

WBL PROJECT PROPOSAL

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1. Project Title Investigation of children's enjoyment and perceived benefits of activities within whole-class vocal sessions in an older primary setting.
2. Context The setting is a mixed-age primary school class, with children from 3rd class to 6th class (c. 8-12 years old). The researcher provides the class with weekly 45 minute vocal music sessions, as part of the Encore programme of Music Generation Carlow. The researcher has worked as a musician educator on the programme since 2015. The school and class involved in this project have been on the programme since September 2021.
3. Justification The researcher's practice objective is to foster children's intrinsic motivation for musical activity in their lives. Research suggests that enjoyment of an activity is key to the development of intrinsic motivation (Kimiecik, Harris 1996) (Csikszentmihalyi, Csikszentmihalyi 1988) (Hallam 2016). There is a lack of research regarding the assessment of enjoyment levels for musical activity in whole class vocal lessons. The ability to get effective feedback from the children directly would inform the development of the researcher's practice and the wider organisation in which they work. The researcher has not found a model of student feedback survey to fit their practice context which measures this aspect effectively, therefore has developed a pilot survey model to be trialled for this project.

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4. The intended impact

The researcher aims to compare observations about how children enjoy and engage with different aspects of the vocal class, including both song learning and rehearsing and song creation with direct feedback from the children.

This project is envisaged as a pilot which would be assessed for its scalability to other classes within the Music Generation Carlow Programme and possibly for use in other programmes in Ireland. The development of an effective feedback tool for the Musician Educator to use in the classroom would be of particular benefit to the programme and would support Musician Educators in defining and developing the pedagogical aims of the programme.

5. The outlined intention

During three consecutive classroom sessions during April / May 2022, the children will be asked to complete a simple questionnaire at the end of each section of the vocal class, before starting the next section. For each class, the classroom teacher and musician educator will also record their own observations of the children's engagement in each activity.

The whole class questionnaires will ask class members to self-assess their enjoyment of each class activity and their perception of its benefit to their singing and musical skills using a Likert scale exercise, with additional space for narrative comments at the end. This questionnaire will be designed with the input and approval of the class teacher and school principal. This questionnaire format is being used as it is a common format for attitude measurement (Royeen 1985, Mellor, Moore 2014) and can be completed by the children at the end of each class activity, provided that the process is explained to the children in advance (Royeen 1985, de Leeuw 2011)

Participant Observation notes for Musician Educator (Researcher): A form to fill in for each class to be observed, with comments for each activity and general observances.

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Non-participant Classroom teacher Observation notes form for each class: A form to fill in for each class to be observed, with comments for each activity and general observances.

The timeline for the project is shown on the GANNT chart Figure 1 below.

6. The ethics and insider research

The principal ethical concerns are around the participation of children in the research project. The researcher needs to ensure:

- a) parental consent for the children to participate
- b) the informed consent of the children to participate, in making it clear to the children that they are not obliged to participate
- c) the process is clearly understood by the children
- d) the children are not harmed in any way by their participation

As an insider-researcher, the researcher needs to:

- ensure clear communication and consultation with the classroom teacher and school principal, Music Generation Musician Educator colleagues and line managers regarding documentation and implementation.
- be aware of the power dynamic with the children of their role as Musician Educator and ensure that this does not unduly affect the freedom of the children to participate honestly.
- share and discuss the outcomes of the research with colleagues in an open manner and to discuss any implications or recommendations.

7. Personal learning outcomes

To become familiar with research on enjoyment and engagement in children and how that might be applied to activities in Vocal classes.

To pilot and refine a method for getting direct feedback from classes.

To analyse the format of vocal classes and what produces the most enjoyment for the children and to discuss possible reasons for this.

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Figure 1 Project Timeline

Week	13/3 - 19/3	20/3 -26/3	27/3 - 2/4	3/4 - 9/4	10/4 - 16/4	17/4 - 23/4	24/4 - 30/4	1/5 - 7/5	8/5 - 14/5	15/5 - 21/5	22/5 - 28/5
Task											
Drafting Parental Consent forms											
Drafting Survey forms											
Parental Consent collection											
Lesson planning											
Explanatory session with children											
Literature Review											
Schools Easter Break											
Research exercise data collection											
Research exercise data processing											
Project write up											