



BIRMINGHAM CITY
Faculty of Health, Education
and Life Sciences

Whole Class Ensemble Teaching Research Report – Executive Summary

Professor Martin Fautley
Dr Victoria Kinsella
Dr Adam Whittaker



Birmingham City University

WCET Report - Executive Summary

This is the executive summary of a research report into the Whole Class Ensemble Teaching programme in England, conducted during the academic year 2016-17, funded by Arts Council England, and administered by Music Mark, a membership organisation for Music Services and/or Lead Organisations of a Music Education Hub, their teaching and support teams, their partners and their schools.

The research was conducted in three phases:

1. A nationwide on-line survey open to all heads of Music Education Hubs (MEHs) and Music Services (MSs) to complete. This produced 89 usable responses
2. A series of semi-structured interviews with key MEH and MS leads, 24 such interviews were undertaken.
3. A series of elite interviews with experts in the field of WCET.

Key Finding A: Conceptualisations of WCET

This report identifies two main ways in which WCET is conceptualised, and subsequently operationalised. These are:

- Music starts with the instrument (MSWI)
- Music via the instrument (MVI)

These are different, and whichever is used has a significant impact on the ways on which WCET programmes are set up, and put into practice.

Key Finding B: Quality of WCET provision

What makes for quality WCET provision depends on which conceptualisation is foremost. For MSWI programmes, success is likely to include:

- Knowledge of music
- A range of improvising activities, using both the instrument and voices
- A range of composing activities, using both the instrument and voices
- A range of music listened to, including recordings made by others as well as recordings that the learners have made themselves
- Developing technical skills on the instrument with a view to deepening understandings of music via this means
- Opportunities to perform using instruments and voices in a range of styles and genres, and in a variety of venues
- Making progress on the instruments/s concerned

- A basic knowledge of notation as it is appropriate to their stage of development, possibly including, but not restricted to, staff notation
- A realisation of the long-term nature of musical learning
- Opportunities for progress and progression in whatever way/s the learners deem appropriate to them.
- There are opportunities in place for accreditation for musical attainment, both collectively and singly

Success for MVI programmes is likely to include:

- Making progress on the instruments/s concerned
- Singing activities which support musical learning
- Appropriate notation for the instrument/s concerned
- Developing technique on the instrument with a view to making good medium and longer-term progress
- A range of improvising activities, possible starting with instruments and voices
- Opportunities to perform using instruments and voices in a range of styles and genres, and in a variety of venues
- Knowledge of music
- A range of composing activities, using both the instrument and voices
- A range of music listened to, including recordings made by others as well as recordings that the learners have made themselves
- Opportunities for progress and progression in instrumental musical learning in way/s the learners deem appropriate to them
- Opportunities are in place for accreditation for musical attainment, both singly and collectively.

Key Finding C: Quality of Teaching and Learning

This report identifies that *quality of teaching and learning* are highly significant in WCET provision. It identifies four main aspects:

- Quality of musical curriculum
- Quality of musical activities
- Quality of musical teaching
- Quality of musical learning

All of these are significant in WCET success.

Key Finding D: WCET makes a difference

Done well, WCET makes a real difference to the lives of the children and young people involved. New horizons have opened for children and young people, schools, parents, and MEHs/MSs.

Key Finding E: Progress and Progression need defining

Arising from this WCET research, it is suggested that the music education sector must consider very carefully the words that are being used when discussing *progress* and *progression*. This report articulates this distinction:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| A) Progress | - to make progress, to get better at something, to have greater depth of understanding or breadth of experience |
| B) Progression | - to go from WCET to a school band (etc.), then to an area band, then a music centre band, and so on. In other words to make progress as in (A) above, and then avail oneself of progression routes available via the local hub |

Although interlinked, *progress* and *progression* are different, and need to be considered as such.

Key Finding F: Support from schools is vital

Good support from host schools is the most significant feature. This is vital for WCET to take root and succeed. The only common counter-indicator is lack of engagement by schools.

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Birmingham City University
Faculty of Health, Education, and Life Sciences
City South Campus
Westbourne Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 3TN