

Youth Music Spotlighting – Research Findings

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The presentations at the Music Mark conference on November 21st and the two international presentations took place in February in Ottawa and Salzburg took place as planned. Interim reports as per the Stage 2 application in respect of ‘The Reflective Teacher’ were presented at the ISME world conference in Brazil in July 2014; and in respect of new compositions, working with technology and improvisation, as part of the ISM international conference in April 2014. A further presentation will take place in December 2015 in Italy with two additional presentations currently submitted for the Music Mark conference in November 2015 and for the ISME world conference in Glasgow in July 2016. (Copies of PowerPoint presentations are available).

The Reflective Teacher research consisted of two phases. The first phase involved semi structured interviews with teachers and project leaders following their visit to Venezuela in January 2013. In the second phase these responses were analysed and a set of 48 statements identified relating to areas that were important to those interviewed. Teachers were asked to respond to each statement in one of two ways: either to state how important these statements were on a scale of 1 to 10 (31 statements); or to state whether they agreed strongly, agreed, disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statements (17 statements).

The statements fell into four categories:

- My values (teacher);
- My Teaching;
- Musical Skills; Performance; Social Skills; Transferable Skills; Enjoyment; Personal Development; Pedagogy; Curriculum;
- My Pupils (teacher’s perspective)

Thirty one teachers completed the questionnaire at the beginning of the Spotlighting project. Forty two teachers completed the questionnaire at the end of the project.

The ‘before and after’ questionnaires showed no significant changes, although there were some interesting differences. There are a number of reasons for this. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, building trust and relationships with and between partners are important elements in any project. Part of this process resulted in teachers being allowed to complete the questionnaire anonymously. It was not possible therefore to track responses from individual teachers. There were some staff changes during the two years of the project. The numbers of teachers visiting each other’s projects had to be reduced for timetabling reasons and learning was cascaded by those who were able to undertake the visits. Finally, the building of trust and relationships also resulted in many of the resources being developed as a result of the Spotlighting project only being made available at the end of the project. Impact of change is therefore likely to be seen next year.

Reporting on the findings was broken down into four groups:

- Agree strongly/Agree or scores of 8, 9 or 10 (9 statements)
- Agree strongly/Agree or scores of 6 to 10 (14 statements)
- Including disagree and scores of 4 to 10 (17 statements)
- Including disagree strongly and scores of 1 to 10 (8 statements)

Unsurprisingly, the importance of pupils' social wellbeing rated very highly at both the beginning and the end of the project. The lowest score at the beginning of the project was one person scoring 7 (10 is essential) and one person scoring 6 at the end of the project. At the beginning of the project 28/31 scored 9 or 10 and at the end, 39/42 scored 9 or 10.

The value placed by teachers on musical achievement of pupils had a wider spread with one teacher scoring 6 before the project and scores as low as 3 (one teacher) and 5 (two teachers) at the end of the project. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers also rated musical achievement highly: at the beginning of the project 26/31 teachers scored 8 or above; at the end of the project 34/42 teachers scored 8 or above.

Details for each programmes' responses were shared with the programme leaders so that they could compare their own programme responses with the total responses leading to focussed professional development opportunities both at the individual programme level and collectively across all programmes.

As part of the Spotlighting project 27 peripatetic teachers from music services also completed the same questionnaire. Whilst there were some statistically significant differences between the two groups these need to be treated with caution because of the relatively small size of the sample. In general, peripatetic teachers also care about the social wellbeing of their pupils (all scored 8 or above), but tend to have a greater emphasis on musical achievement (all scored 9 or 10).

The questionnaire remains open with a total of 164 responses from across the UK, Europe and Canada to date.