# Developing children's self initiated music making through the creation of a shared ethos in an early years music project

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## Abstract

The three-month *Changing Places* project involved early childhood student teachers working with music students in developing children's music in centres in Auckland, New Zealand. The project set out to challenge the *calculative* aspect in music learning (Heidegger, 1993). The term calculative in this instance describes learning seen as music as preordained tasks. The music students involved in the project understood music in the form of a predefined score to be perfectly realised, while the early childhood teachers were familiar with a repertoire of early childhood songs and music played on a CD with pre-ordained actions to be performed at mat times. Data for the study was obtained through video recordings of student pairs working with children in centres, audio recordings of shared dialogues between students and online moodle discussions.

This paper describes the different ways in which the two sets of students through their dialogue developed a shared ethos that countered their previous approaches and understandings of music education. The suggestion is made that the task itself, of developing self initiated music making with children, facilitated this open exploration and change of musical education ideas.

**Key words**: Music, Heidegger, calculative, philosophy, Changing Places, Ethos, Pedagogy of Listening, Holistic Learning

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## Research aim

The *Changing Places* project was premised on a set of philosophical ideas about pedagogy and practice in music. These were outlined in a position paper, *Changing Places: Openness, pedagogy and Heidegger* written by the two researchers and formulated soon after the initiation of the project. In this position paper the authors critiqued pedagogical practices found in both tertiary music education and early childhood teacher preparation that led to students seeing their own subject knowledge and their resulting conceptions of teaching as calculative.

Frequently music students see musical performance as the realization of 'objects' – or 'music pieces' – that exist primarily for the purposes of accurate reproduction. Pedagogically, this perception of music impacts on the student musician in terms of their conception of themselves as music teachers. In this music world-view, teaching practices become focused primarily

on performance outcomes, regardless of the differing needs, aims and motivations of the young children with whom they are working. Further, over reliance on certain kinds of performance outcomes may prevent other, more emergent, learning to surface, such as cross-modal learning (e.g. dance/music/drama) and hence child initiated learning generated from the impulses and creative actions of children themselves becomes lost.

In New Zealand, the early childhood student teacher's view of learning tends to be more holistic in nature, in synergy with the New Zealand Early Childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki,* with its overarching principles of Mana Atua (well-being), Mana Whenua (belonging), Mana Tangata (contribution) and Mana Aoturoa (exploration). As such, *Te Whāriki* promotes practices of making and developing learning from ideas that spring from the child, within the context of the family and centre environment. The challenge for early childhood student teachers is to bring these ideas and ethos into music. The researchers in this project believed that the music-as-object technologies such as CDs, are used too frequently in centres in New Zealand and as background resources at mat-time. The researchers felt that the *Changing Places* project could offer alternative ideas and practices for the early childhood students more in keeping with the values and aims of *Te Whāriki*.

From a philosophical perspective, the researchers' position makes reference to Heidegger's critique of calculative thinking (cited in Peters, 2002, p. 8), in which education is characterized by highly technical ordering of curriculum designs, atomised assessments and repetitions of pre-determined knowledge. The researchers perceive calculative practice impacting on both music and early childhood teachers in terms of shaping their music teaching and learning within specific performative conditions. In contrast the researchers promote a more open style of thinking that could be adopted by teachers – one of being receptive or open to the emergent qualities present in any learning interaction. This sensitivity to emergent learning, or what Heidegger called *poiesis* (Heidegger, 1993, p. 317) is something that, the authors believed, is desirable in early childhood education, and could be a rich way of thinking about teaching and learning in so-called performance learning areas like music.

In the initial phases of the project dialogues between the researchers opened up potential for shared practice following an assessment of student activity with regard to their pedagogical knowledge of music education in early childhood. With both staff members involved in inquiry orientated courses about music and arts education, an opportunity existed where a collaborative programme to investigate a different kind of early childhood teacher preparation in music could be observed, to see whether this approach contributed in any way to changes in the musical, educational and practical teacher-world-views held by both groups of students.

## Research context

There is strong support for a more open, exploratory and collaborative approach to music learning in the early childhood literature. Key research articles point to the early childhood music educator increasingly seeing music as a holistic learning mode in which young children make together with the teacher, as opposed to seeing music as a performative activity.

Alcock (2008) examines music and rhythm as a mode of creative communication and points to children's drama activities, improvisation, and spontaneous play commonly found in early years centres as examples of *rhythmic musicality* (Alcock, 2008, p. 328). Drawing from the concept of *musike,* Alcock sees rhythmical action in all engagements by children in the temporal arts (p. 337) and those children's artistic multilayered expressions being spaces of mediation, contradiction, communication and playfulness. She expresses some concern that this dimension of musicality is often overlooked. Teachers, in her view of young

children, need to learn to take on passive roles in child interaction, letting children generate their own artistic and rhythmic expressions by listening, prompting and encouraging them.

Similarly Barrett's (2006) research on children's vocalized interactions with others (carers, family, children) suggests a deeper mode of learning and communication that is often dismissed or not observed by adults close by. Barrett's particular interest is in the phenomenon of spontaneous song in young children—which she sees as a very real expression of creativity in a child, and the complex contextual environments that nurture this form of expression. Knudsen (2008) commenting on children's vocalisations, sees this as a fundamental form of human expression that become "technologies of the self" or embodied learning tools that "act upon the self" to reinforce a certain mental state or mood—in other words, the vocalizations become ways of knowing the self as self (p. 287). Musical learning, when seen in this way, becomes a vital means of forming a sense of personal identity within a group. Knudsen is concerned about the fact that adults tend to lose their spontaneous vocalization impulses and she promotes the idea that teachers need to nurture children's musical worlds for children, and not primarily from a 'becoming adult' perspective. Knudsen calls for "playful musical interaction" with young children as it can lead to a "greater awareness of their creative potential and a deeper understanding of the musical nature of children" (p. 293).

Custedoro (2007) explores the world of young children's musical improvisations. She discusses the notion of "receptivity…which is a disposition open to receiving sources from which to respond and is sustained by mutuality and embodiment" (p. 81). Children for Custedoro become more receptive through having ready access to musical instruments and experimental sound materials that offer opportunities for physical interaction and experimentation. Similarly, Young (1995) writes about a pedagogy of listening that encourages teachers to step back, observe, and allow children to express their own musical ideas. When a musical expression is observed and fully expressed teachers can then respond actively, so that meaningful learning is actualised and pedagogical communication is effective and timely.

These and other literature point to a view of early childhood music education attuned to the learning child as an individual within an environment of social interaction and engagement. Music is seen as a mode of engagement, as a medium whereby children and teachers creatively interact, communicate and develop ways of being in the world—in other words ways of seeing the self as self within a social context. It is considered by the researchers that there is an increasing need for teacher responsiveness or 'responsivity' to children, letting them explore, and then proactively working with them while considering their own particular cultures of learning. Music is thus seen as a holistic tool, as part of a child's growth and development as a child – not primarily as something that builds towards what adults do.

## Methodology

A research design was constructed that brought together two tertiary courses. This comprised a final year early childhood student project and the other a special topic in the education of young childhood in music for a group of final year BMus students. The idea was to join the two groups of students in one teaching project located in early childhood centres. While the focus remained on the music learning of the young children in the selected centres, the two groups of students brought to the project a different skill set and knowledge base. The early childhood students had a good deal of personal work experience as they were all positioned in centres while undertaking their degree. These students had an intimate knowledge of the teaching processes employed in early childhood centres, and the New Zealand early childhood curriculum – *Te Whāriki*. The music students brought specialized knowledge of music, musical understanding,

and experiences of music teaching – mainly with older aged children. One key aspect of the project was the complementary nature of the two student groups and how this provided an opportunity for rich pedagogical learning in 'both directions'.

Once a small group of students and centre staff had completed all the various ethics requirements, the students were introduced to each other and worked together collectively on musical activities and games initiated by the course lecturers. Student pairs were formed depending on a range of factors including locality, transport issues and student interest. Workshop time was allocated for student planning when the music and early childhood students could devise their activities for when they would be working together in the centres.

From the start, the students were closely observed to see how they developed their thinking, ideas and practice of music education within the context of collaborative practice in the centre environment. This was undertaken alongside knowledge from key research readings (see above), reflective practice in the form of shared dialogue, reflective interviews after each session each week and through online moodle discussions – which kept the sense of the whole group working together. Selected music sessions were also video recorded so that the researchers had a record of the student pairs working with the children and the kinds of outcomes and experiences that were realised within the sessions.

## Data

The researchers used a range of text, voice and visual means of data collection in order to ascertain the nature of the student interaction, pedagogical thinking and the contextual aspects informing each case study. These were as follows:

1. *Online Moodle:* This provided the students with a space for group discussion, the interaction of ideas and the sharing of experiences. Students also wrote a weekly reflective journal that summarized what they had learnt and experienced during the weekly session.

2. *Post-session Dialogues:* Immediately following each teaching session students met with each other to discuss and evaluate/debrief the session, compare experiences, and offer planning ideas for the following session the next week. These dialogues were audio recorded and transcribed into text for the researchers and students.

3. *Live Video Recordings:* Sessions were video recorded for first-hand capture of learning and experiences. Video material was edited following the sessions by the researchers so that exemplary moments of pedagogical interest and children's learning and involvement could be disseminated alongside text outcomes.

4. *Researchers' Observations:* The researchers visited each centre on several occasions to track progress and note first hand the student-child interactions that were ongoing. This was useful to compare and confirm interpretations of experiences later on.

5. *Student Assignments and Evaluations:* Students met with staff following the sessions to discuss their experiences in the centres. Students were required to complete an assignment which included a reflective summary report of each teaching session.

## Analysis of data

Qualitative themes were extracted from text, audio and video responses following triangulation of evidence within the context of each case and the research aims in mind. This was deemed to be the most appropriate course of action because of the exploratory nature of the investigation and the emergent and experiential qualities of each student collaboration. The researchers found that each student group (NZTC/UoA) had changed or developed as music

educators in terms of knowledge, perception, observation and pedagogical knowledge. Themes were suggested that emerged from student perceptions and experiences as a result of the collaboration. These themes exemplified the kind of student learning and awareness that developed in the project. A key overarching theme was the pedagogical practices that evolved within the child centred learning ethos that underpinned the whole project.

## Findings

Qualitative data from the research was analysed and key themes extracted. The themes represent patterns of pedagogical interest that reflected the experience of the study programme from the student's point of view. One of the most interesting findings was the way in which the two sets of students had developed a shared ethos around the project.

## Shared ethos

A feature of the *Changing Places* project was the shared ethos that developed between the research staff and students of both institutions. The partnerships between the students one from each institution, worked together for six sessions in the participating centres. Of note was the 'fit' between the different skill-set and knowledge-base of the two groups of students on the one hand and the project aim on the other which was to develop knowledge and learn more about music education in early childhood through the student collaboration. Early on in the project, one of the music students reflects on the participative element in the early childhood educator's involvement with the children. This development of a shared evaluation process legitimated the process that the students were engaged in. Here is one such example from the second week of teaching:

*ECE Student 3: I think they're doing really well, if you think about the first time that you came in and we did music with them, they had fun because we*

*did all that dancing and stuff like that but I would never have imagined them to sit around and do what they're doing now because they're starting to get to know who you are and be more involved. I think the first session where we were outside playing on the drums and stuff, that went okay, but it was a little more chaotic but this time it's a little bit more…*

*Music Student 3: More spontaneous, more natural…*

*ECE Student 3: Yeah the children are actually relaxed.*

*Music Student 3: I think that's the thing, we should just let them be; like even if they don't want to join us, me and you, we can just play and then if they're interested they'll come in and we can make some music together. (Centre 3, Reflection 2, 30/3/11)*

This confidence in assessing the process according to the student's own criteria showed how shared practice was developing in the student pairings. This confidence prompted the students to reflect on changing attitudes to music practice:

*Music Student 4: … that's one thing that opened up my eyes; this project has really made me immerse myself in the child's world. Trying to understand what they're doing, be like a part of them, like you and me being silly, playing around creating some musical instruments. It's very good the music that we made.*

*ECE Student 4: Well it's like a musician, he might learn how to play a song, but a musician will learn to play or create their own style or their own sound on their own. These children are doing the same thing. (Centre 4, Reflection 6, 11/5/11)*

Here we have an acceptance of the 'other' recognised in a quite sophisticated manner with reference to a musician. This recognition of each others difference in the space of the teaching was revealed in a discussion as to how they might use a story:

*Music Student 1: My version will be like more the sound and rhythm, but because you are more*

creative and more imaginative that will make them really experience themselves in the 'wood,' mine is more like rhythmical activity so your story is very interesting its different but in the same context.

*ECE Student 1: But that's really good … if we both do that and work together.*

*Music Student 1: We can mesh together. (Centre 1, Reflection 5, 11/5/11)*

Within the scope of the project the musician can see the technical aspect of her approach as opposed to the imaginative being, the experience, conjured by the early childhood student. They readily see a way the two can be combined and 'mesh' together their respective strengths reflecting the children's ability to both play rhythms and respond to the story in their imagination. This in essence, allows the story to become music theatre.

The online moodle brought all of the students together as a learning community even though they were writing and participating in the discussions at home and working with their partner in a centre during weekly sessions. From the onset of the project students were using the moodle to prompt and raise discussion on their practice and emergent philosophy of teaching:

*Music Student 2: The biggest challenge I think [is]… to [move] our heart/work/philosophy from a hypothetical place of 'fear' (…am I doing the right thing?, etc...) to a very prominent place of 'freedom' – the freedom of offering these children and the programme the very best of our actions…(Moodle, 20/3/11)*

Through the moodle discussion students also shared some of their contextual or 'situated' knowledge. This was important for the early childhood students who were already working in centres and were familiar with each centre environment. The moodle enabled a deeper understandings of aspect of *Reggio*:

*ECE Student 3: In the Reggio approach, the teacher is considered a co-learner and collaborator with the child and not just an instructor. Teachers*

*are encouraged to facilitate the child's learning by planning activities and lessons based on the child's interests, asking questions to further understanding, and actively engage in the activities alongside the child, instead of sitting back and observing the child learning. (Moodle, 12/4/11)*

Gradually students started to reflect on the value of working collaboratively and their own progression:

*Music Student 1: I feel that this whole thing, collaboration with you and working in the childcare centre has actually opened up my eyes to see the importance of the need to be sensitive to children, whatever the child is doing in terms of their aspirations or whatever they want to tell us. I feel the teacher collaboration is very important and for the children to be engaged in the activities, the teachers have to co-operate well. You have to know how to do this and that way we can do something. I feel that a teacher alone is not enough. With the help of other teachers it is better more useful, more power, the whole collaboration thing, works out well. I've learnt something about teacher responsibility to create opportunities for the children and how to design the whole thing, and then just let the children take the lead.*

*ECE Student 1: And also like because teachers usually they don't see, if they're doing a mat time and they put on a song and the children dance to the song you know I can stamp my feet, I can stamp my feet and they all copy. They are all doing what the song is telling them to do but most of the time if a child sat down or a group of children sat down and started banging away on instruments, most of the teachers, and myself probably, would have been like "oh really is that necessary, can you not play it properly, just be quiet, it's really noisy, come on." (Centre 1, Reflection 6, 18/5/11)*

Here the students reflect on the value of working together and being quite clear how this has helped them devise and develop their practice. Reflecting on the 'calculative' they are critical of the way that teachers might use nonsenical

songs and see the contradiction when the level of noise is instituted through 'singing' as opposed to music freely made by the children. The ethos is one of trust in each other as both students work to define for themselves the task and reflect on the children's involvement. The openness in their dialogue allows them to extend their ideas and to revisit assumptions on noise as music and their role as prompters.

## Pedagogy of listening

Another common theme that was reported by both student groups was that the project enabled them to become more effective listeners, observers and responders and thus more able to make teaching and learning decisions with the children. This was reflected in some students becoming more attuned to the process of music learning as opposed to the common orientation of aiming towards a music product which in western culture is often viewed as a song or performance piece.

This change in orientation reflected a change in the underlying assumptions they held about what music teaching and learning was all about. Here is an example of two students recounting an incident in the fifth teaching session with a child:

*ECE Student 1: She's actually really sensitive to sound because she was playing the triangle and she said "everybody listen to me." She wanted everyone to stop so I made them all stop and I think you were putting a CD on and she was playing and I'd respond and she just kept watching me and she'd do another little tune and then she'd wait for me and then I'd do another tune.*

*Music Student 1: Yeah that's like what we did, call and response.*

*ECE Student 1: Yeah and she was loving it.*

*Music Student 1: You can see that's improvisation there.*

*ECE Student 1: Yeah but she was the one that started it. She was the one that actually suggested we do the call and response. It wasn't anything that I'd suggested.*

*Music Student 1: I think we all did this together and she did a different one, like she did it differently.*

*ECE Student 1: She probably observed us doing a little thing, like you'd bang and I'd sort of do it and then you'd do it and I'd do it and she was probably also watching that thinking.*

*Music Student 1: And she was trying to tap the lid as well.*

*ECE Student 1: Yeah.*

*Music Student 1: I think she's trying to improvise and I observed the other three and the two girls that were in front of me, more like following and just more reserved types. Like some kids they are very musical, some they're not but they want to be but you can see that we're trying to bring that out from them.*

*ECE Student 1: I don't know her name but I was trying to get her to do things, like I was whispering in her ear and stuff she didn't want to even participate, she was sort of sitting there and I was "come on do it for me" and she wouldn't and then when I forgot about it she came over and started doing it in my ear. So it was having the confidence to come over to me and do it but without all the attention being on her. (Centre 1, Reflection 5, 4/5/11)*

It is the attention to detail that is so interesting in this reporting. The students find in the child's responses how the child is able create something musical of her own finding it much easier without the spotlight being on her. At the same time as recognising the achievement of the children the students can see how patient they have to be in waiting for the child to make the decision as to when to play her call and response improvisation. This ability to wait for the children to develop their own activity and to be responsive to their spontaneity was reflected on by another pair of students in their last teaching session:

*ECE Student 3: That's the first thing we found was that we were directing them too much. When we sat and listened to our audio recordings we found more of our own voices than the children's voices*

*and we saw that we were disturbing their own creativity. When they started to do something we'd say "do this" or "you try this, sing a song" and sometimes we started a song, like Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and we expected them to join in.*

*Music Student 3: Yes to continue it or something.*

*ECE Student 3: Yeah wait for them to respond.*

*Music Student 3: But I think that was good in a way that we did direct the children a little bit because they do need some form of starting point and then from that they continued their own idea. Like I found that one girl had some bamboo sticks and she grabbed a leaf and she went along that way and I would never have thought of playing the bamboo that way so by just observing and letting them observe and think how to play an instrument, their own way has opened up my way of thinking to say "oh yeah this can make sounds, not just the way that we would think of it." (Centre 3, Reflection 6, 11/5/11)*

The admission that too much time was spent in telling the children what to do was a frank admission of their practice at the start of the project. However, as reported, the development of their teaching was seen as a combination of instruction and developing the children's independence. The work of the early childhood students in documenting the work of the children was recorded in one exchange after again seeing the value of 'stepping back:'

*Music Student 4: I usually jump in when I'm doing music and start to analyse everything but gradually I've realised it is better to step back. I was thinking about my teacher at university, I noticed that what he does for a lot of lessons is he stops and just listens and then focuses on tiny little details. It's that really careful listening, not just sitting and hearing, but really careful listening that's important, so I'm going to try and apply it to my teaching.*

*ECE Student 4: Yes part of our role is to be an observer and what we do is we make learning stories with the children. So I've been trying to apply this observing in our music sessions. That's our role as teachers we*

*have to be observers as well as teachers. We can't teach if we don't observe so I can relate to your teacher and that article about listening by Susan Young. (Centre 4, Reflection 3, 6/4/1)*

To many of the students, the notion of listening became a pedagogy connected to the idea that teachers should give students space to be themselves and learn from actions sparked by their own interests. There was an increasing awareness of a "pedagogy of listening" (Young, 1995), and this reflected what they were reading in the early childhood research literature. It is interesting to see how the students were embracing the ideas and assumptions about being 'aware' of children's musical development through self-action coming out of the research:

*ECE Student 2: Susan Young stated that through developing an awareness of the children and their music we should let them venture where they will. Even if it is out of the musical conventions. (Moodle, 11/4/11)*

As the project progressed students appeared to become more aware of the special moments of interaction and learning. This amounted to observations of little moments of child responses, special smiles, small exchanges and nonverbal or expressive interactions. What was previously a noisy exchange from a child was perceived as an opportunity to listen:

*ECE Student 4: However, for me, I now am more aware to listen rather than quieten children when they express themselves in this [noisy] manner and embrace their creativity...(Moodle, 8/4/11)*

Another student expressed the capturing of special moments in terms of being an audience for the children:

*ECE Student 2: Sitting still and watching helps you catch little moments of 'making music' and I think they like to play to an audience. (Moodle, 6/4/11)*

In addition to listening and observing students reported that it was the nature of their responses to children's music making that stimulated and

captivated them. One student noted that her responses to children as a kind of encouragement or affirmation that helped raise the enjoyment of the experience and spur the children on to more learning:

*ECE Student 2: I have also noticed that when they are 'making music' and we respond by moving, or dancing this encourages them to continue, or do something a little different to see what our response will be. Yes, they do like to have our attention. It is amazing how much we missed before! (Moodle, 3/4/11)*

## Holistic learning

As the project developed the students became more cognisant of the idea that music was very much part of a holistic learning for the child. This meant that the conventional boundaries between what was commonly perceived of as music and 'extra musical' learning and behaviour were not so readily present in their pedagogical assumptions. Music learning happened alongside moving, dancing, stories, language, games and a whole range of physical and emotional experiences. The students from both groups caught onto music being broader than one element in the imagination and life of a child and actively discussed notions of interdisciplinarity:

*ECE Student 4: Drama is very close to music isn't it? You know they're role playing here all the time.*

*Music Student 4: They're very convinced by it too. Their imagination is everything. Like today they said to me "you watch your foot" because as far as they're concerned the fire was there and there's hot lava underneath us; one girl actually panicked like she was falling in, "you're going to get hurt" they all said and so we pulled her up to save her. I was quite interested and thought wow it's as if it's actually happening. (Centre 4, Reflection 3, 6/4/11)*

Music was assumed to have a strong connection with imagination and the power of music to stimulate the imagination was a common interest point for all the students. This was prevalent in a

'boom whackers' session initiated in one centre. A boom whacker is a homemade percussion instrument like a tube which when hit produces a percussive note...

*Music Student 1: Some of the children let their imaginations run wild as they replicated the sound of the jungle with the boom whackers. I think we should incorporate an activity based on the sound of the boom whackers in the next session. (Moodle, 30/4/11)*

The boom whackers took the students and children into some unexpected areas:

*ECE Student 1: Also I noticed when we were doing the boomwhackers, when we were all listening to the music, there were a few children saying ooh that feels like there's monsters here and dinosaurs and things like that.*

*Music Student 1: All sorts of imagination.*

*ECE Student 1: Yeah, so it would be quite cool to get them to listen to more of that sort of music and then tell what they thought we did in class.*

*Music Student 1: Sort of develop a story from their music*

*ECE Student 1: Yes get them to tell the story about what's happening with their piece of music.*

*Music Student 1: Yeah you can imagine what's going on; it's kind of creepy.*

*ECE Student 1: Maybe we could try and do something like that and get them to, tell us how they feel and maybe start acting out some of the…*

*Music Student 1: Share stories around.*

*ECE Student 1: Yeah.*

*Music Student 1: Probably from everyone, they might have ideas, good imagination.*

*ECE Student 1: Yeah go round the circle and ask them how they felt, how it made them feel or what story they thought it was about. (Centre 1, Reflection 2, 30/3/11)*

Here we can see the students gradually developing a sense of the dramatic infusing their work in the centre after the experience of the

boom whackers. This evolution of the activity from sounds to activity to moving into narrative was an exciting process for the children and the students alike. The students began to realise the holistic music learning was not only based on the ear, but involved sight, sound, smell, touch a whole raft of senses. Students found that stories and narratives provided a good entry point for multi-sensory development and several centres created musical activities based on stories that encouraged whole group participation. Stories were developed that used 'hunting' and 'journeys' among other things:

*ECE Student 2: I really think that by using music and stories that we capture the children's imaginations and all their senses. They LOVE to be involved and they do not differentiate between any of their senses, as such. Sight, sound, smell and the physical are all involved; it's how they discover and learn. (Moodle, 17/4/11)*

Here the students critically consider their knowledge and understandings while observing the practical implications of their reassessments in the centre music sessions. In the course of the project, musical concepts like rhythm and improvisation became triggers for new ways of thinking about pedagogy. The students began to relate their observations of the children using these musical descriptors. The idea of rhythm was used to describe the way children fell in and out of different learning activities going from something systematic to "chaos" and then eventually settling on "what feels right for them" (Music Student 4). It was interesting to note how the students were picking up on how movement through various spaces of interaction occurred as a kind of 'rhythm'.

Similarly, music improvisation was something that was seen as akin to the creative responses the children were making within the musical activities they participated in. Students talked about how they observed the children's '"creative responses" and embraced them in order to "encourage more improvising and creative thought" (Music Student

1, Moodle, 12/4/11). The particular blend of music and early childhood thinking and practice, seemed to promote these kinds of innovative pedagogical concepts. Early on in the project the students began to reflect on their efforts as teachers leading in a 'do as I do' fashion.

*ECE Student 1: I think the songs they're taught are quite, well I don't know I think they're more, they're moving to actions but they're being told to move to. Basically it might be "I can run, run, run then I stop. I can run, run, run and then I stop." So all the children are running, stopping, running, stopping - there's no imagination or no thought really it's just imitating what they're given.*

*Music Student 1: Music can be more –it can evolve all sorts of things that they can't see but they can feel and want to bring out. (Centre 1, Reflection 2, 30/3/11)*

This showed a developing critical regard for mindless imitative activity that is removed from the children's musical imaginations. Previously held assumptions about the concept of 'noise' came under critical review. The project's emphasis on music also brought about a reassessment of noise—and the occurrence of loud noise—which is commonly dismissed as being annoying or a nuisance. The experience of 'noise', as reconstructed in the project, became a potential for learning and expression for both teachers and children.

*Early Childhood Student 2: I have also realised, by observing other teachers, how often we shut the children down when they are making sounds (noise, before this project). I am sure that we will never look at music the way we used to and I am sure that the music students will see music differently too. (Moodle, 14/4/11)*

## Conclusion

While the object of the *Changing Places* study was to examine children developing their own musical space, other more unexpected developments occurred. Through an open exchange facilitated by the researchers in the

workshop setting, it was noted that as the weeks passed both sets of students developed an ethos of mutual trust and shared understanding. This ethos was particularly evident in the online discussion forums set up to encourage all the students to share their weekly experiences with one another. The findings showed the different ways in which the two sets of students through their dialogue developed an ethical approach to teaching. Whereas in a calculative approach, premised on individual achievement, the ability to imitate a pre-ordained musical text relies solely on teacher direction. As the students increased their commitment to the project their way of teaching changed. In observing these changes the researchers suggest that the task of developing self initiated music making with the children facilitated a shared ethos amongst the students in how they worked together in their practice.

There is always a risk factor in setting up a project with no track record to go by. In this project the reliance was on students trusting in the concept of granting space for invention and devising their own strategies for carrying forward their ideas. In creating opportunities for engaging with child initiated making, the music and early years students were through this project re-making their own concepts of teaching and music. Through this opening they developed an ethical practice that was reinforced by the children's adaptability to becoming musical initiators rather than imitators.

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