practical component or was it all theoretical? Was music combined with the other Creative Arts subjects or taught as a stand-alone?)

3. ***(Teachers) - When you graduated from Uni how prepared did you feel to deliver music in the classroom?***
   (Did you have a toolbox of resources or ideas to bring into the classroom? Do you remember any opportunities during your prac/s to observe a music teacher or a general class teacher delivering music? Do you recall how you approached preparing for and delivering music lessons in your early teaching days?)

4. ***Now we're going to talk about music in your current classrooms – could you describe any musical happenings during your day with your class?***

   (Do you use music as a cue for mealtimes or playtimes? Do you use recorded music? Do you employ live singing in any way – eg. walking song, goodbye songs. Do you use the IWB (Interactive White Board) or a CD player for recorded music? Do you access YouTube for music videos / playsongs / nursery rhymes?)

5. ***What have you noticed about the students' responses to musical activities***

   (Are there any changes in arousal or alertness levels? Do you notice any dysregulation or self-regulation by the students when music is playing? Are there non-verbal students who appear more communicative? Do you notice anything about your own responses or mood when music is being used in the classroom?)

6. ***This project is an opportunity for us to design together a unique music program for your class. We will first test musical material related to choices and interests within music therapy groups with me before you implement the music program in the classroom. I am wondering what you would like to try out in our sessions together?***

   (Do you have some ideas about what musical activities might look like for your class? Singing? Movement? Dancing? Drama? Playing instruments? Do you want to explore using digital technology on electronic devices?)

7. ***You will be supported throughout this project to learn how to deliver live music sessions for your class. Can you imagine yourself running musical activities in your classroom?***
   (What might that look like? Little and often or one session a week? Do you have a time of day in mind? Totally teacher led or student driven? Structured? What strengths do you feel you might bring to a music session? Weaknesses? Anything you are anxious about?)

8. ***In thinking about this project is there anything you'd like to ask or add?***

Thank you so much for your time today, I am looking forward to working with you all!

Focus Group Two - 'Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools'

The Second Focus Group will take place halfway through the project with the two teachers and two Student Learning Support Officers, prior to the commencement of the classroom music program.

(These questions are broad and will become more specific with consideration to the survey responses and general observations by the investigator during the first phase of the project)

1. ***First of all, can you tell me if you have noticed any extra musical happenings in your classroom since we started the project?***

2. ***What did you notice about the students' responses to musical activities?***

   (Any changes in arousal or alertness levels? Any dysregulation or self-regulation by the students? Where there non-verbal students who appeared more / less communicative? Did you notice anything about a student that you had never seen before or didn't know they could do? Anything about your own responses or mood during the sessions?)

3. ***We are going to continue our music therapy sessions together while you trial the program we have designed in the classroom. What would you like to use this time for?***
   (Do you want to 'rehearse' or practice the live components of the classroom program or try new material? Singing? Movement? Dancing? Drama? Playing

instruments? Do you want to explore using digital technology on electronic devices?)

4. ***What are you feeling most comfortable about when you think about delivering a live music session to your class?***

5. ***What are you most concerned or anxious about when you think about delivering a live music session to your class?***

6. ***In thinking about this project is there anything you'd like to ask or add?***

Thank you so much for your time today.

Focus Group 3 - 'Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools'

The Third Focus Group will take place at the end of the project with the two teachers and two Student Learning Support Officers, after the project has concluded.

This might feel a bit repetitive and you have answered these questions already in the weekly surveys, this is hopefully going to generate some more discussion as you hear others' responses.

1. ***Can you tell me if you have noticed any extra / different musical happenings in your classroom since our last focus group?***

2. ***Was there anything you noticed about the students' responses to musical activities in the last few sessions that stand out for you?***
   Any changes in arousal or alertness levels? Any dysregulation or self-regulation by the students? Were there non-verbal students who appeared more / less communicative? Did you notice anything about a student that you had never seen before or didn't know they could do? Anything about your own responses or mood during the sessions?

3. ***Was there anything you remember about your own responses to the music or your mood during the last few sessions?***

4. **Thinking about the learning experience you've had, how do you think you might approach music in your classroom next year?**

   (Are you going to program for a music session specifically or combine it with Creative Arts? Do you want some help with it?)

5. ***How do you feel now about delivering a live music session to your class?***
   (Are you feeling more / less comfortable singing in front of others?

6. ***In thinking about this project is there anything you'd like to ask or add?***

Thank you so much for your time today.

Focus Group 4 - 'Fostering Musical Cultures in Schools'

Thanks for meeting with me! Before we start, a brief refresher on my 8 week project that is now almost halfway through, I am supporting 3 of the Primary teaching teams to collaboratively design a short music program for their class that they will deliver themselves when they feel confident to do so after which time I will withdraw.

I just want to set the tone, this is considered 'situational research' as in we are colleagues and I am conducting investigative research into my own workplace - which means I have to be careful to be really impartial. There are no right or wrong answers here and no judgement, I will be exploring your responses to better understand the phenomenon of the musical culture in this school.

1. ***First of all, can you tell me about some of your musical backgrounds and experiences***
   (Did you learn an instrument growing up / wish you had? Were you part of any musical groups at school? Is/was there music playing in your house – what was/is it? What kind of music do you like to listen to? Do you play 'your' music at school at all?)

2. ***How would you describe the music component in your teacher training course?***
   (Was music taught as a one-off unit of work or throughout the course? Was there a practical component or was it all theoretical? Was music combined with the other Creative Arts subjects or taught as a stand-alone?)

3. ***When you graduated from Uni how prepared did you feel to deliver music in the classroom?***
   (Did you have a toolbox of resources or ideas to bring into the classroom? Do you remember any opportunities during your prac/s to observe a music teacher or a general class teacher delivering music? Do you recall how you approached preparing for and delivering music lessons in your early teaching days?)

4. ***What have been some highlights for you personally in your time here at CRS that involved music?***
   (Were these usually performance-based events? What was it do you think that made it memorable? Did you see something you didn't realise a student could do?

Were there any changes in arousal or alertness levels? Do you notice any dysregulation or self-regulation by the students when music is playing? Were there non-verbal students who appeared more communicative? Do you notice anything about your own responses or mood when music is being used in the classroom or at a school event?)

5. ***How would you describe the musical culture here at CRS at the moment?***
(Compared to the past / when you arrived – is it different now? Can you describe it? Why do you think that might be?)

(Do you use music as a cue for mealtimes or playtimes? Do you use recorded music? Do you employ live singing in any way – eg. walking song, goodbye songs. Do you use the IWB (Interactive White Board) or a CD player for recorded music? Do you access YouTube for music videos / playsongs / nursery rhymes?)

6. ***What is your understanding of the requirements of delivering classroom music as part of the students' weekly curriculum of Creative Arts?***
(What's your understanding of the requirements of the percentage of time to be spent on Creative Arts? Does the current reporting system in your view reflect the learning that is occurring? If not, what would you like to see? Have you received any feedback from teaching staff about this, is it too much / too little / not relevant when there are so many other subjects and areas vying for their time?)

7. ***I know the school engages in some outsourced music sessions such as Drumbala or Rhythm Village. In what way does this approach impact on the classroom music program***
(For teachers, for the students? IYO how ***effective do you believe this approach is as a model of Music Education Delivery?***

8. ***I'm interested in your understanding about the difference between music therapy and music education?***
(Do you see a lot of overlaps for example?)

9. ***Considering what we have discussed today is there anything you'd like to ask or add?***

I wanted to also thank you both for your support to set up my research at the school, I do really appreciate it. Thank you so much for your time today, I really value your input!

Appendix H

Qualtrics Survey Script

Default Question Block

Please indicate your consent to participate in this weekly survey and understand your responses are anonymous

- ☐ Yes I consent to participation in this weekly survey
- ☐ Yes I understand my responses are anonymous
- ☐ No I do not consent to participation in this survey

Please take a few minutes to respond to each of the questions below as soon after the weekly music therapy session as possible.
When you have finished filling out each field, simply press submit.

1. At what moment in the session this week were you most engaged in the musical activities?

2. At what moment in the session this week were you most distanced from the musical activities?

3. What action that anyone in the room took this week did you find most affirming or helpful?

4. What action that anyone in the room took this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?

5. What surprised you most about the session this week?

Thank you for taking the time to do this weekly survey