

Chapter 31

Music Composition for Creative Thinking: An Educational Experience Based on Creative Process

Maria Maddalena Erman
C.I.D.M. NaturalMenteMusica, Italy

ABSTRACT

Music composition may be used as a tool for the development of creative thinking; it can be considered an “exercise of imagination,” and it can offer new operative ways to develop interdisciplinary processes and to promote communicative, cognitive, cultural, aesthetic, and emotional functions. The author of this chapter introduces a report of educational experiences of music composition with pupils in Primary School where, through socio-constructivist learning, the students acquire new ways of reading and writing music and begin to elaborate a different score for new and original musical compositions, written, composed, and performed directly by children. This musical experience has the goal of using a “creative” teaching/learning process that contributes to the individual’s global education. This musical work on music composition is considered an appealing open project because of its formative nature and various applications: it develops a creative pedagogy which doesn’t transmit a static culture, but rather provides new thinking processes and new interaction modalities.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, as people find themselves in the middle of a serious collective crisis, they find themselves exposed to new and unprecedented emotional experiences and pressed by looming

threats in the present society. At this juncture, we are reminded that the human potential is limitless and precious. Creativity, an innate human potential that each individual possesses and has the right/duty to develop, is now recognized as a priceless resource for the whole society. It is a

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fact that music promotes the conditions for the development of creativity and also multiplies the individual's potentialities. Music is a natural part of each individual's life. Music offers a solid basis for a general education by developing, praising and valuing children's potentialities, thus leading to individual self-fulfilment.

Built on creative pedagogy, this musical experience has the goal of transforming the implicit compositional process into a "creative" teaching/learning process that contributes to the individual's global education and promotes communicative, cognitive, cultural, aesthetic and emotional functions. In order to enhance general creative music lessons we need to promote creative activities where music is understood as playing, producing, expressing, communicating, exploring and stimulating inside and outside behaviour, and thereby providing a valuable opportunity for growth (Stefani, 1979).

This creative work of composing music provides considerable positive benefits for the learning experience, disputing the notion that only the highest levels of music education allow for a musical composition approach.

In relation to general perspective of education, the current socialization and 'culturalization' processes tend to standardize adults, young people and kids, representing them in an existential theatre that conforms more and more to stereotypes, where there is little space to express someone's identity and authenticity. The deepest aspects of someone's personality, his motivations, aspirations and all the goals and objectives he can and must reach throughout the course of his life, are increasingly limited by image production/consumption systems. In this society in which everyone is being levelled out, overwhelmed by a serious socio-political crisis and pressed by a sombre financial crisis, culture, education and the arts run the risk of being neglected.

Ads and specific programs about creativity education are being promoted, sponsored and realized at different levels and for various educational areas

by the EEC (European Economic Community), MIUR (Ministero Istruzione Università e Ricerca) and other public and private organizations.

This has been especially true in the western part of Naples, Italy. Despite the presence of archaeological and natural areas of interest, the lack of a cultural continuity and the difficulties in recovering and maintaining resources, was aggravated by intense and harmful building activity and by poor and inadequate city planning. The current scenario presents a rather deficient and disjointed cultural resource system and a lower-middle sociocultural status quo which is exacerbated, moreover, by a 35% unemployment rate. Therefore the school system represents a strong, if not the only, source of culture.

The 33rd Primary School in Naples - Italy has carried out the music education activities for the formative experience based on creative teaching// learning process in conjunction with NaturalMenteMusica – CIDM (Centro Iniziative Didattiche Musicali) which operates on the territory promoting music and creativity as a resource for education. The formative experience was realized during curricular school time thanks to a creative leadership which has promoted a careful focus on school resources, smart organization and time management. The 33rd Primary School, working in collaboration with NaturalMenteMusica, operates by elaborating integrated plans according to a bottom-up formative system focused on socio-cultural and educational activities extending outside the school system and involving children's families.

The centre NaturalMenteMusica participated to a shared planning through a creative music approach, providing musical instruments. It monitored the process and carried out a product analysis presenting results from this learning experience. In addition, the centre enriched the musical experience with local concerts and lessons.

This educational experience based on "creative" teaching/learning process, tend to have these overall aims:

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