MUSIC Mark Magazine

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The UK Association for Music Education

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Editorial

By the time this is published, the official launch of The UK Association for Music Education – Music Mark will have taken place. Welcome, therefore, to the first issue of your new association’s Magazine! We hope to be building on the reputation the NAME Magazine has achieved for the breadth, depth and variety of its articles as we continue to seek out offerings that reflect the multi-faceted nature of music education in all its many contexts.

Music in higher education is sometimes seen as separate from the mainstream of music education. However here we present four perspectives that remind us of a continuity and progression in the greater continuum of music education beyond school and reveal something of the increasingly diverse world of music in higher education as it becomes ever more responsive to refreshed conceptions of music education more generally.

Refreshing the professional lives of music teachers is what the Teaching Music website does so well, and we celebrate its success with David Ashworth’s insights into the burgeoning impact of its growing community.

Next comes a group of articles focused on music education for the young: an Early Years music project; the third in a series about a project integrating language and music learning; and an example of a global music project supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties led by two community musicians. These are complemented by an account of one Higher Education Institution’s response to the Teaching Agency’s invitation to provide additional support for the training of primary music teachers, and a personal account from a Hungarian-born primary teacher describing her introduction of the Kodály method to a British school.

Kathryn Jourdan completes her account of an eventful 2012 for the Scottish community of Raploch by placing it in the context of an ethical dimension to a music education. Food for thought for all of us.

Keith Stubbs looks back over a year as educational manager for a freelance chamber orchestra and then we have the first in a series of GCSE composing worksheets from Jennie Francis, following on from her article on ‘exploring pathways’ this time last year.

The Good-enough music lesson returns with a follow-up to last year’s account from a secondary school and then we introduce a new feature, From the archive, opening our minds to the past as a potentially rich source for evaluating the present and placing in context future aspirations. Finally, two significant recent contributions to the music education canon of thought and practice are reviewed by distinguished music educationalists.

We have always considered the Magazine to be the property of the membership and as a place to inform, challenge and educate, while serving all shades of opinion. We hope you enjoy this issue and urge you to consider submitting your own account of music education as it is ‘thought’ and ‘lived’ in practice. We are as keen to work with first-time authors as we are with those whose names are familiar to those who read the Magazine regularly.

John Finney and Lis McCullough

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Integrated music and language learning: The European Music Portfolio – A Creative Way into Languages

GILLIAN L. AKHTAR, KAREN M. LUDKE & NIKKI M. MORAN

This is the third in a series of articles concerning the European Music Portfolio – see also Caroline Davenport's article in NAME Magazine Issue 36 and David Wheway's in Issue 37 – and is an account of a project, undertaken as part of a Masters degree, in the Albanian community of Thethi.

Introduction

For most people, and especially for children, music is something life-enhancing and fun. In addition to the enjoyment we can gain from listening to, making, representing and discussing music, evidence from a variety of fields suggests that instruction in music can have strong cross-curricular benefits. For example, focused attention and on-task behaviour (Moore 2002), self-esteem (Costa-Giomi 2004), mathematics and reading skills (Gardiner et al. 1996), IQ (Schellenberg 2004), and language skills (Slevc & Miyake 2006) have all shown improvements after or correlations with music training. Group music-making is an activity which can offer children the possibility of fun and successful collaboration in the classroom, and may even enhance young children’s engagement in positive social interaction and cooperative behaviour (Kirschner & Tomasello 2010). Language learning is also crucial for human development and interaction, and is increasingly important in light of pressures from globalization. Learning a new language, however, can create performance anxiety in learners (Krashen 1985; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986; Kramer 2001), and even in teachers (Horwitz 1996). For this reason, any techniques to reduce this anxiety seem likely to benefit language learning.

The European Music Portfolio: A Creative Way into Languages (EMP-L) is a project that aims to support music and language learning in the primary classroom (for details about the rationale and approach, see Ludke & Weinmann 2012). As part of a Masters degree project, EMP-L materials were taken into the demanding setting of English language learning at a summer education programme in the remote Albanian community of Thethi, Northern Albania. In this article we describe how the EMP-L materials were used in Thethi and we consider how cross-curricular links between language and music teaching could support the primary music curriculum here in the UK.

EMP-L resource materials

The European Music Portfolio project aims to support primary school children’s learning in music and language through an integrated approach. The project materials were developed by an international team from across ten European countries and piloted by teachers from 2009-2012 (see www.emportfolio.eu for the full list of project partners).

Since there is so much educational variety throughout Europe, and even within a particular school, the EMP-L materials are intended to be easily adaptable rather than treated as ‘recipes’ to be followed one step after another. Ten categories of musical activities were developed in order to organize the musical materials:

1. Rhythmic vocalisation (e.g., chants, raps with words in different languages)
2. Singing (e.g., songs from different regions and countries)
3. Body percussion (e.g., sequences of rhythmic movements to accompany words)
4. Playing instruments (e.g., traditional instruments, percussion, ‘found’ instruments)
5. Dancing and moving (e.g., dances from different cultures, movement games)
6. Exploring, improvising, composing (e.g., creating new music or lyrics)
7. Listening to music (e.g., instrumental music and songs from different countries)
8. Painting, writing, reading music (e.g., learning music notations, developing new ones)
9. Using ICT (e.g., technology-assisted learning such as YouTube, Audacity software)
10. Conducting, teaching music (e.g., teaching other pupils through call-and-response).
The EMP-L activities are designed to support a range of language skills, including:

- Oracy (perception and differentiation; listening comprehension; pronunciation and articulation; spoken production, reading aloud; spoken interaction and mediation)
- Literacy (reading and understanding; reproductive writing, copying out; productive and creative writing)
- Vocabulary [e.g., knowing the meaning of words and how to use them]
- Language awareness and knowledge about language [e.g., which language forms are appropriate for formal vs. informal contexts, or learning about and comparing different grammar systems]
- Intercultural awareness [e.g., learning about another culture and how it is similar and different from your own]
- Language learning strategies [e.g., memorisation strategies, scanning a written text to find a particular detail]

### Integrated music and language teaching in Albania

In July 2011, EMP-L materials were successfully used to teach English language skills to primary children in a summer education programme, run by the British charity The Balkans Peace Park Project [http://balkanspeacepark.org/], in the remote mountain community of Thethi in Northern Albania (Akhtar 2011). The unusual setting provided valuable insight into the benefits of the EMP-L programme for both generalist teachers and specialist music educators. Five of the EMP-L categories (Rhythmic vocalisation; Singing; Dancing and moving; Exploring, improvising and composing; and Listening to music) provided the framework for the development of fourteen musical activities [see Table 1]. These were integrated into ten two-hour themed English lessons that were delivered to a class of 25 pupils aged 4–12 years by an experienced British school teacher and musician with the help of an English Teaching Assistant and two Albanian interpreters. The EMP-L categories initially chosen were those deemed to be most suitable to a remote, poorly resourced environment. Then, as lessons evolved over the duration of the summer education programme, other EMP-L categories were naturally incorporated. For example, singing was eventually accompanied by the playing of percussion instruments, and listening activities led to creative artwork to illustrate what had been heard and to aid vocabulary learning. Whilst the primary aim of the summer programme was to teach English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMP Activity Category</th>
<th>Musical Activity</th>
<th>Summer Programme Curricular Themes</th>
<th>Aims of The Balkans Peace Park Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Vocalisation</td>
<td>* Use rhythm and rap to teach the weather, colours &amp; the songs You Are My Sunshine and Sing a Rainbow</td>
<td>Weather and colours.</td>
<td>Understanding of the environment and vocabulary related to nature and tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing (without additional activities)</td>
<td>* Old MacDonald Had a Farm</td>
<td>Animals, animal sounds and products, and the environment. Numbers, telling time.</td>
<td>Understanding the environment and English vocabulary related to nature and tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing &amp; Moving</td>
<td>* When You’re Happy and you Know it</td>
<td>What makes you happy. Body parts, left and right.</td>
<td>English vocabulary related to nature and tourism – giving directions and first aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring, Improvising, Composing</td>
<td>* Create a musical soundscape to the story The Three Billy Goats Gruff</td>
<td>Animals, nature, the environment, and the students’ own choice.</td>
<td>An understanding and appreciation of the environment and English vocabulary relating to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to Music</td>
<td>Listening to a musical version of The Hare and the Tortoise. Vivaldi’s Four Seasons to inspire artwork and learn vocabulary relating to the four seasons. Musical version of the story The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse.</td>
<td>Tolerance &amp; respect for other students’ pace of learning. Animals and speed. The seasons and weather. Town and country life.</td>
<td>Tolerance and cooperation in the community. Understanding and appreciation of the environment and English vocabulary relevant to tourism. Address the issue of depopulation in the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
language skills, the use of the EMP-L materials simultaneously fostered musical interest and skill, and – as we will discuss below – was shown to improve children’s concentration and heighten their self-esteem, which led to unexpected cross-curricular benefits in terms of enhanced learning in other areas.

Music is a naturally engaging medium through which to learn and the Thethi experience clearly demonstrated that EMP-L activities can create a positive learning environment. When interviewed, Albanian children of different ages and abilities were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the musical activities delivered in the classroom, describing them as ‘enjoyable’ and ‘fun’. Some older pupils commented that musical activities, particularly singing, helped them to acquire and retain new English vocabulary, whilst other pupils were eager to list their favourite English songs and indeed were often heard singing them after lessons had concluded for the day. The children loved music and it became apparent that as far as they were concerned, learning through musical activities was ‘much more fun’ and less ‘hard work’ than traditional non-music based lessons.

The Albanian and British adults involved also remarked that the use of music not only helped improve language skills (particularly pronunciation and vocabulary) but created an ‘energized classroom’ where ‘motivated pupils’ became ‘highly engaged’ in the learning activities. The EMP-L activities created the conditions for enhanced learning, which in turn reduced the number of discipline issues in the classroom and created a more manageable and rewarding work environment for the teacher.

As we mentioned earlier, the attraction of using music as a tool for learning not only lies in its ability to engage and excite children, but also in its ability to reduce anxieties associated with language learning. Albanian children are very competitive in the classroom and individuals are often concerned about being ‘shown up’ in front of their peer group. This fear can inhibit learning and damage self-esteem. Learning through group activities such as singing and musical games, however, reduced the need for individuals to ‘perform’ in front of their peer group, and instead allowed skills to be practised and honed within the safety of the group. In Thethi, this ultimately led to both greater English language acquisition and improved self-confidence. By the end of the two-week Albanian project, previously shy and reticent pupils were volunteering to perform songs and recite verse in front of their classmates and teachers.

Whilst the EMP-L programme can undoubtedly enhance student learning, the Albanian experience has shown that such benefits are not dependent upon having a particular pupil cohort or learning environment. The flexibility of the EMP-L materials is such that teachers can adapt and tailor activities to meet the needs of their students within the confines of the available resources or particular curricular structure. For example, in Thethi, the lessons and musical activities were linked to environmental education (to tie in with the supporting charity’s aims) and were delivered in a context with severely limited resources (no electricity or blackboards and an insufficient number of desks). This meant that some EMP-L musical categories, such as those involving ICT, were not used, but this did not constrain the overall effectiveness of the materials.

Musical activities such as singing could take up as little as 10 minutes during a lesson, although it was more typical for musical activities to be
Integrated across the entire lesson (for example, using a rap exercise to learn colours or listening to Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* when learning about the seasons). In fact, linking musical activities to lesson themes proved to be a key aspect in improving pupil learning. The EMP-L materials could also be easily differentiated to meet the needs of a class that differed widely in terms of age, educational background, English language ability and social skills. Furthermore, the type of musical activity delivered could be tailored to suit staff availability, both in terms of numbers and skill level. Whilst the children in Albania were generally presented with live music, individual teachers could if necessary also use recordings and equipment such as a metronome to help with lesson delivery. One of the key factors behind the success of the Albania project was that the lead teacher was familiar with the EMP-L materials and confident about how they could be used in the classroom. This is an important point, and the online resources and training opportunities available as part of EMP-L are very valuable for this reason.

**Applications to language and music teaching in the UK**

Although budgets are tight in the UK, the EMP-L materials have been designed to be implemented with a minimal level of time and effort required on the part of teachers. The EMP-L materials and learning opportunities fit well within the framework of the National Languages Strategy for England and Wales and the Primary National Strategy [Key Stages 2 and 3] and the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland [Expressive Arts, Modern Languages, Literacy and English]. Specifically, the EMP-L materials provide opportunities to support and nurture children’s creativity and aesthetic development; musical, listening and composing skills; and performance and expressive abilities. The EMP-L activities can also build learners’ confidence, intercultural awareness and understanding, literacy and ICT skills, teamwork and use of effective learning strategies – which are important across the primary curriculum.

In sum, the EMP-L materials are very flexible and easy to adapt to different classroom contexts and situations (see the article by Caroline Davenport about her use of the materials in Scotland in NAME Magazine Issue 36). Sharing resources between teachers and departments within a school can greatly enhance children’s learning. We suggest that such cross-curricular teaching can be used to keep music in the primary curriculum and, indeed, to place high quality music instruction at the centre of children’s learning. We encourage teachers to visit the EMP-L project website [www.emportfolio.eu] for more information about the project, downloadable online resources, and upcoming training opportunities in the partner countries.

**References**


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