CAN YOU THINK A LITTLE LOUDER?
A CLASSROOM-BASED ETHNOGRAPHY OF EIGHT AND NINE YEAR OLDS
COMPOSING WITH MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the processes in which eight and nine year old children engaged as they composed generative expressions with music and language. This study was a classroom-based ethnography conducted by a teacher/researcher in the context of her own general music classroom and the home room of the participant students. Twenty-one boys and girls in a suburban grade three class were involved in this four and one-half month study; three children were chosen as target (focus) composers.

This study was designed so that the primary voice and point of view was that of the student-composers rather than that of the adult teacher/researcher. To that end, methodologies for data collection and interpretation were flexible and emergent, to allow for inclusion of unexpected events, interactions, foci/directions, etc. and to ensure that student-composers' self-described decisions about their work were at the forefront of the discussion and interpretation of the data.

A framework was devised to inform and clarify the teacher/researcher's understanding of what the children were doing as they composed. This framework provided a flexible structure for organization and illustration of data used for interpretive purposes.

Data collected included:

1) journals, written self evaluations and in-process verbal critiques by all students

2) video-tapes of focus composers in:
   a) working sessions
   b) reflective discussion with the teacher/researcher
3) video-tapes of all students in:
   a) in-process sharing/critiquing sessions
   b) final performances of compositions
4) field notes of the teacher/researcher, including observations, informal conversations
   with student-composers, and observations and comments of the home room teacher.

Findings from this study included these insights:

1) For these child-composers, process and product were intertwined throughout the
   making of their compositions;
2) These child-composers began with a holistic idea of what they wanted to do and
   proceeded to explore, revise and polish their compositions in the particular medium
   until they reached their self-determined goal;
3) Socio-cultural factors of informal (enculturated or acquired) learning, and general
   maturity, were primary influences in decision-making in compositions with both
   music and language;
4) Training made a difference in the baseline starting point in composing ability,
   attitude, speed of the compositional process, and expectations for the final product;
5) These eight and nine year old children, untrained in music, demonstrated that they
   could compose rather than just improvise;
6) These child-composers went through the same four processes of exploration, making
   choices, editing/drafting, and completing a coherent product, when composing in two
   different modalities; they engaged in these processes recursively as well as
   sequentially in both media.
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“A line cannot exist alone, it always brings a companion along” (H. Matisse)

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To my partner, Stan:

“Daring to write, daring to compose: at the least a challenge facing talented women, at the most an act of rebellion” (M. Citron)

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To my children, Jessica, Zoe and Zachary:

“When I make my drawings....there is nothing foreseen about my path. I am led. I do not lead” (H. Matisse)

Thank you for supporting me as I followed my path - I will do the same for each of you as you follow yours.

To the children and my teaching colleague in this study:

“We are the Music Makers and the Dreamers of the Dreams” (R. Dahl)

Thank you for sharing all the delicious moments of discovery.
CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Scene

“May you live in interesting times.” This Chinese curse is often misinterpreted to be a blessing, because it is worded so ambiguously. The response, “Oh, that’s an interesting idea”, which I often get to my proposals for a general music curriculum where composing is a major focus, often leaves me feeling that this phrase, too, although explicitly neutral to positive, is actually negative. When music teachers respond this way I believe it is often because they are fearful of losing control of students’ behaviour, learning outcomes and noise; when administrators respond this way it is perhaps because they do not understand what composition is, only that it is not clearly demonstrable as entertainment for the parent community; when teaching colleagues respond this way I feel it has something to do with their mistaken perception that I am prying or putting pressure on them, when I only wish to make some connections between what is relevant in other areas being studied and topics for music compositions.

Having taught children music, drama, and classroom core subjects for many years, I have experienced various swings in philosophy, dictates from the Ministry of Education, and moves to bring certain curricular areas more in line with those same ones outside school: specifically science and math; or, new ways of maximizing learning and creating: whole language and creative writing come to mind. The one area that seems forever stuck in its 19th century position is music. The place of music in schools is either as entertainment or a showcase for skills in performance practice (Carlin, 1997). Rarely, in the education community, is there evidence of strong support for art either as ‘a way of thinking’,
(Arnheim, 1969), or as an art form ‘for its own sake’. (Fiske, 1993) Students are vessels to be filled, quietly and systematically, with skills needed to perform other people’s ‘acceptable’ musical works. Repertoire consists primarily of traditional Western icons, and methods are teacher directed and hierarchical, driven by behavioural objectives that can be quantitatively evaluated. Individual, informal experiences with music out of school (religious, cultural or peer) are not taken into account when pedagogical content or teaching procedures are determined; students are not invited to input ideas into assessment procedures. Music education really manifests itself as training, and although I doubt if either school-based music teachers or researchers would acclaim training in performance skills, imitation and memorization as a complete music education, I have always been hard pressed to see much evidence of educationally sound practices involving such things as critical and creative thinking on the part of the students, relevant materials and assessment tools for specific, different situations and student populations, or, teachers who involve students in co-operative learning and teaching with him/her or classroom peers.

Music education in schools requires, for the most part, passive acquiescence, by children, to someone else’s (adult) decisions in every aspect of learning. The result is uninterested, unmotivated students who have no reason to take response-ability and see little connection between music in school and music in the rest of their lives. It seems to me that this attitude, and the resulting passivity is, perhaps, one of the reasons music enrolment is declining in many high schools (B.C. Ministry of Education), and why so many elementary music teachers get ‘burned out’. Music teachers I have as colleagues, seem, as a group, to agree that we are entertainers ourselves, always short of time, always needing to motivate, always
making sure the kids have ‘fun’. I think we have done ourselves a terrible disservice as both artists and professional educators. Music, like any other subject, needs to have challenges, demand commitment from the participants in the form of critical and creative thought and action, and include assessment and evaluation tools which are appropriate to the subject and media that form the bases for learning in that modality. Quantitative, behavioural objectives, criteria-referencing based on traditional goals and measurements, have all been forced on arts teachers, including music teachers. Rigorous musical problems to solve, demands on students’ thinking and time, have been eradicated, because music is a ‘frill’ in so many minds.

Such is the climate of the times, and the situation I have repeatedly found myself in over the years of my career as a music teacher. Learning in music is passive, imitative, skill-based: three words that are pedagogically incomplete, at best, and unsound and inappropriate, at worst, for teaching and learning an art form. In the effort to make ourselves appear more credible, we, and our students, have become narrow, linear thinkers, unimaginative in the process, for “the more pedantic we become, the more acceptable we are”, according to Bud Beyer, Theatre Department Head at Northwestern University. In the search for “efficiency and manageability [we have] thrust imagination aside” (Greene, 1988, pp. 46-47). We have alienated ourselves from ourselves, and no longer know how to reach into the wellspring of the creative and imaginative world we have within ourselves that makes us humans rather than animals. Being out of touch with ourselves we are out of touch with the children we teach. Van Manen (1990) writes that effective teaching and research demands full awareness of experience “as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it.” (p. 30) He calls this type of
experience, ‘lived experience’, whereby one involves and acknowledges intellect, intuition and subjectivity in the process of “uncover[ing] and describ[ing] the...internal meaning structures...” (1990, p. 10), immersing oneself totally in that specific experience. If we allow ourselves to be fully ourselves and at the same time sensitively guide our students based on their needs and abilities, we can, it seems to me, be truly effective in designing and meeting relevant educational goals. Unfortunately, in our hierarchical, compartmentalized, highly structured system, the real essence of educational experience is often lost.

While there has been some interest, recently, in creative activities like improvisation and composition, most learning in these areas centre on melodic or tonal centres, or rhythmic pattern, as evidenced in research studies by Flohr (1979, 1985), Reinhardt (1990), Kratus (1989), and Wiggins (1992), among others, and echoed in classrooms by practitioners who have “been lacking a scheme for bringing structure and sequence to the [creative] learning that occurs.” (Kratus, 1990, p. 33) Inquiry in research and/or practice into emergent behaviours based on open-ended tasks with sound, rarely occur. For theoreticians, the lack of methodology for studying these kinds of phenomena makes research procedures complex and ‘messy’, and it takes a researcher totally comfortable in the knowledge that out of chaos may (and only may) come order, to undertake such a project. Among practitioners, few feel comfortable leaving the secure structure of melody and rhythm behind, to trust that exploration and invention with tone colour, dynamics, tempo, texture, and form will yield as much opportunity for growth, mastery and understanding about and with music as the more pre-structured setting. As teacher and/or researcher, immersing myself in the ‘lived experience’ of what the students and I do together allows opportunity for exciting sharing,
growth and discovery in creative endeavours. I realize that for me, the essence of teaching is to foster learning within a transformational creative form rather than a static curriculum construct.

I think that discomfort is the main reason I so often have received the responses I get about my research and teaching preferences. Interestingly, the response from students is completely different. From kindergarten through adults, once involved in the co-operative process of design, execution and evaluation of learning in music, energy, enthusiasm, commitment, growth and imagination are constants in the learning setting. Recent examples include the kindergarten child who ‘told’ on another for stockpiling instruments, concerned that this would result in “me not getting my idea out before class is over”; and the grade 3 parent who telephoned to ask what we were doing because “my child only wants to come to school on music days”. Student response is one of the main reasons I continue to teach in the face of continued lack of support (even criticism), and why I have chosen to concentrate my dissertation on composition with young children.

Composition involves artistic expression for the purpose of communicating ideas to others. Over time, I have noticed that both the children and I intuitively use language and dramatization to explain, accompany, and extend sound events, or to act as a springboard or catalyst for musical expression. Vygotsky (1978) argued that visual symbols derive from gestures. Dyson (1989), a teacher and researcher who studies young children in transition stages of learning to use language in written forms, believes that the creative writing or storytelling patterns and structures “evolve primarily through dramatic play, talk and drawing...” (p. 9). My experience with children between the ages of five and twelve
corroborates these research findings. The students all seem, in some ways and at some times, to utilize various art forms in interrelated ways, either to help communicate ideas or to aid in the immersion of themselves into the ‘doing’ of a musical ‘problem to solve’. According to Dooley (1995), “We know the thing by becoming it” (p. 79). Although this statement was written about using language in the classroom, the same can easily be said for any holistic and deep knowledge about any experience or any other curricular area.

Thinking about how often other art forms appeared within or alongside music expressions, I began to investigate published research involving creating with language. My first idea was that storytelling would be a logical area to look for parallels in thinking and/or behaviours, for both use ideas, inspirations, structures, patterns and no notation. Interestingly, I found that there was little evidence of an aural/oral focus in language learning. In many of the schools about which I have information, there is little or no oral language in schools - no reciting, no reading out loud to peers, even, after primary years, no teacher reading to the children. Teachers in my school were so concerned that they have made this an issue: currently each intermediate class has a primary class with whom they “buddy-read” on a scheduled basis, and all primary and several intermediate teachers read aloud to their classes on a regular basis.

There is, however, creation with language as part of the curriculum in the form of creative writing and publishing. This began as an effort, some years ago, to bring some creating into language arts, to balance all the attention to skills and analysis. According to Leggo, a poet, teacher and researcher himself, this wonderful, open-ended opportunity quickly got ‘standardized’ into a prescriptive set of procedures widely utilized in elementary schools in
my province. The implication here, as in music, is that lack of adherence to behavioural objectives and normative assessment and evaluation allows for too fuzzy a teaching/learning structure for comfort. We tend to be constantly drawn to logical, structured systems, where the boundaries are clear and everyone knows and works within, the accepted standards. This attitude seems to me to be evidence of the vise-grip our culture’s puritanical overtones have on the entire social fabric, education included.

The whole area of learning in/with language arts is of prime importance, for our social systems rely primarily on language for communication, especially language in written form. We are obsessed with the written word in our Western culture, and have been since Gutenberg gave us the vehicle for disseminating ideas in a mass(ive) format. We are not an oral culture, and, as one can see from the richness of vocal inflection, body movement, intonation, etc., integral to stories in other cultures having more prominent and enduring oral traditions, a lot can be lost by only having the printed word to tell the story. The parallels to music are obvious: music on a page does not ‘live’ unless one is trained to ‘hear’ complex musical patterns in one’s head and understand the conventions within that modality; words on a page do not ‘live’ unless one is trained to understand the meanings and implications of words, phrases and situations of a particular language style and setting.

However, school experiences with language and musical sound are very different. Children come to school having much experience with and informal knowledge about, language, and we spend a great majority of teaching time developing their abilities and skills with written language so that they can quickly participate in our culture’s mainstream communication mode, print. Oral language is relegated to a secondary position, to be used as
needed, the belief being that the children already know enough about oral language. In
music, children do not enter school with a similar abundant background. Many children sing
or dance spontaneously, but few family or social settings extend this knowledge/behaviour.
Also, it is often discouraged once they come to school as a mode of expression. Many
kindergarten teachers do sing and play song-games with their classes, but in grade 1, ‘serious’
work begins, and most teachers leave music to sessions with the music teacher. There is,
from this point, minimal kinesthetic, aural and oral involvement with music. Some older
students get instruction in theory, but this is usually at the expense of listening and creating
experiences. Sometimes by age 9, and certainly by age 13, most children see an end to their
music education in school. So, whereas language learning is concentrated in written form,
but lacks emphasis in oral form, music has smatterings of both aural and written in some
school settings. In both cases, education in the subject is unbalanced and incomplete.
Through reading and observation of children in my school, my deep interest in creating in
music began to spill over into creating in language.

While my interest in the interrelation of these two modalities is fairly recent, Anne Haas
Dyson has been investigating written language acquisition and possible parallels between
creating procedures and structures in music and language composing for some time (1989).
She has found similarities in intention and some elements of structure. Like Dyson, Upitis
(1992, 161) feels that creating artistic, generative expressions in both music and language are
ways people tell about themselves: “[It is] argued by anthropologists,
psychologists...linguists...sociologists...historians and educators alike, that people are
essentially storytellers. If we ignore their stories, we not only do them an injustice, but we
fail to take advantage of an opportunity to make meaning and effect change”. As a result of both reading and closer observation of the children at my school, I decided to design my dissertation project to further investigate creating in both these modalities. This dissertation shares the stories of twenty-one eight and nine year old student-composers whose narratives were expressed in the mediums of both music (sound) and language (words and text). As well, stories of my own composing activities and my journey initiating, designing, conducting and writing this thesis as teacher/researcher, are included in the narrative.

Readings, empirical work, dissertation project outline, etc., form one strand of this dissertation, organized and written within the formal dissertation paradigm. Another strand which has been woven into the fabric of this dissertation grew out of my reflections on readings, dialogues with others, observations of students, and my own composing experiences. I was fast filling a journal with questions, ‘revelations’, intuitions, etc., which was both comforting (a release for my non-linear side) and frustrating (each time I thought I was getting somewhere, I would have more questions). Dreading the formal, ‘dry’ thesis style I would have to write in, when my research involved open-ended, emergent, creative ways of thinking and acting, I was already projecting the tensions within myself to reconcile the two poles I would have to deal with concurrently. Through discussions with a member of my committee and reading of Rena Upitis’ books which are both “readable” and scholarly, I recalled that Jeanne Bamberger, in The Mind Behind the Musical Ear (1991), and Douglas Hofstadter, in Godel, Escher, Bach (1980), had both created “dialogues” with imaginary characters to explore ideas metaphorically and/or out of the prevailing style of the rest of their books. I decided, therefore, to include my own reflective protocols as part of the structure of
this thesis, as “interludes”. This, I felt, would help explain my own holistic exploratory process, in which senses and intellect played equal parts. It was validating to read Dewey (1934), Eisner (1992), Sutton-Smith (1988), Greene (1988), Grumet (1988), among others, state, unequivocally, that cognition involves both the intellect and emotions, working together. Being able to acknowledge that both these parts of myself participate in scholarly, intelligent work is very satisfying.
CHAPTER TWO
Introduction To My Interest In Composition

As a classroom music teacher, one of my principal interests is encouraging elementary school age children to create their own compositions. I include composing in my curriculum at all levels from kindergarten to grade seven. As a researcher, I have long been curious about the value judgements and decisions young children make as they plan, perform, and critically discuss their musical compositions. In particular, I am interested in the decisions untrained student composers, such as those I work with, make as they focus on the musical medium, sound.

Composing music involves the ability to synthesize and transform both new and previously-known aural material in order to both find and solve musical problems (DeLorenzo, 1989, DeLoache and Brown, 1987, Getzels and Csikszentimihalyi, 1976). Cognitive components in this creative activity include the imaginative use of the full range of cognitive processes (perception, storage, recall, synthesis and transformation) in a series of planning processes (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1988,1991; Gromko, 1996, 1993; Hargreaves, 1997). Baker-Sennett, Matusov & Rogoff (1992) determined that “planning is inherently a creative process that involves foresight as well as improvisation in the face of changing circumstances and anticipation to be able to take advantage of unpredictable events” (p. 95). As children plan for a particular purpose, they draw upon knowledge and experience gathered from various socio-cultural venues (home, school, wider community), specifically useful for that particular situation.
Research in perception (Butterworth, 1992), and language development (Donaldson, 1978), suggests that all experiences are contextualized. This point of view is similar to that of cognitive psychologists who believe that socio-cultural aspects of a person’s life-world are ‘situated’, or grounded in ‘situated cognition’. Cognition is involved because, according to Fiske (1995/6) and Hargreaves (1997), among others, the concept of ‘situated cognition’ requires the mind to actively process pre-existing knowledge with new information through such (cognitive) processes as perceiving, storing, recalling, interpreting, and transforming. In order to absorb information, some form of communication is involved. In order for communication to take place, the transmitted material must be understood, which implies information having shared meanings within a situated, contextualized frame - ie., from the culture of which the communicating parties are part. The ‘communication’ can be considered ‘learning’, which, according to Mercer (1992, p. 33) must be situated, as “any task or act does not exist independent of the ways in which participants...contextualize it”.

Researchers in creativity in music education have various foci for their work: many isolate an aspect of the creative process in an attempt to objectify measurement: e.g., Vaughan (1977), Gorder (1980), and Webster (1979). Others, for example, Wiggins (1992), DeLorenzo (1989), and Upitis (1990, 1992), investigate cognitive development and artistic decision-making through the creation and notation of melodies. Kratus (1985) and Bamberger (1991), use original songs to study developmental differences of children as reflected in musical syntax. Tillman (1987) and Davidson and Scripp (1989), have developed theories of musical strategies/parameters utilized by children at different ages and stages in their composing efforts. These are some of the many foci for studies in creativity in music education which illustrates the growing interest in this area from the research community.
Just as there are different foci for work in creativity, there are a variety of definitions for what creativity is. According to Balkin (1990), however, the research literature essentially agrees that there are four basic phases in the creative process: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification (p. 31). He does not necessarily see these phases as sequential only; in addition, he states that there is more to the process which involves several ‘re’ words. I agree that creating includes inspiration as well as a lot of redoing, rewriting, reconceptualizing and reprocessing. I think it is the combination of all of these elements which connects creating to the process of composing. When I teach and/or research in the area of creativity, I use the term in this way. Also like Balkin (ibid.), among others, I believe the gift to create is manifested by people who “see the ordinary extraordinarily” (p. 32). To this end, I believe teachers can facilitate their students’ creative development by providing the arena within which each child can exercise his/her own abilities to see, hear and make with the intent of pushing boundaries and exploring for possibilities. By providing such opportunities, teachers encourage the taking of risks and the opening of doors to let in the extraordinary into our ordinary surroundings.

My particular interest in the area of music creativity centres around the decisions made by untrained child composers as they create aural/oral compositions. There is debate among researchers as to whether untrained children are composing or improvising. Much of the problem, it seems to me, arises from the tendency to either apply adult criteria to children’s compositions, or demand standards applicable to compositions by children trained in theory and/or performance practice be used for compositions by untrained children. From the perspective of both teacher and researcher, I feel it is important to differentiate between
improvisation and composition, and also, use evaluation criteria which are relevant and appropriate for untrained children’s compositions.

Kratus (1989) writes that the main difference between improvisation and composition is replication: “A composition reflects closure on a compositional problem. If one cannot replicate an original melody, then it can be inferred that there is no closure, and the music does not exist as a composed product” (p. 8). Sloboda (1985) writes about trained adult musicians and the differences between improvisation and composition: improvisation accepts a first solution, which progresses as in a fluid manner about an internalized skeletal structure in the mind of the performer. A composer, on the other hand, is concerned less with the immediacy of the first response, and more with balancing the inspiration with ‘perspiration’ (the hard work of choosing, editing and polishing). Another important difference is that an improvisation is ephemeral, never repeated exactly again, and a composition is meant to be repeatable. Classic composing elements include an introduction of motifs (rhythmic and melodic) in the beginning; repetition and variation of patterns in the middle; and closure in the end.

While young children who are untrained and inexperienced in music are not able to reach the level of quality for composition that either trained children or adults can, researchers have found that untrained children do revise, shape, and re-play their creative ideas and in so doing, move beyond improvisation into composition (Barrett 1996, Davies 1992, Wiggins 1992, Glover 1990, and Gromko 1996). Maxwell Davies (1963, cited in Tillman 1991), vividly describes composition as “much slowed down and chewed over improvisation” (p. 252), which results in “vital and arresting original music” (p. 115). This ‘vital’ or ‘arresting’
music is, therefore, the result of intentions acting on inspiration. Pateman (1990) writes that creating involves the concept of ‘making’ which can be “underpinned in terms of psychological...theory, notably from the work of D.W. Winnecott where emphasis is placed on the child’s making something new (something else) out of something old (something other)”(p. 35). Children composing often approach the task in a holistic manner, beginning work with a ‘big’ idea which takes shape over time as previously known information is melded with and mediated by new inspirations. Wiggins (1992) observed that student composers “seemed to work from a preconceived vision of the musical whole rather than from random exploration”(p. iv.). In working with untrained children composing, I look for evidence that they have a sense of the whole before they delve into the ‘bits’, and, through planning and shaping their ideas, are able to make meaning with a medium and communicate their ideas in an expressive, repeatable, musical structure which they consider to be of value.

Why do I focus on composition as a music teacher? Perhaps because I have been involved in musical activities, both informal and formal, since the age of five. From the time I can remember, I have resisted expressing myself through other peoples’ works; while I get great pleasure out of performing music that moves me, intellectually and/or emotionally, it’s never enough to satisfy - I feel driven to create and perform my own compositions.

My personal experiences with music cannot be separated from my experiences as a music teacher. I bring my own biases, needs, and passions with me into my teaching environments. Consequently, as my educational philosophy forms the basis of my pedagogical praxis, I include composition as an integral part of my lessons for the children I teach. In order to facilitate the composing process for the students, I feel it is essential that I immerse myself in
the processes in which they engage. Therefore, I situate myself within the experience where, together, we explore, reflect, perform, critique, evaluate, edit and polish their musical ideas.

My teaching is also my learning; I cannot be removed or remote, yet while I am immersed I also try to mediate my biases through reflection, in an attempt to be professional. The children and I become partners in discovery, as we build generative gestures in sound based on previous, informal knowledge, new perceptions, intuitions, imagination, inspiration, and hard work.

In writing this thesis, I thought it important to include as full a picture of the evolution of the project as possible. To this end, I decided to include examples from my own experiences by ‘thinking aloud’ just as I asked the children to do. As the reader might expect, these include extracts from my field notes, written during working sessions, of observations or informal conversations between children and their peers, and me, and reflective journal notes from working or sharing sessions with the children, or on my own teaching. Because of the nature of this study, however, there were deeper, sometimes more random, or more complex reflections, that served a variety of process purposes for me, and could perhaps be thought of as stream-of-consciousness writings. Sometimes, they were prompted by a ‘burning question’ or concern that plagued me, and which I subsequently addressed through reading the research literature, or posing a question for the children to answer in their journals, or instigating a class discussion. Other times, I used these writings as musings to help me clarify or direct my thoughts on a particular aspect of the study. Sometimes, I wrote as a release, when I felt constrained, muddled or frustrated by a certain aspect of the project and/or writing of this paper, and needed a venue for free-form thought. Although I
recognized their importance to me and the whole research project, they did not fit into the formalized structure for writing a thesis. I could, however, relate them to the various sections/topics that were emerging in the process of the project and which I was addressing in my writing. As they seemed, in many cases, to bridge my thinking from one section to another, I decided to call them ‘interludes’. Through reading these interludes, I hope that the reader will gain insight into some of the covert aspects of undertaking and writing about a project of this kind that often are not revealed in the final, ‘good copy’ of a thesis.

In addition to contributing to the reader’s deeper understanding of my processes in composing this thesis, the interludes form an important part of the methodology I developed for this particular classroom ethnography. The methodology evolved from a teaching starting point, rather than, what is more usual, a research starting point. I began my professional life as a teacher, and my many years of experience as an educator, along with my personal roles as mother and nurturer, form the basis of my preferred perspective of reflection-on-action from within a particular situation. My experiences into scholarly research began more recently, and because of my extensive classroom experience, I tend to position myself as researcher within that setting, preferring to act as both teacher and researcher. The nature of the research I undertook with this project made the methodological challenges even greater than finding a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice. By taking on the dual role of researcher and teacher, I chose to be immersed in the situated experience; however, I was not only seeking to interpret or change my own teaching, I was also attempting to act as a more traditional ethnographer and stand back, away, from the situation and participants. In addition, I wanted to make sure that I made room for the children’s voices throughout the
process. Often, research projects are designed from the point of view of the researcher only, and do not include the points of view of the subjects/participants. In this project, it was important to me, as a social science researcher, to focus on the participant - the child-composer. Therefore, the methodology used to study this particular ‘lived experience’ (van Manen, 1990), had to be a vehicle for a trio of voices (teacher, researcher and student-composer), in order that a complex, critical, detailed, valid interpretation of data could be possible.

The methodology I sought needed to be flexible, emergent, and immediate, never remote, removed or ‘fixed’. Somehow, those unexpected twists or unexpected moments of inspiration which occur in daily life and impact on the situations such ethnography as this seeks to explore, must be accounted for. I was planning to investigate experience as I found it, rather than attempting to conceptualize, construct, constrain or change it. Exploring and attempting to interpret what actually is, according to van Manen (1990), is an investigation of “...lived experience [or] lifeworld...gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences...lived experience is the breathing of meaning.” (9,36) In this type of research, the social scientist is holistically experiencing the situation he/she is positioned within. In order to interpret events, perceptions, or ideas, contextual reflection is necessary. While one cannot re-live exactly what one previously experienced in all its fullness, one can, by reflective attention to detail, grasp much of the richness, depth and breadth of that experience.

In this thesis, I am trying to develop a methodology for interpreting lived experience in
the context of the classroom. To that end, my research design is based on:

1. the perspective of a teacher/researcher;
2. bringing the voices of the participants to the forefront, rather than the researcher's;
3. gathering as many data as possible from as wide a variety of sources as possible and interpreting them through a variety of means, including reflection;
4. communicating, through the writing of this thesis, as much of the richness, depth and detail of the whole experiential process as possible, of both the participants and myself.

One of the most useful tools I found to facilitate the expression of thought, feelings and written expression, was the interlude. As a methodological tool, the interludes served several purposes:

1. they helped me bridge the gap between theory and practice in writing the details of the process I was engaged in;
2. they detailed some of the intertwining of my own personal experiences as a composer with my role as teacher/facilitator of my students' composing experiences;
3. they sparked and/or reflected on understandings of interactions I had with the student-composers as both teacher and researcher with the purpose of understanding what influenced the children's decision-making as they engaged in composing processes and procedures.
In order to get a holistic picture of the composing process, I felt that both musical and socio-cultural aspects needed to be investigated, and that the methodological grounding of that investigation would emerge to reflect the particular group of participants in a specific situation. To that end, I designed and conducted the following study.
Creativity was a topic I intended to avoid totally, as there is so much controversy around the meaning of the term. It is used by different people to mean different things: educators, philosophers, cognitive psychologists, and artists all have varying definitions for the same word. There are so many possible foci to this dissertation that I hoped it would be possible to use alternate terms or just mention the word quickly, with a sentence or two to define how I use it in the thesis, and stay out of the huge, convoluted morass created by this word ‘create’. Alas, I keep getting pulled back to this very word, and I guess I have to admit that the crux of my study is the creative artistic act - the process of making, in an imaginative, original way.

For starters, why do we bother? The process is so fraught with angst and misunderstanding from others. Csikszentimihalyi (1996) finds a succinct answer in Umberto Eco’s statement regarding writing fiction: “It offers us the opportunity to employ limitlessly our faculties for perceiving the world and reconstructing the past” (p. 420). The implication of ‘transformation’ and ‘possibilities’ is enticing.

I accept Eco’s explanation of why we create...now on to what creativity is - an equally disturbing and difficult idea to confront. For now, I’m going to try and make some clear statements about my perception and use of this term in regards to the composing my students have done in both music and language. I think I can find a working definition that spans various modalities, but which can, if necessary, be amended to make specific reference to a particular artistic mode of expression.
Ideas on creativity that have resonated the most with my own intuitions and observations from my teaching experience are mainly from Marcia Citron (1993), Elliot Eisner (1985, 1972), Silvano Arieti (1976), Maxine Greene (1988, 1995), Jackie Wiggins, (1992), Abraham Maslow, (1959a), E. Paul Torrence (1963), Torrence and Myers (1972) and Dewey (1934).

So far, my thinking about creativity in artistic expression, primarily composition, centres around the statements written below. I don’t expect to always think the same way, and I expect many other points of view are valid. I don’t really want to argue with anyone or try to establish the ‘definitive definition’, I just want to organize my thoughts and find a base for my discussions about creativity.....

Citron (1993) writes that the word ‘creativity’ has various meanings and creative acts tend to fall into one of the following categories:

1) making or fashioning something where little or nothing existed before;

2) involving the characteristic of talent for devising unusual solutions when one is given objects or a challenging situation;

3) acts considered special or highly meaningful by society;

4) connoting authorship.

Writing from a feminist viewpoint, she stresses that all of these ways of categorizing creativity are cerebral. Interestingly, although Csikszentmihalyi is ‘male’, his (1996) organization of thinking processes are more holistic: along with the cerebral, detached processes of elaboration/editing and evaluation, he includes immersion, insight and incubation, all processes involving imagination, curiosity, time and inspiration. From Plato onwards, mind and body were thought of as separate entities whose functions were
hierarchical. Western thought ascribed creativity (along with imagination and originality) to be fundamentally a mental activity, part of the cognitive process, while 'body' associations were merely disruptions to the process. Citron, along with Grumet (1988) and others writing from a feminist perspective, remind us that body and soul are implicit in expressive and original artistic thought and actions. In addition, research by cognitive psychologists Sloboda (1985) and Bamberger (1991), and sociologist Witkin (1974), also emphasize the interrelationship of the mind and senses in cognition: "The mind", writes Bamberger (1991), "is always actively engaged in organizing incoming sensory material" (p. 9). When I think of cognition in this way it seems to act as an umbrella process (or set of procedures) of generative, organizational activities to derive and express meaning through various media.

Arieti (1976) states that all concepts about creativity depend on social judgment in association with cultural context. Looking back at Citron's list, it is obvious that all of her definitions, not only the third, are bound by social constructs. I think so much of the difficulty around this term is the deconstructing process we are engaged in. A wide-spread avant-garde movement to disassemble icons in all areas of our social world invites transformation and/or obliteration of words, definitions, concepts, procedures, etc. If I choose, I suppose I can justifiably use the philosophical position of some of the deconstructionists and say that the definition I devise is to be for this situation involving these participants only, because meaning itself is a social construct, and should not remain static. (Re-reading this last statement it sounds defensive - why? Maybe it's my old beliefs rising up in protest against my Will - a la Kant).
Moving along. Arieti (1976) defines creativity as being different from originality, explaining that for him, originality is personal and not dependent on societal or cultural judgements. The person who chooses to engage in the creative process is seeking a way of “fulfilling the longing or search for a new object or state of experience or existence...this longing or search is often observed not only during the creative process but also in the creative product...the work often represents not only the new object but also...this indefinite search...which has a conscious and an unconscious motivation” (6). This process involves the person as creator (not the response (judgement) of the society). This does not mean the influence of the society/culture is absent, just that at this point the creator is in charge, choosing to acknowledge or negate (consciously or unconsciously) the influences of his/her environment. Drawing on the literature, Arieti puts together a composite of a ‘creative person’. Some of the profiles from Torrence (1962), Hirsch (1931), Henle (1962), McNeil (1960), Guildford (1959), among others, include characteristics like: flexibility (spontaneous and adaptive), tolerance of ambiguity and disorder, independence and resourcefulness, fluent thinker using both convergent and divergent thinking, receptivity to new ideas, sensitive but self-confident. This is ‘old’ data, but, interestingly, a variety of newer materials I have recently been shown by the teacher in our school responsible for enrichment for students tested as “gifted”, include these same characteristics. These types of characteristics (personality traits?) allow for, and perhaps encourage, original and imaginative thinking. Oops, another one of those words - ‘imagination’. It seems to have lost effectiveness, generally, perhaps from overuse. Somehow, telling a student or her parent that “you have an active imagination” does not imply the positive ‘stroke’ it once did. I think, however, that it
is an essential ingredient in the creative process. Dewey (1934) thought so too, calling it the "gateway" through which previous knowledge enhances new experiences (272). And for Greene (1988), to imagine is to “look beyond things as they are, to anticipate what might be seen through a new perspective...and discover something unexpected.” (49). Using Greene’s definition, I feel it is appropriate to associate the word ‘imagination’ with originality, and it seems to fit with some of those characteristics mentioned already.

It is possible, however, to be original and imaginative in thinking and doing, yet be considered non-creative by those using measures of judgment different from the person doing the creating. This has happened many times to me, and I also see it in school when my students perform their compositions. Because they are novice musicians and composers and my goals for them are not necessarily those of the mainstream pedagogy for either area of musical learning, the products (and, consequently the students’ achievement) do not ‘measure up’ to the societal (school and community) standard. Those judging, i.e., parents and other teachers/administrators, often miss the musical and aesthetic knowledge embedded in the compositions because of the unconventionality of form, content, materials and/or presentation. Although the product does not conform to the expected standard, it more often than not meets the student composer and my standards of both process and product. The audience, not privy to either the process of creating nor all the pedagogical goals set, are not seeing/hearing the same reality. I see it is my responsibility to “educate” the audience so that they are using the same criteria for judgment as the composers and myself. I believe I am giving my students a musical education, and, as I believe that the prevailing values for music in schools are, for the most part, irrelevant, I have to find ways to bring parents and school
personnel around to my way of thinking. This is an ongoing, uphill struggle, as traditional norms change very slowly. Teachers with ‘different’ points of view, like artists, often find themselves outcasts, ‘on the cutting edge’, and this is often a very uncomfortable place to be.

So, what does a person do with the characteristics mentioned, when she creates? I think I want to limit the creative experience to composing, for that is the context of this dissertation. So, to re-write the question: What does a person who wishes to create a composition do with all those characteristics mentioned above? I think, and again, my belief comes from a combination of reading scholarly writings (for example, Dewey, 1933, and Witkin, 1974) and artists’ reflections (for example, Friedman, 1993, Melton, 1985 and Tyson and Russel, eds., 1995) as well as my own composing experiences, that one invokes a dialogue between one’s senses (perceiving the ‘muse’) and one’s mind (mediating the inspiration). To use Jung’s words, creativity occurs when “rational thoughts collide with emotions and intuition” (unspecific quote from a workshop handout on creativity in 1990, Vancouver). In a series of interrelated procedures, not necessarily sequential, involving ‘inspiration and perspiration’ as a popular phrase describes it, one’s mind and emotions utilize those ‘creative’ characteristics described above to make an artistic expression. The ‘muse’ or inspiration part, for me, involves the removal of my conscious self from the process. Nachmanovitch, a musician and composer, writing in “Free Play” (1990), phrases it this way:

“In order for art to appear, we have to disappear...mind and sense are arrested for moment, fully in the experience. Nothing else exists. When we ‘disappear’ in this way, everything around us becomes a surprise, new and fresh. Self and environment unite. Attention and intention fuse. We see things just as we and they are, yet we are able to guide and direct them to become just the way we want them...” (p. 51).

The guiding and directing involve the ‘perspiration’ part of the process. In my experience,
and in that of the students I have observed over time, these two separate and different aspects of involvement intertwine, ‘collide’, and serve as ‘check-and- balance’ throughout the creating process. The part of the process most easily understood, is the ‘perspiration’ part. Everyone knows what it feels/thinks like to edit, clarify, practice, etc. I think the part which causes artistic or creative expression to be held in ‘awe’ or kept at a distance, is the ‘inspiration’ part. Exploration and play are integral to this part of the process, and, of course, they are emergent, unpredictable, even unknowable until demonstrated. Play is, however, work, but of a different kind than usually thought. Play is not frivolous, but it may be irrational, therefore, it is suspect....my pet rant these days, it seems.

I’ll stop now, and get back to my definition. For now, I will call it a process definition, or, more poetically, a Phoenix definition (rising from the ashes of the old)....I just hope I won’t get too attached to it and will be able to allow it to transform as necessary.

**Creativity: the process by which intuitive insights are nourished by intellectual reasoning.**

(If I sit at the dining-room table, getting ready to start writing the cognition and creativity part of my thesis. I love Northrop Fry’s quip about ‘babble’ and ‘doodle’ which I first heard from Carl and which always makes me smile). Back to this ongoing issue of perspiration vs. inspiration...another part to consider is the source of the inspiration itself. Plato, of course, thought the ‘muse’ came from the gods and was shaped by human reason - perspiration acting on inspiration; Kant disagreed, writing in his Third Critique of Pure Reason that the inspiration was really intuition from an internal, human source. Certainly, I’m not going to find the definitive answer, nor, really, do I care. I am only interested in the exhilaration and frustration of the experience, for myself and my students as creators and composers.

Now, to work. Where will I start? At the beginning? What/where is the beginning? I
have no idea where the beginning is! I feel overwhelmed! *Creativity* as a topic...as the huge pile of notes, articles, books, etc. I have collected here in front of me grows ever larger, the thought of starting at the beginning is an impossible concept - Sitting here hyperventilating, I wonder if perhaps I should just leap into the middle, wherever that is, and work out to both ends (and beyond?? Will there be more than two ends??). I decide I can’t be any more intimidated by jumping in somewhere in the middle, and just letting ‘it’ go where it will ....actually, it seems less threatening as soon as I make that decision - I can go anywhere from here - it feels less confining. So, here I go, with the help of (yet another) cup of tea, and Bill Richardson’s soothing voice in the background on CBC radio...

As I write today’s date on this scrap of paper I’m ‘doodling’ on, December 3rd, I realize that it is my Mother’s birthday --Stopping once again, I light a candle in her honour, and sing the song I wrote last year in memory of her, Dad, and Reva’s parents. Afterwards, I sit down, and, somehow I feel calmer. I remember what a lovely singing voice my Mother had, and how much she loved to make, and hear, music....creativity is a good topic to work on today.

Still more babble (an add-on, months later):

The more I work on ‘creativity’, the more I realize that I’m looking for descriptive words with three dimensions (where are those 3-d glasses we used to get in cereal boxes?) - words like ‘collide’, ‘explode’, ‘transform’, multi-directional’ and ‘multi-dimensional’. Bud Beyer (1996, Chicago, MENC conference), spoke about using imagination and creativity to “explode” necessary linear skills in the doing/making of art - and I think that is how learning is best accommodated - with a combination of skills and creative activities and concepts: the interweaving of the narrow and the open, for balance and rhythm...reading about body rhythm
and the basic need we, like nature, have for a balance and variety of activity and rest, of normal and outrageous, etc.

My sense is that this ‘discussion’ can go on forever. I really don’t mind, it gives me something that I know will draw my interest to think and feel about and in for a long time. I wonder if I should be worrying that I won’t be any more successful in reaching a definitive ‘answer’ or understanding concerning the issue of what creativity is than anyone else throughout history has been? Well, I won’t worry about that now.
Interlude 2

Composition

I really like the word compose. When I tell people that I am a composer it makes me feel grown-up, accomplished, expert and ‘weighty’. Perhaps so many years of overcompensating for my small stature and the way, as a music teacher, woman, wife, mother, etc., I often feel I am not taken seriously, makes me so attached to the word. In any case, a composer seems to have some merit, generally, and I know my students also feel accomplished when they compose something of which they are proud.

I never used to bother about defining the word with my students, I would just say a composer was someone who made original music in order to communicate an idea to others, or, to express some emotion, idea, ideal, etc. just because he/she had to. The kids always seemed to understand both kinds of reasons for composing, and were ready to try. Recently, I began to notice that after the novelty of the first one or two composition tasks wore off, some students would begin to fool around and not be serious or committed to the ongoing process.

This observation caused me to ask a group of grade 3 students just finishing a composition project if they felt like composers. One student replied “no” and when I asked “why not?”, he clarified by explaining that he felt like a composer when he was creating the music, but not when he was playing it. Wow! I was impressed by his complexity of thought, and decided, from reflecting on both observations, that it was time to discuss what composing actually was in more detail with my students....but first I think I should discuss this topic with myself.

Okay, first of all, a composition is, most basically, a creative work. This ‘work’ is a combination of things...I agree with Tillman (1987) that the various ‘things’ which make a
composition (she says “creative work”) are, the “creator, process, product and environment that encourages it” (part 1, p. 277).

Searching the literature, various uses of the word ‘composition’ appear:

1) June Tillman, (in part 2 of her thesis, 1987), and Keith Swanwick share a definition of composition: children’s musical utterances. This is too vague for me, and besides, I don’t like the word ‘utterance’ - it sounds clumsy. Maxwell Davies (1963), quoted in Tillman’s thesis (1991, part 1), defines composition as “much slowed down and chewed over improvisation” (p. 252), and describes the resulting product as “vital and arresting original music.” (p. 115). The images these statements create for me are vivid and energetic, implying essence, validity and importance.

2) Barbara Van Ernst (1989) decides on the following definition based on her distillation of the literature available on composition at the time she did the research for her Ph.D. thesis: “Composing can be considered a way of knowing music, and involves a specific mode of thinking” (p. 83). Her idea of what the ‘way of knowing’ is, is based on ideas and writings by Dewey (1934), Langer (1967), Barrett (1989), and Swanwick and Tillman (1986), among others.

3) Brian Loane (1984) developed his definition of composition from work with 11 to 14 year olds. His point of view is described by Van Ernst (1991): “children’s work [in composition] could be considered an act of artistic creation, involving thinking in sound, and [is], in itself, a form of learning...student compositions are important pieces of art, and as such capable of containing meaning” (pp. 65, 69). (I like that - I’m used to hearing and thinking about composition this way, partly from my own experience, and partly from
hearing Bob Walker, my thesis supervisor, talk about composing in these terms.) Loane noted various features of the process and products:

- **process:** use of a lot of energetic, rhythmic noise to convey strength; repetition of words in clear patterns; influence of pop music; use of ostinato (previously known)

- **products:** use of formal structures (previously known? I assume so, though not stated by van Ernst); inclusion of instruments already played (e.g., flute); influence of film music in creating mood music.

From the cursory look I have given my data at this point, I think I will find much similarity in the compositions (process and products) of the 8 year olds in my study....interesting...

4) Jackie Wiggins, in her 1992 Ph.D. thesis on music composition, defines the word for her purposes as: “pre-planned performance of original musical ideas”. The ‘pre-planned’ part is good, because it implies ongoing cognitive involvement and also a willingness to work toward mastery (i.e., editing, shaping, polishing of inspiration as ‘original idea’). It also implies difference from improvisation, which is important, because some writers, Kratus (1989) for example, say untrained young people can’t compose, but can only improvise (see below). Wiggins is working with 5th graders (10 year olds) and I know she intentionally made this distinction in her definition because her findings showed intent and understanding of the whole on the part of her participants. She writes (1992), “in creating, they seemed to work from a preconceived vision of the musical whole rather than from random exploration” (p. iv). This is not to say they did not explore, in fact, Wiggins notes that exploration was important to the process. But, these products were not consistently explorations, i.e., improvisations. Rather, improvisation was an integral part of the composing, as exploration, not as the end result.
5) Webster (1992) mentions revision as a key to determining whether or not a work is compositional. I agree that the process of editing (the 'perspiration phase'), as revisiting, replaying and rethinking, is one element that differentiates an improvisation from a composition. Improvisation accepts a first effort as 'final', but composition does not (Sloboda, 1985). As I watch my students play, re-play, change and practice their music, it is obvious to me that the process is one of revision/editing. Barrett (1996) looked for this element in her study in composing with children in grades one through six. I think Webster’s definition of composing will provide an important resource as I focus on the behaviours the children in this study demonstrate: “If subjects are given the opportunity to revise their work in some way before it is considered finished, the product or process is considered more compositional in nature” (p. 270).

6) There seems to be a group of people focussing on improvisation - John Kratus has many articles on this subject, and he concludes from some of his work that the main difference between improvisation and composition (as product) is the ability to replicate what you have created. “A composition reflects closure on a compositional problem. If one cannot replicate an original melody, then it can be inferred that there is no closure, and the music does not exist as a composed product.” (1989, p. 8). (As a process, composing is an act that must lead to a product as just described). Young children, particularly untrained and inexperienced in music, find it understandably difficult to repeat their work. From my own observations, when they first begin there are too many stimuli, too many choices to explore. I think the reason people like Kratus talk about young children not being able to compose is not because of logical restrictions like memory ability due to maturation or
lack of notational knowledge (as memory aid), but because they fail to realize the amount of time necessary for the process of composing. Children need lots of time for exploration, which is sometimes random, but often, as I have found from observing various student groups working, purposeful. In this study already mentioned, for example, he gave kids 10 minutes to work! Many studies use time frames like this, probably believing statements like this one of Regelski’s that Kratus (1989) quotes: "These restrictions are in accordance with Regelski’s (1981) guidelines for using creative activities in general music classes: ‘If too much free choice is allowed...students can quickly become lost, waste time or lose interest for lack of guidance (p. 294)’" (p. 9).

No wonder teachers are so afraid to give open-ended tasks and work as facilitators, if they believe that is what their students will do. I saw Regelski in Chicago, Illinois in September, 1996, where we both gave presentations at an MENC conference. I wish there had been an opportunity for me to ask him if he still believed that statement himself - the speech he gave seemed much more student-centred and imagination-oriented...I wonder if it was just rhetoric or if his point of view has really changed? If it’s the latter, then he isn’t working too hard to communicate the message to the power people in American universities!

7) John Sloboda (1985) writes a lot about improvisation, but with adults. He says that whatever has been found out through research about the process adults go through in improvising, cannot necessarily be assumed to be true for children. He has delineated clear differences between improvisation and composition, and I think they are worth noting. His work is definitely one of my most important sources, as it is carefully done,
in research and personal reflection. Sloboda isn’t bashful about stating his findings when he is sure, but he has intelligence and humility to realize that the area he is researching is individual and probably impossible to make definitive judgments about. I don’t know if it’s his writing style or his own personality coming through, but I enjoy his writing and respect what he has to say. He defines *improvisation* as: accepting the first solution; using a skeleton blueprint around which embellishments (original) occur; progressing in a fluid manner from one episode to the next (this is for trained musicians - with kids, or untrained people, he believes improvisation just moves randomly without knowledge or use of a skeletal form); quick and consistent movement to the inventions; not being concerned with a long-term structure or plan to unify the music.

*Composition*, on the other hand, stresses: long-term structure; unimportance of fluidity or quick moves from section to section; editing and evaluating of each ‘solution’ until the best one is chosen. Composition has two stages, as well, according to Sloboda (1985):

“‘inspiration’...where a skeletal idea or theme appears in consciousness; the second is called ‘execution’, where the idea is subject to a series of more conscious and deliberate processes of extension and transformation” (pp. 115-116). This is like the ‘inspiration-perspiration’ idea, or the belief that the ‘muse’ strikes with the original spark and then the composer edits and polishes and transforms new and old ideas to end up with a viable ‘composition’...different words, same ideas.

8) Rena Upitis (1990) takes a more poetic point of view, and defines composition as musical narrative. For her, composition, along with improvisation, critique and notation all lead to and from and weave through each other to form complete learning in music (p. 147).
Narrative is not a term usually used in music, but it is a type of language form. She is another important source, along with Dyson and Sloboda, for research data into possible overlaps, interfaces or parallels between creative learning in music and language. All three use the word composition for creative work in both language and music. I like that a lot, and used it myself to label the process the children in my dissertation study were engaged in. Sloboda, in a continuation of the statement quoted above, talks about the two parts of composing as “by no means confined to musical composition, and is to be found in every branch of creative activity..." (1985, pp. 115-116). Both Dyson and Sloboda have also come up with specific areas of overlap in composing with language and music.

Sloboda’s list (1985):

- both are human products
- all cultures have some form of both language and musical structures
- both language and music are capable of generating ‘new’ expressions (transformation, extension and variation)
- both are auditory vocal (voice or external sound source) forms
- receptive skills generally precede productive skills (ie. one can understand before inventing one’s own sentences; one can move/sing/talk with or about music before coherently creating one’s own compositions)
- both are tools/media of generating new ideas
- both modes include unexplained moments (inspiration)
- both use imagination, sense, and intellect to refine inspiration
- both involve a variety of procedures and perspectives, from unconscious inspiration to
conscious intent

- both have a product to communicate as a goal (if intent is part of the process)
- both have temporal, aural products; both can have notated, visual products
- both notation systems use symbols specific to a group (society/culture).

Dyson’s list (1989):

- procedures:  
  - exploration (music) and drafting (language)
  - editing and critiquing (music and language)
  - polishing (music and language)

- expression:  
  - intent
  - shape/line (beginning/middle/end; details; big ideas)
  - temporal elements (tenses; what is emphasized through time)
  - texture (foreground/background relationships of major/minor themes or characters)
  - innovation and invention (info. from real and imaginary worlds
  - natural sounds, programme music (describing event, metaphor)
  - pacing (rhythm and structure/phrasing of music or story events)
  - mastery of the medium (effective and appropriate use of language/sounds).

There’s certainly enough here to make decisions from - maybe too much? I know I will utilize the parallels in composing with language and music when it comes to interpreting my data, but as far as a definition...

I’ll put it off a while longer, and think about my own composing. What do I do? Notes
Various ways I write:

1. I find myself humming a melody for days on end, sometimes, and by the time I realize I’ve been singing the same thing over and over, I sometimes don’t know if it’s new, or where it came from;

2. I am thinking of writing a song for a purpose – a religious service, or for the kids at school, or for one of my own kids. I look for words I like and then think of how to make sense of them in/with music;

3. I decide to write music for someone or some specific event - I let the idea of that person/event flow into my consciousness over time (days to weeks) and sooner or later melody, words, bits of rhythms, come to me, and I write what comes and either wait for more or try to concentrate on ‘finding’ more - its not tense or frustrating, I just wait, attentively, with an open mind and heart;

4. various combinations of inspiration, imagination, intuition, and HARD WORK in varying proportions.

I’m terrible with words alone, unless it’s stream of consciousness or some fluke. Writing a paper, school reports, even letters to friends, is just hard work. Music, however, or words as text for music is a whole other thing. I think the processes must be similar in some way, but the composing feels completely different. Perhaps this dichotomy in my own use of words would be an interesting thing to look at sometime.

An area of great concern has always been the fact that I often forget what I’ve written. Sometimes I can’t remember how or what I wrote and it feels almost as if I was ‘channelling’
the music, just being used as a conducting vessel. Even when I work hard on something, I can usually remember some or most of the tune, but rarely the words. It used to bother me a lot, especially when people would want to sing what I wrote and ask me to teach them - if I didn’t have the music with me, I couldn’t, and it was embarrassing. Until, that is, I read some books on composing. Then I found out other composers have a similar experience:

- Abby Lincoln: “I have to learn the song. I write it as it comes through me, I don’t necessarily know it” (interview, CBC radio jazz show, April, 1996);
- David Melton, author of *Written and Illustrated By*: “I have a quirk in my work - I can never remember anything I have written. My friend, Rod McKuen, has the same quirk. He can easily sing his own songs, but even in concert, he has to read his poetry rather than trust his memory...what does this mean?...I can recite...any number of stanzas written by other people...” (1985, p. 20);
- Madeleine Grumet, guest professor at UBC, July 1995, was asked in a lecture to explain a certain passage in her book *Bitter Milk* (1988). She replied that first she had to find the passage and look at it, because once she writes something it leaves her consciousness and she doesn’t necessarily remember what she wrote.

So, now I feel better about forgetting. And really, the important issue, is really not the remembering, it’s the doing. I can’t NOT do it, and I think essence in the whole idea of creating, for me, involves the fact that although I may sometimes choose when to write, there are other times when I must write...I wonder if this will make sense to someone reading it. Maybe to say it another way, from *And Then I Wrote: The Songwriter Speaks*, edited by Tom Russell and Sylvia Tyson, “‘One wants to tell a story’, said novelist Carlos Fuentes, ‘in order
not to die.' The urge to tell a story in song - to sing 'the news' - is as old as mankind...In the words of Christ, taken from the Gnostic gospel of St. Thomas, ‘Everything you bring forth from within will save you; everything you do not bring forth will destroy you’”. That sounds a bit melodramatic, but I know it’s true; people make and do and create because they must...can someone who is not an artist understand that? (And, then again, cannot everyone be an artist in some form in the right circumstances?...which is , of course, what I want to believe because I try to teach with that philosophy in mind...).

Now, to get back to that definition. Some possibilities...

- Composition, as process, in music or oral language: Thinking and acting in, and with, sound. (It’s kind of awkwardly worded, but it gets at the ideas I want – I wish I was more facile with words!)

- Composition, as product: An intentional artistic expression. (That’s a beginning - I want to add more but I can’t distill the right words for this definition just now either.)

- Composition, composite definition: Creative, generative gestures resulting in original, artistic expressions. (Too flowery?)

Obviously, this bears more thinking, feeling, acting, reflecting. More later, I guess.

March, 1997: Still composting the composing definition...

- Composing is a generative gesture, plus revision, in an expressive medium. It is not just a first response (e.g., improvisation), but an ongoing, intertwining [interweaving] combination of exploration, editing and polishing. In the classroom, interactive participants are student composers, peers and teacher.
The goals for composing are often twofold:

1) to manipulate and transform an expressive medium in an artistic and aesthetic way for the personal satisfaction of the composer;

2) to communicate the intent or meaning to a critical listener.

In the classroom, this can be done effectively through “informances” (Bud Beyer, 1996, Chicago MENC conference presentation), which is a combination of performance and information.

Well, this is not your one sentence definition...maybe, to include all the subtleties and complexities of the subject, it is impossible to give a one sentence definition. I’ll leave this for now, but I think I’ll keep these ideas, quotes and beginnings of definitions somewhere close at hand for use in the body of this thesis.
Interlude 3

Cognition

Reading about brain research and cognition and psychology, etc. immerses me in an attempt to think linearly and carefully- not necessarily a bad thing, but definitely not easy...as a musician, composer, writer and arts teacher, my pedagogical and research foci are on artistic and expressive forms of the disciplines I teach, specifically, language and music. This does not mean I exclude basic concepts and skills, rather, I treat them as ongoing inclusions of learning in a subject. In looking at children and their relationships with the creation and understanding of music, I do not want to probe into minutiae which I struggle to extract from the qualitative whole experience and try to analyse using a repeatable, ‘scientific’ method. To treat music elements or concepts in this compartmentalistic, fragmenting way, “...is not sufficient to help us to understand how children think in music. Musical concepts, if they are to explain the act of music itself as a cognitive process, must deal with relationships of musical events in time” (Davies, 1992, p. 19).

In spite of the sense I have of floating unanchored in the miasma of unfamiliar vocabulary, I am pleased with my level of understanding of some of the research I am reading. Certain words and thoughts stick in my mind once I am through distilling the information for inclusion into the thesis...Reductionism, rationality and reality vs. complexity, chaos and chimeras....I am beginning to feel ready to interact with the historical literature on cognition in an attempt to make sense of it in terms of my own research and pedagogical philosophy. But first, a digression about the preoccupation with rationalism, order, ‘science’ and ‘method’....
This urge to "make order" seems to have led Western thought into a love affair with rationality. We have Plato to thank for providing the secure base upon which man's reverence for his mind was built, and which opinion continued to inflate, through man's ego (itself a mental construct!). The mind was rational, logical, and capable of complex constructions of thinking whose organization and components could be enumerated and re-created at will. Even art's muse was to be mediated by the mind's ideas. Descartes, in the Renaissance, went further, separating the irrational and uncontrollable perceptions by emotions and the body from the workings of the mind. Something rational and ordered was more predictable (read 'comfortable') than something irrational (read 'uncontrollable', 'unexplainable').

The result was that anything relating to the emotions or body was, therefore, relegated to a lesser/lower position and was less desirable. Artistic thinking and doing was often unexplainable in logical, linear terms, and possibly, this is the reason the arts in schools and society were accorded low status. Although there is much awareness, interest and research into feminine forms and mind/body connections (Jorgensen, 1996, Hawkesworth, 1989, and Grumet, 1988, among others), the arts in schools are still grappling with the legacy of negative connotations surrounding emotive, expressive forms. Eisner (1981) writes, "...operations of the mind that do not employ logic are placed on the margins of rationality...the arts are considered emotive forms" (p. 7), and emotive forms have been thought to be devoid of any logic. This is not true, of course, but the arts do not contain the traditional, linear, forms of logic we seem to revere so much. Today, this infatuation with rationality and logic is evidenced by our passionate attachment, bordering on worship, to
computers and all things technological. Ironically, as Skinner said in 1977, and I agree, “The struggle to make machines that think like people has had the effect of supporting theories in which people think like machines” (Epstein, ed., 1982, p. 177). We seem to be obsessed with the simplest, most direct link to order, which takes away all the nuances, the richness and, certainly, the uniqueness of an experience or object. Taking order-making to its simplest (most simplistic??) level, tends to result in reductionism. I am reminded of the poetic excerpt from Wallace Steven’s “Six Significant Landscapes”, 1969, reprinted in Greene (1988):

Rationalists, wearing square hats,
Think, in square rooms,
Looking at the floor,
Looking at the ceiling.
They confine themselves
To right-angled triangles.

With so much time and energy given over to the need to order, it makes those who enjoy chaos because of the excitement and availability of possibilities seem odd indeed. In fact, it becomes clear that anything unpredictable or unique is more than just ‘odd’, but even, rather, scary...and if it is scary, it must be ‘bad’, and the next step is to do away with it. Once again, antiseptic, scientific, order is called for.

Those who don’t subscribe to this perspective are left, as Timothy Findley so pointedly describes it, with the ‘demons’... do all artists see (or hear) the demons? Findley says humans do not, generally, strive to act on the best in themselves...if the current explosion of violence and inhumanity to humankind and the environment is an indication of the ‘true’ nature of humanity, then I think he may be right. Most people ignore or just do not see the possibilities, maybe that’s why they are so easily amused by such ‘entertainment’ as “The Simpsons”....maybe artists do see the possibilities and that is why they create - to combat the
sameness, the sterility of order and reductionism...maybe it is a desperate attempt to stay sane in the face of impossible occurrences all around one. Is this what Paul Klee is feeling when he writes in his journal, “I create pour ne pas pleurer (in order not to cry); that is the first and last reason” (Eisner, 1969, p. 254). (Maybe it’s just that it’s November and I find it hard to be positive about anything---it’s cold and bleak, and I crave my fireplace and “Messiah” played at top volume to get my endorphins going!).

There is a tension and ambiguity inherent in art which makes artworks dynamic and relevant, and which demands an active response from the perceiver/receiver. In order to perceive, one must first ‘see’ the art in a gestalt - as whole- then the work must be internalized and digested. The ambiguities allow the receiver to revisit the work many times, for we view different, fresh, things in good art as we grow and change and expand our own knowledge and perceptual base. When there is no tension, ambiguity, etc., there are no spaces or rough edges - all is in order...what then? Can/do artists create in an atmosphere of clear, clean, reduced sterility?? I think of Orwell’s 1984 and Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale...what happens when there are no “what-ifs”? No rough edges? No spaces to play in...? Does this impede creativity? Or, is it possible that this is one of those instances where adversity, as monotony, sameness, and/or nothingness, becomes the ‘spark’ for creating?? Maybe the ‘creative act’ depends on some unaccountable interaction between the individual and the particular moment in time - perhaps the passion of the creator for (or against) that particular situation?

I’ll have to think about my own composing history and see if I can put myself into either or both situations as a creator...and in the meantime, end this interlude with the rest of Stevens’ poem, which in its entirety, according to Greene (1988), “...embodies an entire
...If they tried rhomboids,
Cones, waving lines, ellipses-
As, for example, the ellipse of the half-moon-
Rationalists would wear sombreros.
CHAPTER THREE

Discussion of some relevant issues in cognitive processes and resulting behaviours in music and language composing

What are children doing when they compose? While I cannot actually know what is in their minds, I propose that their behaviours and decisions, expressed verbally, in written form, and/or with sound, are the results and reflections of that thinking. As both teacher and researcher in the study which formed the basis of this thesis, I can make inferences and informed ‘guesses’ based on the proposition that what they do and/or say reflects what they think.

In this thesis, I am faced with the same questions about cognitive processes and resulting behaviours that philosophers, psychologists and other scholars who have explored the question of “what is thought?” have investigated. While this question has been examined from many points of view, I have chosen to discuss perspectives relevant to this study, which focussed on the specific area of children’s thinking and decision-making in music and language composing activities.

Cognitive science, biogenetics and behaviourism

Cognitive scientists have engaged in an on-going debate about whether humans are pre-programmed or pre-disposed to specific types of learning, or whether we learn from our experiences and environment.

*The Biogenetic View of Cognition: The Hard-wired Brain*

The Chomskian version of cognition centres on the belief that humans have unique, inherited abilities above and beyond the basic physiological fight/flight and fear-of-falling...
instincts. The fact that all human embryos grow and develop in basically the same, innate, way, provides support for Chomsky's belief that all human brains contain a program or recipe which forms a template for understanding and articulation of basic language acquisition. His argument is that since practically every sentence uttered by children as they learn speech is a new one (a novel combination of words) and not mere imitation, the ability to do this cannot be learned simply from a repertoire of repeated responses; it must, rather, be genetically inherent. He labelled this program, or template, a mental grammar (not to be confused with syllabic grammar). This 'universal grammar' tells a child how to distill the appropriate syntactic patterns of speech, resulting in patterns which are not accidental, but part of human nature. Halle and Stevens (1991), who seem to be two of the contemporary supporters of this view, write that although "we are not born knowing the words of our mother tongue...when speakers learn a word, they learn its sound or phonetic shape, its meaning and also its grammatical features...these sequences of discrete sounds (words) are stored in memory as a specific 'phonetic module' which is part of a genetically engineered language competence ability all humans share" (pp. 2, 9).

The generative theory of language grammar has a parallel in music in Lerdahl and Jackendoff's 1983 generative theory of tonal music, and Schenker's approach to musical analysis, whereby cognitive mechanisms used in music listening are part of an innate understanding, particular to humans, of certain music universals involving grouping and structuring of tonal and rhythmic material. These universals are intended to be different and distinct from "...the musical idioms that define a particular musical language and that presumably are learned through experience with that language" (Fiske, 1993, p. 161).

Another proponent of a generative theory of tonal music is Serafine, who, according to Fiske,
“...has developed an especially strong and useful theory of music cognition which she calls a theory of music as thought...[her] theory (and that of Lerdahl and Jackendoff, and Heller and Campbell) is a functionalist theory, one that attempts to explain...the musical mind/experience in terms of cognitive mechanisms and information processing in isolation of neurophysiological activity...her own theory is...concerned with the growth and development of (musical) intelligence. Serafine, like Lerdahl and Jackendoff, identifies both a set of music universal ("generic") processes and a set of music idiom-specific ("panstylistic") processes” (Fiske, 1993, pp. 161-2). This perspective is taken into classroom learning in music by Bamberger (1991), who details the process of acquiring mastery of pitch/time patterns by means of “felt paths” which she feels are generative organizational processes.

Behaviourists and Cognition

A different viewpoint from that which considers the brain to have a pre-programmed template for processing purposes, is one that considers all behaviour to depend on environmental factors. Watson, the originator of behaviourism, and Pavlov, were two researchers who believed that activity can be contained within a cause and effect relationship framework labelled ‘stimulus-response’. This idea is problematic in regards to the acquisition of language, for example, for it means we could only respond in kind - yet, in fact, humans, including young children, routinely create (or re-create) language phrases and sentences not heard before, as well as act (behave) in novel ways. Skinner noticed that not all responsive behaviours had eliciting stimuli, and this discovery caused him to move in a direction different from that of Watson and Pavlov. He gradually developed his own theory, involving the concept of operant behaviour - e.g., behavioural response having no direct stimulus. Skinner’s idea was that a behaviour continues because the response to that
behaviour is reinforced in some way; behaviour is voluntary rather than simply a “knee-jerk” reaction, and future occurrences of that behaviour depend on the effect elicited. It is, in Skinner’s words, “selected by its consequences” (Epstein, 1982, p. 1). Skinner uses the terms ‘stimulus’ and ‘response’, however, which may account for part of the confusion about his position. He describes stimulus/response as “names for events...[which are] one of a large number of variables that affect behaviour...deprivation, for example, is another important determinant of behaviour that cannot easily be characterized as a stimulus” (Epstein, 1982, p. 1). Although Skinner “studied only environmental determinants of behaviour, he has never denied the genetic contribution...the potential for certain behaviour is...preserved in the genetic code (Skinner, 1982, p. 153). “Identifying the provenance of behaviour is important, says Skinner, ‘because it tells us something about how behaviour can be supported or changed. Most of the controversy concerning heredity and environment has arisen in connection with the practical control of behaviour through the manipulation of relevant variables’” (Skinner, 1982, p. 154).

Skinner debates with cognitive psychologists about the concept of mental processes: he feels there is no place for “a ‘mental apparatus’ [Skinner’s term]...in the experimental analysis of behaviour...[but] unable to show how the organism can behave effectively under complex circumstances, we endow it with a special cognitive ability which permits it to do so” (Skinner, 1982, p. 161-2). Terms like ‘preference’, ‘choice’, ‘will’, and ‘intention’, are all abstractions given by cognitive psychologists to contingencies that involve internalizing of actions. For Skinner, these terms are synonyms for ‘behaviour’, and although they are used to describe the internalization of action, they do not cause actions.
Skinner is adamant that he is not a cognitive psychologist, but, rather, a behavioural psychologist. He labels himself as a radical behaviourist, a position and perspective he refined over time, and one which, he says, differs from some other forms of behaviourism which deal with the “problem of mind” by simply ignoring it. For him, private events...can be considered part of behaviour itself and can be interpreted in terms of what we know about public events in behaviour. Certain contingencies of reinforcement allow us to respond discriminatively with respect to the world around us,[and] to events inside of us...conscious content...may also be considered behaviour...seeing in the absence of the object seen, hearing in the absence of the object heard...the human organism is so complex that it often seems to behave capriciously...an inner idea is put into outer words, [i]inner feelings find outward expression...[but] all this made it easy to lose sight of the central argument - that behaviour which seemed to be the product of mental activity could be explained...‘knowing’ or ‘being aware of’...involves discriminating responses...which arise from contingencies necessarily arranged by a verbal environment...[but] because the community cannot reinforce self-descriptive [private] responses consistently, a person cannot...'know' events occurring within the skin [seeing without an object present, for example] as subtly and precisely as events in the world at large (Skinner, 1982a, pp. 115-133).

Concisely put by Skinner himself: “All’s behavior - and the rest is naught” (Skinner, 1982b, p. 191). While it is incontestable that behaviours are the externalization of some internal processes, what is missing in Skinner’s theory is the idea that there are covert processes going on in the mind that underpin those behaviours that are demonstrated. While he does not believe this to be occurring, I will attempt to show throughout this thesis, that in fact, there are covert processes going on in the mind that have direct impact on behaviour.

Skinner believed strongly that the use of his theory of behaviour reinforcement could work with large numbers of children. His attempt to take this theory into classrooms is
recorded in various articles published from 1960 to 1974. His main focus was the use of teaching machines in order to reinforce positive learning behaviours of students more often than it was possible for one teacher to do. This technological approach to behaviour was based on the “exciting prospect of an advancing science of learning [which] can be used to supplement ineffective and inefficient methods of conventional teaching” (1982d, p. 208). According to Epstein, “American industry was prepared to make the proper investment [in teaching machines], but the educational establishment was not” (1982, p. 208). Currently, educational trends seem to be again moving toward technology as an aid to teaching, and the educational community is in the midst of philosophical and pedagogical restructuring in regards to the uses of computers and the immense body of information afforded through that medium.

**Phenomenological Viewpoints**

Thinking is a conscious activity involving the mediation of previous knowledge or experience (conceptualizations and memory) by new information or sensory experience (perceptions). Eisner (1981) writes that “No concepts can be formed without sensory information...” (p. 49), and this belief is echoed by Grumet (1988) and Smithrim (1995), among others.

Phenomenologists such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, studying the ‘science’ of human experience from various perspectives, discussed mindful awareness and lived experience in purely theoretical form. While current thinking accepts that this mediating process is, in large part, conscious reflection, Husserl, according to Varela, Thompson and Rosch, in “The Embodied Mind” (1996), was concerned that a lack of self reflection in
philosophical discussions on mindfulness, offered "only a project of theoretical reflection on experience" (p. 19). Merleau-Ponty determined that reflection was always after the fact - "it could not recapture the richness of experience, it could only be a discourse about that experience" (ibid, p. 19). Husserl, building on the work of Brentano, declared that all mental states (perception, conception, memory, etc.) are either of or about something, and are directed toward an object. Brentano and Husserl’s term for ‘directedness’ is intentionality, not meant as purposeful action, but rather, the structure involving experience itself.

Initially, Husserl’s brand of phenomenology separated the mind from the world - there was no concept of embodiment in his theory. In his later work, however, he recognized that this point of view was problematic, and wrote about the experience of consciousness in the ‘lived-world’ as the every day social real world of which the individual was a part, rather than a theoretical construct. Phenomenologists were, now, exhorted to analyse the “essential relation between consciousness, experience, and this life-world...” (Varela, et. al., 1990, p. 17). And, analysis was to include reflection.

This change of perspective allowed thinking about reflection to shift from an abstract, separate, disembodied mental activity, to a mindful, open-ended, embodied event involving both mind and body in holistic perception and response. Contemporary research by Schon (1983), van Manen (1990), Wassermann (1990), and Bamberger and Schon (1991), among others, finds that “...what we casually call “the mind” is always actively involved in organizing incoming sensory material...this is a generative process...” (Bamberger, 1991, p. 9). The generative process referred to is complex, utilizing both reflection-on-action, the traditional form of retrospection, and reflection-in-action, the active form of mindful
experience itself, in combination, to make sense of incoming information and process it in various responses. This perspective is functionally important in both theory and practice, as evidenced by these researchers', among others, work with children in classrooms.

For the purpose of this thesis, cognition about and within lived experience is considered to be mindful perception, conception and reflection, as described above. Details of the interaction of detached, rational thought and sensory, emotional perception is purposely left undefined, as the various levels and structures in the brain which are involved in such interactions are incredibly complex and largely still unknown at this time, and is not my intent to attempt to define the processes involved.

Thinking as a Socio-cultural Construct

The idea that thought processes involving decision-making and value judgements might be influenced by socio-cultural environmental factors gathered support and came to the forefront of psychological thinking as the 'social cognition' movement of the 1970-80's, which considered cognitive development to be the result of interaction and communication. Objects and conventions have "a social history and functions that are not discovered through the child's unaided explorations" (Newman et. al, 1989, p. 62)...the child 'appropriates' (Leont'ev 1981; Newman, Griffin and Cole 1989) ideas and behaviours from encounters with objects in cultural context" (Mercer, 1992, p. 36). "Cultural context" includes all the various social worlds, familial, community, and school, in which the child participates and which, according to Bruner (1971), Vygotsky (1978), Donaldson (1978), Tizard and Hughes (1984), Wells (1985) and Dyson (1989), directly influence cognitive development. The means of influence was unconscious absorption of values, rules and behaviours through exposure and
experience. These enculturated ‘teachings’ formed the implicit, fixed body of knowledge understood by those people within that milieu to be their ‘culture’. Piaget, in his writings on child development, acknowledged social factors had some influence on development: “The child’s thought cannot be derived from the unborn psycho-biology factors and the factors of the physical environment alone...the very structure of thought depends upon the social milieu...(1932, p. 55)” (cited in Vygotsky/Kozulin, ed., 1996, p. 43). Therefore, egocentrism and cooperation are both aspects of cognitive reasoning and play a part in cognitive development. The “social cognition” movement is associated with the “cultural psychology” perspective, which was greatly influenced by Lev Vygotsky’s work, newly available in English in the 1960’s. Vygotsky’s research was based on an approach to studying human functions he called ‘developmental’. “In calling his psychology developmental, Vygotsky meant much more than a mere analysis of the ontogenetic unfolding of behaviour. Vygotsky perceived psychological development as a dynamic process full of upheavals, sudden changes and reversals [and] suggested that the new developmental approach be built on three concepts: 1) higher mental functions; 2) cultural development; 3) mastering one’s own behavioural processes” (Kozulin, 1996, pp. xxviii, xxix).

While research findings continue to point to socio-cultural factors as powerful influences on thinking and behaviour, it is also becoming evident that the definition and use of the term ‘culture’ has been changing. Mercer (1992) notes that Geertz, through anthropology, provided the original definition, which, is “…show[ing] its age...(p. 30)” (p. 30). Mercer comments on the enlarging concept of ‘culture’, which has changed since originally used by Geertz and, later, similarly, by Vygotsky. ‘Culture’ is no longer fixed within and determined by, an apparently homogeneous group. Consequently, the definition of the word is seen to
have, by Maybin (cited in Mercer, 1992), among others, "...changing and contested meanings..." (p. 31). The movement away from previously accepted and expected meanings and functions is due, I suspect, to the globalization of the world by technology and mass media, which has stretched and overlapped the lives of people of most cultures.

The Situated Cognitive Perspective on Thought

It is generally agreed now that social influences on cognitive development specifically interrelated and defined within a cultural context are important factors in the process of learning. It is possible, according to Walker (1996), that there is some innate capacity relating to sound processing, but it is at a primitive and general level: "...all humans, because of their unique biology, possess basic and innate capabilities for processing sound pressure waves. Beyond this, most behaviour is attributable to the effects of culture, environment, and the social and physical conditions in which human life exists" (p. 108).

Research focussing on cultural factors in cognitive development emphasizes that not only are socio-cultural aspects important, but that all experience is contextualized within some socio-cultural frame. This position has come out of research in both perception and language development and their relationship to cognition. For example, Butterworth (1992) cites research in perception by Bryant (1974), Chapman (1988), and Butterworth (1990), and research into language development and acquisition by Donaldson (1978) and Segal (1991). Work with infants and young children suggests that very young children can make deductive inferences and relative judgments. Such findings support and extend the position of a socially rooted basis for cognition in that culture is instrumental in what and how learning takes place (as opposed to the individual in isolation), and context is inextricably woven into
all experience - ie. no experience is decontextualized. At this point, it is important to define how the word ‘context’ is used: according to Mercer (1992), it is primarily a mental phenomenon of conditions or information utilized by human participants in various activities and situations. “All learning is situated, because any task or activity does not exist independent of the ways in which participants...contextualize it” (p. 33). Learning as well as any other communication, depends on shared contexts, so information can be exchanged. Context information can be drawn from shared past experience or the broader base of previous individual experience and/or cultural knowledge.

The “situated cognitive” perspective seems to make a strong case for the argument that there is a variety of means of acquisition and use of cultural artifacts such as language and music. Although all cultures have music and language in some form, each culture uses language and music differently and features and structures of each form vary. The process of acquiring knowledge in these modalities involves the act of taking in sensory information (socio-cultural information from without), and processing it, in the mind, with pre-existing knowledge. The ‘key’ word here is active; central to cognition is the active relation (or coding) of new information with what is already known. It is generally accepted that acquisition of any knowledge in any modality is, therefore, not passive (Fiske, 1995, Hargreaves, 1997). Taking up Merleau-Ponty’s (1978) argument that perception as well as other parts of the cognitive process (storing, interpreting, transforming, etc.) is based in body-experience, Davidson and Scripp write that “cognition, intelligence and mind are not matters of the head alone” (1992, p. 411), but are, rather, embodied, inclusive of the body and senses as well. Lochhead (1995) agrees that meaning, often the goal or result of cognitive activity,
"is not the result of a disembodied mind...not an act of thought. Rather, meaning results through the interaction of an embodied human being with the world" (p. 36). In addition to Merleau-Ponty, Lochhead, Grumet (1988) and Varela, Thompson and Rosch, (1993), among others, conclude that both perception and cognition include and embody the synthesis and transformation of new and old information from senses (body), intuition, and imagination as well as intellect (mind).

**Neurological and Physiological Studies of Brain Functions and Processes and Cognition**

At this writing, the newest research area into cognition is neural network, or brain, research. Emphasis seems to be shifting from *where* the knowledge comes from in the first place, to *how* information is recalled and processed. The implication may be that there is an assumption that knowledge which the brain/mind has must be acquired rather than pre-set.

"The study of brain and behaviour relationships had a tremendous thrust forward from the work of Roger Sperry and his colleagues...recognized in 1981 by the Nobel Committee...He showed the brain had a right side and left side each...with its own special profile of cognitive style" (Gordon and Bellamy, 1991, p. 311). More recently, it has become understood that while certain functions show neural activity in *primarily* one side or the other, there is cross-over and interaction between various brain areas during processing tasks.

Studies on real brains are done (naturally) from the outside, and "it is very difficult to determine the mechanisms within the brain from probes on the outside " (Gordon and Bellamy, 1991, p. 317). Straham and Toepfer (1984) report on research from various neuroscientists who write about the vast possibilities for variations and complexity within the brain. "There may be as many as 30 billion neurons in the brain, some with as many as
10,000 connections with other neurons...as we perceive the possible combinations beyond the
trillions, we can begin to grasp why the brain can be so subtle - and why each brain is so
different from any other (Hart, 1982, p. 198)...[and why]...the brain has always been and will
always be more complicated than man’s latest contraption (Begley, Carey and Sawhill, 1983,
p. 42)... [and the fact that]...there are individual variations in brain ‘blueprints’ - some
subjects’ sites for naming objects lie in the parietal lobes while other subjects’ sites are more
numerous in the temporal lobes (Ojemann, 1983)” (p. 223). Clearly, research results provide
more questions than answers, which keeps researchers exploiting current technology in the
hopes of finding more conclusive information about neural functioning.

Cognitive Acquisition and Processing in Young Children and Early Influences From
Adults

Besides the ‘how’ of neural functioning, another of the questions that intrigues some
researchers about acquisition and processing of information centres around the ‘when’.
Studies have been done at all ages, starting as early as pre-natal studies in preferences for
certain musical patterns. Wilkin (1991) investigated fetal and newborn music learning and
concluded that infants who had listened to the same music item daily from 32 weeks
gestation to birth “...appear to recognize that item when played within a set of four contrasted
music items” (p. 230). Continuing her research with another similar study (1995/6), Wilkin
found that a test group of infants demonstrated a willingness to listen to music repeatedly
heard from 32 weeks gestation through to six weeks old and displayed movement interpreted
as positive (eg., not agitated), while listening to that music. A control group not given a daily
‘diet’ of specific music did not demonstrate the same behaviours. Beyer (1996) also studied
infants, and reported differences in the perception and acquisition of cognitive structures in music. These and other similar studies illustrate that there is difference in learning (in music, as an example) as early as birth, which indicates that there cannot be one innate set structure for everyone's learning, but, rather, that learning is a result of specific exposure and experience.

Although basic patterns of use and interaction with language vary less than those involving music, there is evidence to ground the argument for socio-cultural influences as the source of learning in both these domains. Deutsch, North and Ray (1990), studying the tritone paradox with a group of female subjects, found a relationship between the listeners' perceptions and their vocal spoken range. Deutsch (1991), revisiting this idea in a large bi-cultural study with young children in England and California, found pitch placement differences in their spoken language that were marked by parental influence according to the dialect spoken by the adults. She determined that the "perception of the tritone paradox is related to the processing of special sounds" (1994, p. 125), and, therefore, that "the perception of music can be influenced by the language spoken by the listener" (1991, p. 335). She also noted (1994) that pitch range has been found to vary significantly between a group of Californian and Polish males. The variation in range was found between the cultural groups but was "surprisingly independent of the physiological characteristics of the speaker" (p. 127). Brooks and Fusco (1984) and Bruner (1975a, 1975b) also conducted studies with children whose findings clearly demonstrate that verbal 'play' involving adults (parents) is crucial to language development. Dyson (1989), working with school age children in the transition time between spoken and written language acquisition, and Bates, Marchman, Thal,
Fenson, Dale, Reznick, Reilly and Hartung (1994), conducting an extensive study of 1,803 children between the ages of 8 months and 1.3 years who were just acquiring language, note that children acquire and assimilate different types/styles of language at different times and use them in different ways. These various results which conclusively show that language acquisition is of varying kinds and occurs at different rates, further support the perspective that language learning is most probably cultural rather than inherent. Vygotsky's (1978) work with young children also emphasized the importance of adult response as a motivation for learning. His findings indicate that children modified their actions based on 'learning' acquired through interactions with adults, rather than acting on pre-set or pre-decided criteria (1962). In addition to the importance of early and constant adult contact, speed of acquisition may be so swift that we misinterpret the source of knowledge. Bates and Elman (1996); and Saffran, Aslin and Newport (1996) use the term 'very rapid learning' to describe this phenomenon, which can be offered as an alternative to Chomsky's template theory as an explanation for children's early generative capabilities.

Other studies, concentrating on deprivation and language learning, as well as Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the 'zone of proximal development', illustrate the very real differences in language acquisition and development depending on the amount of external stimulation and verbal interaction and modelling at certain maturational times (stages). Information from these types of studies support the case for language acquisition being directly linked to socio-cultural interactions rather than innate knowledge. Empirical evidence from real-life situations also supports the point of view that language development is directly related to verbal interaction, particularly with more knowledgeable individuals (usually adults). For
example, Anne Carroll, in a personal comment, described her experiences as one of the humanitarian volunteers who had ongoing contact with children who spent their first few years in orphanages in Romania during the upheaval during the early 1990s. She noticed that most of the children rarely (or minimally) spoke, cried or laughed, and had very limited vocabulary, because so much of their earliest development was spent with extremely limited voice and body contact from either adults or other babies/toddlers, as well as little or no stimulation from toys, music, bright colours, etc. According to Bruner (1971), “...mental growth is in very considerable measure dependent on growth from the outside in - a mastering of techniques that are embodied in the culture and that are passed on in a contingent dialogue by agents of the culture. This becomes notable in the case when language and the symbolic systems of culture are involved” (p. 21). Although “the sound of words, it seems, builds up neural circuitry that can then absorb more words...” (Begley, 1996, p. 57), explaining these differences is still an ongoing area of speculation and research, for they “often reflect a complex interplay of developmental and stylistic variation. Most of the hard work that will be required to explain these differences [in their study] still lies ahead of us...all these variables...phonological factors, perceptual factors, measures of child memory and cognitive style...[for example]...will need to be explained if we want to understand the causes of individual variation in early language development” (Bates, 1994, et. al., p. 119). And while there is historical support in the literature for the view of genetic pre-disposition, cognitive psychology has not been able to conclusively produce evidence of its existence. I think the research explored above makes a strong case for Edelman’s 1987 statement, cited in Walker, 1996, that “the way the brain responds changes and develops according to
experience, and musical behaviours arise from a particular organism’s interactions with a particular environment and with the social group comprising the culture, not from innate brain mechanisms which invariably produce one type of behaviour as opposed to another” (p. 109).

Music and Language Cognition: Similarities and Differences

Studies by Calvin (1994), Begley (1996), Gordon and Bellamy (1991) and Bharucha (1991), among others, focus on neural activity in processing tasks, with reference to both music and language. There seems to be interest in possible parallels in music and language cognition by researchers in various branches of study, such as neurophysiology, psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, music, linguistics, and education. According to Rischel (1991), this is “a controversial area where there is as yet no real consensus of opinion” (p. 437), and Slawson (1991) writes that music and language both are behavioural expressions which have some mental processes in common:

the human mind has two kinds of characteristic abilities...acquiring and applying rule systems that generate certain kinds of hierarchical structures [and] classifying units of information so as to identify associative patterns, determine ambiguities, and detect anomalies. Behavioural expressions of these capabilities - as distinct from the capabilities themselves - include language, music, and perhaps some other arts and games. Of these behavioural expressions, language is the most utilitarian...syntax and semantics [are] closely co-ordinated...the other expressions [like music] are less useful - at least in terms of species survival - and are, therefore, relatively variable and optional (p. 30).

Whereas syntax of each mode is different and distinct, there are similarities, most obviously in phonology. Both systems have melodic and rhythmic substantive categories. (Pierrehumbert, 1991, p. 132; Aiello, 1994, pp. 44, 46). Rischel (1991) feels that “rhythm [is] the most important property shared by speech and music” (p. 437). Lehiste (1991) thinks
the parallel is most closely seen between music and poetry, and lists several types of rhythmic speech: rhythmic prose and/or free verse; poetry with regular metres; laments (half song and half recitation) (pp. 98-99). Rhythm and pitch also feature in the area of expression, according to Sundberg (1991), for expression is conveyed by “deviations from neutral or expected values with regard to duration and pitch” (p. 443). Ohman, cited in Sundberg, Nord, and Carlson (1991), writes that speech is the expression of a thought and music is the expression of an emotion. Sundberg finds expression in language comparable to music in regards to prosody; “Emotional expression is not unique to music. It is inherent also in speech prosody. This, in fact, suggests that there are very strong parallels between music and speech prosody, both being efficient tools for expressing emotions” (p. 441). The relationship between pitch and rhythm is not, however, absolute, for they behave differently in music and language: “language has nothing analogous to the absolute intervals of music in the concept of “being in tune” as in singing” (Rischel, 1991, p. 437).

Although there seem to be many areas of similarity, there are also important differences between language and music. As previously mentioned, there is different syntax involved in these two areas, primarily because there is a distinct difference involving the use of ambiguity in the two grammars. “Ambiguity occurs rather seldom in language because language is based on communication...on the other hand, ambiguity is a major element of the grammar and aesthetics of music...the grammar of music allows for complexity and simultaneity... overall, the syntax of music has much more latitude than that of language” (Aiello, 1994, p. 48-9). In addition, both the function and semantics of the two modes are different. Repp, (1991), and Sundberg (1991), like Aiello (1994), see a basic difference in function between
the modes as being that of meaning. Whereas music communicates aesthetic and artistic ‘messages’, which may be as various and individual as the people receiving that music, language is designed to communicate specific meanings, understood in the same way by all receivers who have access to the meaning codes of that group to which the communication is directed. Words have meanings specified in a lexicon, and music, (with the possible exception of “Programme” music), does not tie sound sequences to objects or functions in the same way. “The semantics of music seems both fragmentary and optional. The essence of music lies beyond such meanings. This is quite unlike language, where the meaning is normally quite essential” (Sundberg 1991, p. 442). Repp writes that language function differs also, in that “knowledge is solidified by constant productive use...[whereas]...most people have not learned to use their musical knowledge productively... [and] musical knowledge is acquired passively by most listeners” (p. 263).

The above discussed some of the broad issues concerning cognition and the possible similarities and differences between the two modalities of language and music in regard to cognitive activity. According to Repp (1991):
both speech and music psychologies have been dominated by a cognitive orientation that emphasizes categorical processes...this has led to a focus on the segmental structures of speech and on the pitch structure of music, as the closest analogies to a segmental structure...[In speech] the focus on linguistic structure has overshadowed research on the prosodic aspects of speaking as an art, as in public oration, poetic declamation, and drama...While speech is not inherently an art form...[Prosodic dimensions - rhythmic and melodic elements] are commonly treated as purely physical, psycho-acoustic aspects of often artificial rather than artful sound structures, and subjects are expected to report on their sound impressions, but rarely on their aesthetic or emotional reactions...yet, musicians, composers, critics and philosophers of art generally agree that the purpose of music is to convey feelings (see Langer, 1953). (p. 262).

Cognitive Processes and Lived Experience in the Context of Creating in Music and Language Composition

The traditional perspective detailed above has funnelled research into narrow, disembodied, compartmentalized and disembodied categories, where either the focus is on the theoretical or on quantifiable ‘bits’ (eg., looking at the musical aesthetic response based on listening to a ten second excerpt of music). My interest in investigating the area of cognitive processes was different. I was searching for some illumination in practical terms as to the aspects and processes children were involved in as they engaged with specific media during creating activities within actual lived experience. To use Greene’s words (1988), “the point of cognitive development is not to gain an increasingly complete grasp of abstract principles. It is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world” (p. 129). I am not interested in questions which involve procedures such as quantitatively enumerating the number of times a particular response is repeated in a laboratory setting, or which melodic interval is preferred by a specific population of subjects, because these procedures of extraction do not help us...
understand how children think in music. "Musical concepts, if they are to explain the act of music itself as a cognitive process, must deal with relationships of musical events in time" (Davies, 1992, p. 19). To this end, I observed, interacted with and interpreted, the behaviours and communications of particular students in particular situations which involve learning and expression of that learning using the media of music and language. In interpreting the data collected in these situations, I looked for patterns and exceptions in behaviours to help me understand cognitive processes in broad terms, in regards to the participant 8-9 year old children composing with music and language, and what part socio-cultural factors played in decision-making.

To give direction and shape to my own thinking about the relationship of music and language, I looked at the work of Sloboda (1985), Dyson (1989), Upitis (1992, 1990), and Daiute (1989a, 1989b), who had written extensively on the subject. According to Sloboda (1985), until the age of about ten years (when training begins to play an important part), musical 'learning' is acquired naturally through the process of enculturation, whereby socio-cultural rules and preferences are absorbed informally, just as pre-literate children absorb language (albeit through different media and experiences). They can use and express themselves in the mode chosen, even if they cannot articulate the structures/rules embodying that modality. Writers such as Kratus (1985, 1989), Swanwick (1988), Meyer-Denkman (1977), Walker (1990) and Manins (1994), support this view, and consider musical cognition to be a learned form of thought (thinking with sound), just as speaking and writing are learned forms of thought using words. In fact, the oral/aural parallel of sound is the most basic thing language and music have in common.
Sloboda (1985), lists the following similarities between music and language:

1) both are human products;

2) all cultures have some form of both language and musical structures;

3) both language and music are capable of generating infinite ‘new’ expressions; e.g. transformations, extensions and variations;

4) both language and music are auditory vocal forms (‘voice’ as either human or other sound source);

5) acquisition in both modes generally proceeds from receptive skills first, to productive skills after; e.g. one can understand words and sentences before one can invent same; one can respond to music before one is able to create coherent expressions (p. 19);

6) both are tools/media for composing (generating ‘new’ ideas);

7) creating in both modes includes:

   a) moments unaccounted for and unexplained, which can be referred to as “inspirational” moments;

   b) use of imagination, senses and intellect to refine inspiration;

   c) a variety of procedures and perspectives, from unconscious ‘muse’ inspiration to conscious, intent, both at the beginning and within the process;

   d) a product as a vehicle for communication of intent (if intent was present);

   e) a temporal and aural product. There may also be a notated, visual, permanent representation of that product;

   f) a notational system which uses symbols specific to a societal or cultural group.
Dyson (1989), researching and writing in the area of literacy and language acquisition regarding children, has also developed a list of similarities between music and language, which she has divided into two categories:

1) procedures:
   a) exploration or drafting;
   b) editing and/or critiquing;
   c) polishing.

2) expression:
   a) intent;
   b) shape/line;
   c) temporal elements;
   d) texture;
   e) innovation and invention;
   f) pacing;
   g) mastery of the medium.

Consolidating from these various writers I compiled yet another list of similarities which I found useful, and might also be helpful to both researchers and educators looking at cognitive processes specifically in the context of composing in the classroom with music and language:

1) language and musical sound are both symbol systems which people use to shape experiences, create meaning and communicate with others in socio-cultural contexts;

2) both involve performative ‘language’ and are shared through auditory forms;
3) there are shared procedures in the composing strategies of both modalities, such as: exploring, editing, revising, reflecting, sharing, performing, practising and polishing;

4) in the process of composing, there are various roles: e.g., composer, performer, teacher, facilitator, listener and critic; that all participants in the process of composing occupy each of those roles at various times; and that all roles occupy an equally important place in the creative dialogue;

5) there are similar rights and responsibilities, including: appreciating, inquiring, defending, implying, demanding, suggesting, practising, reflecting, and sharing intentions;

6) children demonstrate functional knowledge in both modalities before they demonstrate formal knowledge.

Cognitive Processes as Critical and Creative Thought

Looking at more specific processes of thinking in relation to creating activities involves the areas of imagination, play (exploration), intuition, problem finding and solving. The umbrella terms used to describe cognitive processes within these areas are 'critical thinking' and 'creative thinking'. Both of these terms have been used (and misused) in both the research and educational communities. There is much literature on these so-called processes as well as many different perspectives, definitions and uses. Both critical and creative thinking have become, in recent times, ‘hot’ issues in education. There is independent literature on both topics, as well as independent pedagogical methods. I find it difficult to completely separate the two, for in my experience as an educator and artist I find that cognition which involves learning and/or creating includes both these events, repeatedly, in
varying amounts and often intertwining with each other.

Dewey is credited with being the founder of the modern-day critical thinking movement, although he did not use the term. His theory “rests on the assumption that thinking is highly individualistic and driven by personal needs...and vital appreciations as well as by the nature of the problem” (Woodford, 1994, p. 46). To Dewey, ‘problem’ meant general understanding and synthesis as well as specific problems that needed resolution. In both *How We Think* (1934) and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), Dewey includes “both affective and cognitive components of thinking...characterized as a personal search for meaning...” (Woodford, 1994, pp. 47, 71), as the explanation of the term ‘reflective thinking’, which he used to describe the active, mental process of thinking. Since his time, although reflection is an important, integral part of innovative (or higher-level, to use a term from Bloom’s Taxonomy, 1969) thinking processes, the term itself has been largely supplanted, in the movement, by the ‘critical thinking’ label. Richardson and Whitaker (1992), however, point out that no consensus exists as to the exact nature of critical thinking. In fact, the critical thinking literature from the past decade may be described as “a continuous dialogical argument between philosophers and theorists as to the nature and conditions of critical thinking” (p. 47). One can also add educators to those active in both the use of and debate about, critical thinking. While there is debate about the ‘what’ (substance and content), most critical thinking theorists agree on the ‘where’ (positioning). The focus of critical thinking seems to be within a social context: contextual problem solving which involves the acquisition and development of concept and process knowledge, and reasoning abilities (Woodford, 1994, pp. 44-45).

There is also general agreement on two aspects of critical thinking: the need or desire to solve something as an impetus to engage initially in the process, and the inclusion of
divergent thinking as part of the process. According to Webster (1987), divergent thinking is "a kind of personal brainstorming [whereby] imagination plays an important role and is fuelled by the individual’s conceptual understanding of the material" (p. 165). Using critical thinking to solve a context-specific problem set, or synthesizing life events, generally, involves a personal process utilizing mental flexibility, imagination and intellect.

At this point, to me, similarities between critical and creative thinking begin to appear. Woodford (1995), McLennon (1996), Csikszentimihalyi (1988), among others, also see parallels between these two processes. Most basically, both are mental processes, and both use many of the same strategies, including divergent and convergent thinking, to function. The idea of a distinction between divergent and convergent thinking and their relationship to creativity, was pioneered by J.P. Guilford, within the theoretical framework of modern psychology. Csikszentimihalyi (1996) credits Guilford (1950 and 1967) for distinguishing between the two, "claiming that divergent thinking was peculiar to creativity, and [for] developing the first tests to measure it, which are still being used. [As well], Torrence (1988), Runco (1991) and Baer (1993), also contributed greatly to literature on divergent thinking" (p. 412). Webster (1990), writing about creative thinking within a music context, defines it as "a dynamic mental process that alternates between divergent (imaginative) and convergent (factual) thinking, moving in stages over time" (p. 28). Csikszentimihalyi (1996) considers Webster’s implication that creative thinking, as a mental activity or process occurring inside a person’s head, to be misleading. He states that the frame of reference for that mental activity must be included in the definition in order for it to be accurate and complete. For him, that referent frame is the socio-cultural context, and his definition would extend Webster’s to include “the interaction between a person’s thoughts and a socio-cultural
According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), "the demarcation of the cognitive steps involved in...the 'how' of creativity - was first clearly formulated by Wallas, (1926)" in a four-stage process of preparation, incubation, illumination and verification (described in detail in Piirto, 1992, p.413). Csikszentmihalyi describes his elaborated version of the process of creative thinking as a 5-step process, which is more often recursive rather than linear, and occurring within a widely-differing time frame:

1) preparation - becoming immersed (either consciously or unconsciously) in (a) problem(s) that arouse curiosity;
2) incubation - unusual ideas and connections emerge (either consciously or unconsciously);
3) insight - disparate (or one significant) piece(s) of the cognitive puzzle fall into place; this is the 'aha!' moment, or Einstein's '1% inspiration';
4) evaluation - deciding, through self-criticism, if the idea/insight is worth pursuing;
5) elaboration - working on editing, polishing, etc.; Einstein's '99% perspiration'.

This process is concerned with finding solutions. Most research and discussions concerning both critical and creative thinking also centre on the goal of solving something. While this is a logical and obvious application, especially within the educational context, there is another aspect to consider, which is, possibly, the real crux and determinant of the creative mind: problem-finding. While there is much challenge and satisfaction in solving a given or pre-set problem: for example; breaking Germany's World War II 'Enigma' code, or, finding a way to transform Bottom's head into an ass's and then back to his own without the "Midsummer Night's Dream" audience seeing the change process, there is a whole other dimension in
finding or setting one's own problem. Problem finding propels the thinker into extending a task into an open-ended situation.

In the school setting, problem-solving and problem-finding tasks might look like this: If, for example, I want my students to problem-solve, I would set the following musical task: Using an available keyboard instrument, such as the piano, Orff instruments, melodeons, compose a 32-bar melody with an accompanying baseline. Within this framework, they have some leeway to exercise their individuality as they meet the goal set for them, but most of the compositions will be very similar. If, however, I want them to problem-find as well as problem-solve, I would set the task differently: Using sound sources of any number or kind, compose a complete musical piece in a style of your choice. By providing an open-ended task, I am asking that my students first determine the 'burning', or relevant, question, and then find a way to successfully solve that question. And whereas critical thinking alone would be sufficient to meet the goal in the problem-solving situation, both critical and creative thinking are needed to meet the goals of the problem-finding/solving situation. These resulting compositions will probably be quite different and individual. Unfortunately, schools do not often provide opportunities for problem-finding for all students, nor are children who try to extend tasks into the problem-finding situation usually supported. Often, only those students labelled as 'gifted' are required to engage in this type of thinking/learning, on the assumption either that only they can do this complex, multi-stage thinking, or that only such children need this opportunity. In my experience, the vast majority of children are able and need to, engage in both finding and solving processes in order to develop the full range of creative and critical thinking skills. In addition, I believe that problem-finding and problem-solving, when utilized together, greatly enhance learning.
of all kinds, and are particularly essential elements of pedagogical design in the arts classrooms.

DeLoache and Brown (1987) did a research project with a large number of children in the area of cognition and language: “faced with problems to solve, where they are interested in the outcome and understand the goal, even two-year-olds actively and systematically pursue the solution...the child explores her environment, tests theories in action, and modifies her approach to problems as a result of experience” (p. 119). The children in DeLoache and Brown’s studies, 18-42 months, and 4-7 years, did not stop at correcting errors (problem-solving), but extended and improved upon the successes, demonstrating the desire to set further goals (problem-finding). Young children’s abilities and interests in problem-finding and problem-solving involve awareness of the whole, and the more mature participants demonstrated “this developmental progression...both across ages (macro genetic change) and within an age group (micro genetic change)...two-year-olds [do not] possess strategic abilities comparable to the adult, or even eight-year-olds...the theory building of the preschooler [is] certainly the precursor of active and systematic problem-setting and problem-solving...that are perfected during adolescence and adulthood” (pp. 115, 120).

DeLoache and Brown (1987) argue that general cognitive processes involving problem-finding and problem-solving are “not simply...domain specific, or an age-related sequence” (p. 115), but that the process of progressing through a sequence of error-solving tactics through to extension of further, related, challenges, seems to be apparent in a variety of tasks within and across various age groups. Other research seems to support this view that children can demonstrate cognitive ability through making aesthetic judgements in composing activities in music. Barrett (1996), analysing 137 compositions by children of ages five to
twelve years, notes that they all had a sense of the whole, could use specific structural devices, which denotes ability to use imagination, find and solve problems, and make meaning with domain-specific tools, all evidence of cognition. DeLorenzo (1989) and Wiggins (1992) also worked with children (aged 10-12) in the area of problem-finding and problem-solving in music, and found that the children seemed aware of the whole as they progressed through the various tasks. Daiute (1989), Cowie (1989), and Dyson (1989, 1992), among others, working with children aged 6-12 in language composing, also found that the children demonstrated knowledge of the whole, understood and utilized formal structures, and both found and solved their own problems within the context of story writing. Based on these and similar research findings concerning cognition and problem finding and solving across ages, one might surmise that it is possible for children such as those in these reported studies to also creatively find, meet, and solve, various problems in various learning situations in various modalities. It is important to note, however, that research which looks at the “uniqueness of young children” (DeLoache and Brown, 1987, p. 108), is relatively new. This seems to be, according to DeLoache and Brown, because, firstly, early learning theories, which were strongly influenced by Piaget, believed that young children were not capable of imaginative, cognitive, developmental changes; and secondly, young children tended to be difficult/unreliable to work with, and experimental tasks needed extreme care of design in order to elicit accurate responses (if they were possible at all) (pp. 108-9). Empirical data from teachers in classrooms, and changes in theoretical perspectives about children and cognition, have facilitated and encouraged research in this area.

**Creative Thought in Socio-cultural Context:**

As previously stated, both critical and creative thinking are areas of great debate, and for
similar reasons: it is extremely difficult to find definitions which are relevant and valid. In part, this is because of the event, or process, itself. In part, it is because of the terms of reference for assigning value; if critical or creative thinking is an individual activity, how can its value be assigned? This is an eternal dilemma, and usually is the cause of an artist (or inventor) being labelled outrageous, disgusting or, more kindly, ‘ahead of her time’.

Based on historical evidence, thinking is evaluated by the products, and according to social values. “Judgements are based on criteria that cannot be separated from current values and norms. Hence one must conclude that creativity is not an attribute of individuals but of social systems making judgements about individuals” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994, p. 144), and, also, that the rules of those social systems do not remain static, but consist of “criteria that change from domain to domain and across time” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a, and Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1986).

Although Csikszentmihalyi (1994) talks about ‘social systems’ as if they were a living entity, he is not vaguely suggesting that there is some amorphous being in charge. He determines that there are three sub-systems that make up any social system: a domain, the symbolic system with rules for ideas and actions/behaviours; a person, individuals active in the system, possessing and exhibiting accepted personality traits and cognitive skills; and a field, consisting of individuals who know the rules of that domain and are directly involved in that domain in some ongoing and consistent way (pp. 143-144). In the larger society, these people might include media critics, retailers selling the products of artistic efforts and the collectors, eminent artists and peer artists, historians, etc. In schools, these people might include teachers, administrators, parents, etc. In all cases, although the assumption is that these judges have the purest motives as well as some expertise, the fact that there is personal
bias must be acknowledged. Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p. 405), credits the philosopher Habermas (1970) with the statement that individual bias was unavoidable but we can mediate our prejudice to some extent by being reflective. The awareness that individual bias, as a part of all experience exists and can be utilized productively, is now quite common in creativity literature (Hanley, 1994; Carlin, 1996; van Manen 1990; Roberts; 1996, Peshkin, 1994, for example). It is necessary to be aware, as well, that some reflective mediating is useful, as this helps both critics and recipients (audience) function more productively. I think it is essential for educators to have these awarenesses about personal bias as they attempt to design an atmosphere in their classrooms within which children can demonstrate their curiosity, imagination and creativity.

Possible Sources of Creative Inspiration

Just as there is debate about what the process of creativity is as well as which products are worthy of the label 'creative', so is there continued debate about the source(s) of creative inspiration. Csikszentmihalyi writes that the three sub-systems within the socio-cultural larger system provide the sources for creative people to determine problems to find and solve. Either personal experiences, negative and positive, requirements of the specific domain, or socio/cultural pressures, are well-springs of curiosity for creative individuals. They are the 'burning questions', relevant issues, ownership or pride instances, etc., used by individuals to push against, extend or glorify existing tenets of their larger social contexts. According to Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner (1994), there have been two opposing views about the source for creativity since Plato's time. Plato and Aristotle held the viewpoint that creativity came from "outside the individual altogether (coming from the gods or some other unknown place)" (p. 128). Kant, on the other hand, believed that creativity was "entirely
inside the individual, having no other source of inspiration than the individual's own experience...it was Piaget who revolutionized thought by placing the source of change in the process itself...spontaneity and directed transformation are the processes that make possible both development and creativity” (Feldman, et. al, pp. 128-131).

What exactly takes place within the individual and/or between the individual and the experience that sparks the onset of creativity? Intuition is a credible entity and accepted source of inspiration. Sloboda (1985), working with adult professionals improvising music, notes an extensive awareness and use of intuition. Many adult writers, including Stephen Spender (1946), poet, and Booker T. Washington (Booka White) and Keith Richards (1995), songwriters, credit intuition or the ‘muse’, for inspirational support, similarly to Plato’s external creative spirit ‘speaking’ through a human form. I think Bruce Springsteen’s comment in “And Then I Wrote...” (T. Russell and S. Tyson, eds., 1995), is a particularly vivid example of this elusive entity at work: “It was like my heart spoke straight through my mouth, without ever having to pass through my brain”. Having this conscious awareness seems a rather sophisticated ability, yet Swanwick (1994), Upitis (1992), and Wiggins (1992), working with children in music composition, and Dyson (1989, 1992), and Daiute (1989a), working in language acquisition and use, have found that children use intuition consciously in making value judgements. In this way, Wassermann writes (1990), they act like professionals, demonstrating behaviours that include intuition (p. 31). Intuition is clearly thought of as an integral and essential part of decision-making and artistic expression by such researchers as these mentioned. Further, according to Swanwick, “the only justifiable reason for selecting any music activity as part of an education programme is that it has the potential of significant engagement at the intuitive level...analysis and knowledge relies on intuitive
shaping and selection” (1994, p. 33). Certainly, he gives strong support for the integrated nature of imagination, intuition, and cognition, and their impact on creativity, voicing once again the belief that Arnheim stated in *Art and Visual Perception* over thirty years ago (1966), that “the division between artistic intuition and rational insight is artificial and harmful...both cooperate in the solution of an artistic problem” (p. 277-278).

Hofstadter (1980) writes that intuitive knowledge is holistic knowledge rather than detail knowledge, and may not be fully consciously understood (p. 612). It may appear, then, that intuitions are composed of knowledge that appears without preparation, but, according to Arieti (1976), “there is no such thing as an immediate acquisition of knowledge, in the sense of not having had any preparation into, or elaboration of, any sort. The reason why the new knowing or understanding does not seem to have been prepared is that the subject was unaware of the antecedent stages” (p. 61). So, a person may not be consciously aware of all perceptions, but some part of the being is. When an internal ‘higher self’, or an external ‘muse’, in relation to ‘intuition’, is mentioned, it seems an acknowledgement that while we may not rationally understand everything we feel or seem to understand or are able to synthesize, we still ‘know’ those things anyway.

**Intuition and Creative Thought**

Intuition can be elusive. One can assume everyone has the quality and the ability to access it, but do we? I have been concentrating on the use of intuition in activities of artistic creation. Who uses their intuition in this way? How much is used? How effectively? How often? Csikszentimihalyi (1996) feels that creative opportunities or insights “usually tend to come to prepared minds...occasionally it is possible to arrive at a creative discovery without any preparation” (p. 83). He acknowledges that rest or idle time, when the conscious mind is
not aware of changes, is also an essential part of the process of creating, and sometimes this is the very time the ‘muse’ chooses to strike. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) does not, however, attempt to make the creative process mysterious; he stresses that opportunities abound for creative input, but it is only the *curious* who pursue them, for “the one thing about creative work is that it is never done” (p. 106). Ongoing curiosity allows one to persevere over time, uncovering ever more questions and possibilities. The curious people are the ones who are sensitive to the availability of space and time; they are, in other words, receptive to a certain climate which allows for, and perhaps even welcomes, creative outpouring.

So, who are these creative, curious people? Once again, arriving at a single definition or any definitive explanation is confusing and difficult, in part, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), because the term “covers too much ground” (p. 25). He attempts to write a profile of various ways creativity is ascribed to people, and if one works backward, so to speak, one can form a picture of tendencies which might be found in people considered creative:

1) people who express unusual thoughts, are interesting and stimulating, and appear to be unusually bright intellectually - Csikszentmihalyi prefers to call these people ‘brilliant’;

2) people who experience the world in novel ways, who are insightful and have fresh perceptions - Csikszentmihalyi prefers to call these people ‘personally creative’;

3) people who have changed our/their culture by specific, public achievements - Csikszentmihalyi prefers to call these people ‘truly creative’;

4) people who are described as ‘talented’ are, according to Csikszentmihalyi, in a different category than creative people, because their gifts refer to innate abilities - “We might say that Michael Jordan is a talented athlete or Mozart was a talented
pianist, without implying that either was creative for that reason” (p. 27);

5) people who are described as ‘genius’, are also in a different category from creative people. For Csikszentmihalyi, a genius is “both brilliant and creative at the same time” (p. 27). He is making the point here that many creative people are not geniuses, so although there may be overlap, they are not synonymous.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) also explains how he sees creative people applying their ability:

1) they question the obvious, sensing shortcomings in accepted explanations;

2) they have a perpetual sense of wonder;

3) they don’t make assumptions that they know what is going on around them;

4) they use problem-finding and creative thinking techniques in everyday life as well as exceptional circumstances;

5) they look at any problem or situation from a variety of angles and positions before trying to test possible solutions (use divergent thinking);

6) they are aware that creative opportunities may be in one domain or across domains;

7) they accept that creative thinking opportunities may result in changes in personal life paths and habits.

Arieti (1976) also looked at creativity. Writing from a psychoanalytic point of view as well as a psychological one, he states: “the great work of art transcends life experience, personal factors, and the historical period in which the producer happens to live” (p. 127). He believes that creative ability is not necessarily correlated with intellect, and cites research with children by Getzels and Jackson (1962), Torrence (1962, 1964) and Wade (1968), to support his view. In addition, he believes that creativity cannot be called up at will, but that

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the (potential) creator must make a space, psychically, emotionally and cognitively, within which to be open and be ready to notice opportunities. In addition, he warns that creative possibilities “may include absurdities” (p. 231). In other words, the art expression is probably out-of-step with what is ‘expected’; an artistic opportunity may present itself as unexpected or unusual; the artist him/herself may be odd in personality or behaviour. To be an artist and/or experience art and be outside the ‘norm’, may involve perseverance, courage, and a high degree of internal motivation. Torrence considers motivation an important factor - I think this is similar to Csikszentimihalyi’s ‘curiosity’, for each is meant to enable the creative person to pursue tasks over time and something has to keep him/her wanting to continue, particularly if the creative person is considered ‘odd’ or ‘different’ by the general society (which is often the case).

Creativity and Children

Although these aforementioned researchers and writers talked about ‘people’, they were referring to adults. Wondering whether children would display the same creative characteristics or tendencies, I looked for support in the music composition literature. Webster (1987) noted that curiosity, use of imagination and divergent thinking were displayed by children creating music; Kratus (1989) noted that while children were not capable of the same level of articulation or meaningful discussion as adults, “9-11 year olds [were] capable of using exploration, development and repetition in a manner consistent with reports of adult composers involved in compositional processes” (5); Wiggins (1992) called the efforts of the students in her study ‘creative’ because the student composers demonstrated divergent thinking approaches through the use of critical and creative thinking skills to both problem-find and problem-solve.
Creativity and Point of View

These opinions reflect, naturally, the specific socio-cultural and temporal/historical position of the Western tradition in the last two centuries. They are certainly not universal in any way, and even in the Western tradition the idea of creative thinking or creative people would never have surfaced before the Renaissance, as art was embedded in life. Even though specific people performed specific tasks, their expertise was considered part of the function of their doing that task; music, carpentry, storytelling, masonry, all were expected to conform to a certain standard in order to be acceptable, but “there were no widely shared standards by which novel performances could be judged” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994, p. 147). Today, around the world, many cultures still hold that perspective, where the concept of ‘talent’ or individual creativity does not exist. Bailin (1992), in our North American contemporary culture, also holds the view that there is nothing uncommon in creating. She writes that what is considered creative has only to do with what is achieved, and not with how it is accomplished. Therefore, one enjoys and commends a building, or novel, or piece of music, but ignores the perpetrator of that creation.

Bailin questions that the thinking needed to create is radical in any way, but states that originality seems to lie “on a continuum...On the one end is originality which takes place within the constraints of the tradition (e.g., both Mozart and Bach worked within established forms). On the other end lies originality which involves an alteration...of the constraints...even for products which are highly innovative...connections with the tradition are always in evidence...the techniques of the Impressionist artists were not the result of arbitrary novelty, but involved attempting to deal with the artistic problem of...light. Einstein’s revolutionary decisions were developed in response to inadequacies in existing
theories” (p. 10-11). I think her argument is part of a continuum as well, and only with historical hindsight has she been able to place art as always being connected to tradition. Was Picasso intending to extend the painting tradition when he broke up the reality of the human form into cubes? Were Debussy or Stockhausen relating to historical, musical forms when they wrote their music? Xenakis, speaking for many artists after World War II who specifically stated the intent of their creative expression, said that his music was intended to break with historical icons, so no historical connections remained. Yet, is this possible; can one conceive an anti-music or an anti-canon entirely without reference to the medium or form being rejected? And is it possible to believe that Einstein was merely a “clever boy”, master-minding ideas that other scientific peers were only too dim to see themselves? I think perhaps Bailin is taking a purely philosophical position within which she is letting pure reason blind her to the complexities and possibilities of artistic thinking. As Varese said in *The American Composer Speaks*, (Chase, 1966), “The very basis of creative work is experimentation, bold experimentation” (p. 189) - I do not believe making connections to tradition, or filling in gaps in existing theories is what ‘bold experimentation’ is all about. Pateman (1990), using language as an example, also holds the view that “‘true’ creativity arrives when individuals break old rules or invent new ones. The writer’s use of language is creative to the extent that it violates an existing rule...or invents a new rule...creative writers invented and developed the linguistic device known as free indirect speech... (p. 33).

While ‘creativity’ seems to be a word full of expectations and tensions, there are elements in the *doing* of something unique that are unarguable. Something beyond actuality occurs, as the doer (artist?) moves into the realms of possibility; and the vehicle for that movement is, I think, *imagination*. Pateman (1990), writes that one way to define creativity is “in terms of
the exercise of *imagination*” (p. 34). Imagination includes many things: imaging, unusual and flexible thinking, dreaming, sensing. Arieti (1976), considers imagination to be a “prerequisite or precursor of creativity...subsequent elaborations of imaginations are necessary for creativity” (p. 38) to come to fruition. Egan (1992), in his model of imagination in action, intertwines imagination and creativity “not unlike Arthur Koestler in his “The Act of Creation (1964)...suggests that creativity might be considered as the outward expression of imagination working in a high degree” (p. 37). Using the term creativity in this way seems to release it from socio-cultural restraints. Egan goes on to suggest that imagination “is the capacity to think of things as possibly being so; it is an intentional act of mind;...the source of invention, novelty and generativity...that greatly enriches rational thinking” (p. 43). His definition creates, for me, a balance and openness. I have devised a diagram depicting how I might use his ideas interrelating various aspects/processes of cognition and imagination, as both teacher and researcher:

**Figure 1. A Model of Creativity Based on Egan (1992)**

![Diagram of Creativity Model](image)

Imagination is an idea that many other researchers and writers feel touches the essence of who we are, as humans. It is not just exclusively ‘given’ to the creative few, although it is a
part of what makes creativity happen. (And in this way, I think we all have the potential to be
creative, to access our uniqueness and share it in recognized ways). Mary Warnock (1976),
writes that imagination facilitates our understanding and that there is always more in an
experience than we can predict. It allows any and all people to go beyond what we can see
and know consciously, and immediately. Greene (1995) writes that “It makes empathy
possible...enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and ‘others’...permits us to
give credence to alternate realities...to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions” (p. 3).
With imagination, we can both construct a real world and project a possible one. Traditional
philosophers Kant, Hume and Sartre, all held the imagination to be special: Kant believed it
to be important in making sense of the world, Hume thought of it as a window to the soul,
and Sartre thought of it as the vehicle for approaching possibilities (Egan, 1992, 1994).
Arieti (1976) believed imagination to be the “capacity of mind to produce or reproduce
several symbolic functions while in a state of consciousness...without any deliberate effort to
organize these functions...imagination can assume non-verbal forms [as well as
verbal]...imagery is only one type of imagination, it is the process of producing and
experiencing images” (p. 38). According to Dewey (1934) it acts as the ‘gateway’ between
already known mental material and input from new experiences, enabling the cognitive
process of synthesizing. Imagination can take “diverse forms...a thing of narration, of pure,
visual imagery, or of abstract relations [but] it is a cultural event, with a cultural history
(Egan and Nadaner, 1988, pp. xii, xiii, xiv). Sutton-Smith (1988) also stresses that the
imagination takes various forms and is culturally based. He calls the imagination
“turbulent’, with a concept whose history is filled with contradictions...[it] is relative...
deployed differently in different cultures...plural...used differently in the intellects of logic,
language, space, music...it is the playground of the subjective, the domain where the opposites and the alternatives can be faced...” (p. 27). And yet, he assures us, it is not a trifle. Traditionally, imagination, equated with the subjective realm, was given lower ‘status’ than mind activities considered to be pure ‘thought’. Subjectivity was related to senses, body, emotions, and all things female; therefore, second-rate. Sutton-Smith (1988) supports the imagination and its fantastical proclivities: “what is fanciful doesn’t have to be powerless...I would prefer you think of the imagination not...in deranged terms...but as you might think of any other mental function, like memory or attention of language, which are neither good nor bad in themselves, but become so within the context of particular values” (p. 18). It may seem that “deranged” is an odd and rather strong word to use here. It may be that Sutton-Smith is referring to Canada’s Election Act which, until after World War I, stipulated that “No woman, idiot, lunatic or criminal, shall vote.” This sentiment came straight from the Enlightenment rationalists, who equated any emotion with irrationality and being out of balance (deranged). More recently, as already discussed in this thesis and very well argued by contemporary writers such as Grumet (1988), Citron (1993), Greene (1995, 1988), among others, the so-called feminine traits are being accepted as the sensors and receptors of the creative side of ourselves. Ihde (1976), reiterating Husserl, also believes the imagination is worthy of respect, and should be “elevated...to the level of the privileged ‘instrument’ for critical phenomenological reflection [whereby] the thinker...could reconstruct whole worlds” (p. 119). In this way, imagination can be used to its fullest, giving the ‘user’ the broadest and deepest opportunities to experience his/her various and varied ‘worlds’.

Experiencing one’s worlds includes finding and solving all manner of problems, which are, according to Schon (cited in Wassermann 1990), “Messy, uncertain, complex situations.
They do not present themselves in neat formats in which goal or ends are clear. [It is] critically important ...to reframe problems in comprehensible ways...implicit in this approach are strategies of ‘trial and error’, intuition...and muddling through (p. 43)” (pp. 30-31). ‘Trial and error’ implies exploration and experimentation, which, along with intuition, form a large part of what imagination involves.

**Creativity as Imaginative Play**

Using one’s imagination includes: exploring, experimenting, trying out, investigating, playing *in* and *with*, a particular medium (for example, ‘drafting’ in language, and ‘improvising’ in music). Dewey, according to Chambliss (1991), believed that “all possibilities reach us through the imagination (p. 48), and that regarding children, it was the very “medium in which the child lives” (ibid., p. 48). Engaging in imaginative play is how children learn about their world(s) and how they can fit into those worlds. Swanwick (1988) writes that “play...is intrinsically bound up with all artistic activity” (p. 55). He considers exploration and mastery to be integral parts of ‘play’, thereby agreeing with Dewey and Vygotsky that play is children’s work. For adults, “if we let go of play, our work becomes ponderous and stiff...” (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 12). As well as needing serious attention, play is sometimes frivolous, and sometimes associated with ‘game’. Free-time activities or non-activities, or games with rules and structure, are different than the concept of play used in this paper, although the word is the same. Unfortunately, the tendency is to think of play as only frivolous and child-ish, therefore socially unacceptable for people over the age of about four years, instead of seeing the child-like aspects of play as a spark for the imagination. Sutton-Smith (1988) says we should completely separate ‘imagination’ from ‘play’, because of the negative connotations. If we do that, we can feel freer to take
advantage of all that ‘imagination’ has to offer. For imagination, according to Egan (1992), “never merely copies the world or translates perceptions, it is a constantly active and creative faculty that shapes the world we perceive and that uses our hopes, fears, and other emotions in that shaping” (p. 24). To do this takes both deep thought and deep feeling. According to Egan, we have inherited a tendency from the Romantics to separate the functions of the imagination (as we have with ‘play’), associating it with “the arts and as something distinct from the functions of our reason. Wordsworth, however, knew that reason and imagination were not mutually exclusive faculties...he declared...that imagination was...‘Reason in her most exalted mood’(the Prelude, bk. xiv, 1.192)”, (p. 24-25). Egan quotes Wordsworth again, also Coe (1984) and Paz (1989), reiterating and supporting their belief with his own, that imagination is strongest in childhood and that education should encourage this faculty and keep it alive, partly because it preserves memory and allows us to “‘see everyday things with the eyes of our earliest days’ (Paz, 1989, p. 772)”, (pp. 25-6). This perspective confirms that imagination is not only frivolous fantasy, but a vehicle with which to see the full range of reality and possibility, and to organize and make sense of our world(s). Using imagination, one is “able to think in ways that can transcend conventional ideas...[imagination] is necessary to education...because transcending the conventional is necessary to constructing one’s sense of any area of knowledge” (Egan, 1992, p. 48). One derives pleasure from using one’s imagination, curiosity spurs on inventiveness, one can move outside oneself and connect to other humans, through empathy, or other media, through artistic activity. Nature, too, is imaginative, and uniqueness and ‘blurred’ categories are found far more often than clear-cut ones (Small, 1980, p. 185). Using one’s imagination and/or following one’s curiosity, is a connecting experience between one person and another and humankind and
nature. The literature on imagination and imaginative play is immense and the benefits for children in specific situations as well as general life experience whatever one’s age, seem difficult to dismiss.

It would seem that imagination should play a large and important part in educational praxis, given that it is so integral a part of a child’s world. Even before children arrive at school, imaginative play has been the main tool used by them to make sense of their world (Egan, 1985; Dyson, 1989; Stone, 1971; and Daiute, 1986). And although they have ‘fun’ as they play, it is also obvious as one watches children playing, that they are serious about their play activities. As Bruner noted (1986, p. 604), play is the business of childhood.

Imagination is integral to the young child’s world as a tool for the development and expression of emotional and intellectual learning. Ensley (1987) concurs, and enumerates Lieberman’s 1977 list of component elements of imaginary play that individuals use to understand and extend meanings and possibilities in their world. The four elements are:

1) a sense of humour, which maintains psychological distancing, allowing the person to take the manipulations seriously while not taking the self seriously (p. 70);

2) a sense of joy, occurring when the challenge of transforming the known into something unique is met (p. 77);

3) a sense of spontaneity, which enables transformation of manipulations through intrinsic motivation (p. 82);

4) a sense of playfulness, which is a quality that transcends play and becomes an attitude which indicates a person’s cognitive style (p. 9).

Ensley writes that “the importance of play in educational development lies in the transformation of experience by detaching the ends from the means, and enabling the
development of flexibility and individuality...education is the process within which the above qualities are encouraged, enabling an active approach to the environment” (p. 38).

Creativity and School

Logically, then, schools should utilize this already functioning tool in pedagogical strategies, following Greene’s belief that the use of imagination in education is essential and that “imagination is not an alternative educational activity...it is a prerequisite to making an activity educational” (1988, p. ix). Unfortunately, however, schools seem to not hold this view concerning imaginative play and education, and do not actively foster opportunities for inclusion of imaginative activities as integral parts of pedagogy. “Certainly no one would accuse the schools of the Western world of giving much freedom to the imagination except in the sheltered world of preschools...or ‘challenge’ programs”, writes Sutton-Smith sarcastically (1988, p. 17). Egan (1992), Reimer (1989), Arieti (1976), and Greene (1988), among others, agree, noting that the formal structures of schools as well as the social expectations of the types of learning the children will receive, make it extremely difficult for teachers to incorporate imagination into pedagogy.

There is...a constant tension in education between teaching the conventions whereby students have to live and encouraging the capacities that enable them to gain some kind of mental freedom from those convention...Given our graded schools, with maybe thirty children in each class, conventional thinking that conforms with the expectations built into worksheets and textbooks...is readily accepted and rewarded by teachers as most appropriate and valued...we [have allowed] our technologies to determine how we think about our intellectual processes....which has been pervasive and very damaging to education...[we]...think of learning as a process analogous to recording symbols in the mind for later retrieval...storage and retrieval [of facts]...can be measured...when retrieved on a later test (Egan, 1992, pp. 48, 49).

But, the human mind is not a machine, and does not think in orderly ways; as discussed earlier in this paper, the workings of the brain are complex and involve intricacies
unaddressed in the one-size-fits-all-fill-in-the-blank education system so prevalent in most public institutions.

Arieti (1976, pp. 360-364), lists three socio-cultural factors as inhibitors to creativity:

1) creative people use their imaginations to do new or divergent things and divergence is aligned with abnormality;

2) achievement for its own sake is devalued, therefore, ‘mainstream’ achievement is the only acknowledged success, and creative/imaginative thinkers often do things outside the mainstream;

3) peer pressure to conform is very strong - the personality commonly applauded is the one that is other-directed, and many creative/imaginative people are inner-directed; they are less likely to comply and less likely to be controlled.

Torrence began work with children and creativity in 1962 in the United States, and contributed to studies of creativity in schools for over thirty years. He tracked children to determine ages that changes in creative willingness and/or output seem most likely to occur, as well as made concrete suggestions for ways teachers could enhance classroom atmosphere and practice in order to support creative thinking. His work verifies that social values are a major factor in this area (1963). Like Arieti (1976), he felt that peer/social pressures on the individual to conform had an impact on the person’s willingness to be independent and perhaps ‘different’, thereby lowering creativity in thinking and acting at certain ages, particularly when entering school, and at pre-adolescence and adolescence. Working in British Columbia schools, my own experience as a teacher similarly targets socio-cultural factors as the determinants of curricular and pedagogical praxis within the confines of school structure, culture and philosophy. It tends to be difficult to ‘program’ open-ended,
imaginative tasks for children; partly because of time constraints, partly because of evaluation constraints (tests and grades), and partly because the prevailing philosophy for learning outcomes demands quantitatively measurable bits of information which do not necessarily fit well into a pedagogical scheme which includes imaginative and flexible activities and goals. But it is possible, and the efforts can result in an atmosphere conducive to creating. In such a nurturing, educational setting, Torrence and Myers (1972), Greene (1985, 1995), Jones (1986), and Webster (1987, 1990), among others researching in North America, believe children can and do act in creative ways and produce creative artistic expressions. In Britain, according to research by Hargreaves, Galton and Robinson (1989), and from discussions with Janet Mills (1996) and Robert Walker (1996), composing activities in music using imagination and creative thinking have traditionally been an integral part of school life.

Creativity and the Self/Other

While the debate in education concerning the need to provide imaginative and creative pedagogical experiences is an issue for some, other researchers say that children cannot be truly creative anyway. Csikszentimihalyi (1996), writes that “in psychology and education circles, what is referred to as creativity is almost always of this kind [personal creativity]. You cannot transform a domain unless you first thoroughly understand how it works, which means one has to acquire the tools...but then one cannot be creative without becoming dissatisfied with that knowledge and rejecting it...” (p. 90). For him, creativity is totally bound up with outside judgement of the product; ‘transforming a domain’ involves changes to something within the system to something new that will be accorded value by that system’s judges (as discussed above). And since a child has had neither the lived time, sophistication nor intellectual capacity to understand and utilize the complexities of the
standardized canonic forms, children do not fit his criteria. He is concerned that we label a
child ‘creative’ when in fact he or she is just clever or a good test-taker. This is a valid
concern, and a trap that is easy for teachers to fall into, given the constraints of behavioural
objectives so often determining both content and process of pedagogy. Obviously, using
these boundaries, children could not be considered ‘creative’.

On the other hand, just as obviously, their outputs as well as the individual ways they go
about doing tasks of problem-finding and problem-solving, have been shown to be
imaginative and innovative, if the ‘problems’ given offer opportunities for flexible and open-
ended thinking and doing. Children in such settings seem to work most often like music
improvisors, or writers making drafts, do - they work on a bit they know, stretch it through
exploration and editing, work on that bit, stretch it again, etc. Both memory and maturation
(in terms of vocabulary and articulation ability) are basic considerations in their behaviours,
as evidenced by the studies of various researchers, Bamberger (1991), Gromko (1996), Eisner
(1991, 1994) and Polanyi (1969) among others, who believe that children often know more
than they can necessarily articulate. Many music researchers such as Davies (1992),
Upitis (1990, 1992), and Van Ernst (1991), to name just a few, find children creative within
the modality of music, as do Dyson (1989,1992), Daiute (1989), Cowie (1984,1989), and
countless others within the modality of language. Specific studies often distinguish
capabilities in regards to relative ages, but children are definitely said to be capable of
creativity in terms of coherent, intentional, inventive and individual artistic representations
resulting from self-determined building/doing processes.
Creativity Process and Product

Determinants of ‘creativity’ tend to be based on critiquing the products of artistic activity, thought, and/or behaviour. There seems to be an implicit decision to ignore the possible processes involved and concentrate on the outcomes. This is understandable, as the workings of individual minds and psyches, conscious and unconscious, are involved in creating, and these are difficult (impossible?) to describe and/or assess. Bailin thinks that one should not even consider process in regards to creativity. She writes (1988) that the label ‘creativity’ can only be put on a product, because it can only be seen in the outcome: “Einstein was not engaged in generating as many unusual theories as he could...he was creative in coming up with a theory which solved a scientific problem” (p. 8). However, she does relent and acknowledge that there are activities which embody dynamic, open-ended, imaginative thinking, and the thinking involved in creating include a “variety of processes...thinking which is convergent as well as divergent, logical as well as unusual, evaluative as well as generative and rule-bound as well as rule-breaking (Bailin, 1988, p. 9).

I suspect that Bailin’s position is founded on philosophical rhetoric rather than empirical evidence, for in my experience, and from reading experientially-based literature, (at least regarding children), it is difficult to separate the process from the product. Engaging in the composing process seems to involve an intertwining procedure where activity (process) and outcome (product) mediate and influence each other, just as there is an intertwining influence of individual/personal and outside/other response which moves the process/product activity along from beginning to end. I find support in this view from Milgram (1990), who writes: “creativity may be defined as a process (emphasis mine) of original problem solving...by means of which original...unusual...products (emphasis mine)...a response, an idea, a solution or an actual product...are generated” (p. 220).
In spite of all the complications and possible pitfalls, I am still interested in the processes of children composing. As the processes involved include such intangibles as thinking, imagining and intuiting, my rate of success in tracking these processes would probably be slight. I can, however, observe, discuss about, and reflect on the behaviours children make as a result of engagement in these processes, and use this information for interpretive purposes. It was, and is, my intention, in this thesis project, to do just that.
Interlude #4

Methodology

There is madness in my method; hopefully, the reverse is also true. I read and take notes on an aspect of my current topic, by hand, on unlined paper. I *usually* remember to note references and page numbers of quotes, as well as check that I have that reference in my bibliography. Then, I collect all the scrawls (I always begin neatly, and end up with arrows, ‘bubbles’, insertions, etc.) and try to order all the notes: I put in chronological numbers, letters, red-pencil circles, asterisks, arrows, etc. all over the papers...the whole time I’m frantic! My heart pounds, I have one eye on the clock dreading the flying time - it always seems to take longer than I thought it was going to - and I know that if I don’t get this part of the process done within the two day time-frame I have each week for writing, I’ll have to leave the pile of notes until the next week, when my ordered stack transforms into an incomprehensible mess from lapse of memory. As well, there is the added complication of where I work - sometimes on my huge desk (Stan’s Dad’s old CPR railroad roll-top) that I adore, sometimes on the dining room table... since papers and reference books are everywhere, I’m on guard that no one touches, moves or covers over anything. If I happen to be working on the dining table, there is the added dimension of dinner guests or Sunday morning newspapers. The stress of needing to finish a particular, delineated section each two days, is close to overwhelming sometimes. And I can’t work at the university, for that means carting books, discs, etc. around...of course at home, it’s not all peaches and cream either, what with telephone sales people, carpenters (yes, we’re still renovating), dirty laundry, and the occasional sunny afternoon, to test my powers of concentration and dedication.

I have to keep reminding myself that there is method in all I’m doing - it is ordered, if not
orderly, and it is MY method, which is very relevant to the bigger picture of methodology for this thesis....I am letting the data drive the method, just as I am doing during the whole writing process, so this is a ‘pre-study’ for methodology, so to speak...
CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

Background Methodologies

Qualitative research asks the question: “what is it?”; from *qualis* meaning ‘whatness’. The challenge in doing this kind of work is to investigate a particular object or phenomenon in depth, while not losing sight of the overall structure, purpose and position of that phenomenon in the larger scheme. Qualitative projects tend to produce “vast data pools from observation notes, interview transcripts...and other data generative tools...intended to provide the researcher with a comprehensive body of information from which analysis can proceed”, according to Roberts (1996, p. 1). Key questions are asked before beginning a research project. The researcher depends on emerging patterns and trends to define questions after the fact. Qualitative study must be grounded, focussed, and, at the same time, open-ended and flexible, valuing emergent factors. Qualitative research is “inherently multi-method in focus (Brewer and Hunter, 1989)...the multiple methodologies of qualitative research may be viewed as a bricolage...that is, a pieced together, finely knit set of practices that provides solutions to a problem in a concrete situation...the qualitative-researcher-as-*bricoleur* uses the tools of his or her methodological trade, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials that are at hand (Becker, 1989)...the use of multiple methods or triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured” (Denzin, 1994, p. 17). As one goes about collecting data from as many sources and analysing them in as many different ways as possible, it is easy to get buried in the mountain of data, one’s own subjectivity and reflection, and get no
further. Qualitative research, particularly phenomenology, involves going back and forth between the particular and the general, looking at data and re-examining them through reflection, utilizing multi-dimensional methods and as many points of view as possible, and trusting one’s own intuition, subjectivity, and knowledge in a “systematic attempt to uncover and describe the...internal meaning structures...of lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). To do such research, procedures and methods cannot be followed blindly. According to Gadamer (1975, p. 266), cited in van Manen (1990, p. 43): “The essence of the question is the opening up, and the keeping open, of possibilities”. Van Manen adds: “critical moments of inquiry are ultimately elusive to systematic explication. Such moments may depend more on the interpretative sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent of the human scientific researcher” (ibid., p. 34).

Swanwick (1994) makes the bold statement that “research in the social sciences (if not all science) is rooted in intuitive understanding, passes through...analysis and returns...to the intuitive...Hunch and method, induction and deduction, interpretation and findings together form a cyclic process, mapping meaning in the space between interpretative and normative paradigms. It is the cross-fertilization of intuition and analysis that creates ‘quality’...‘quality’ research occurs when an intuitive sense of how things might be is informed by scientific curiosity and detailed technical analysis” (p. 68). For him, qualitative methodology provides flexibility and range for variety in real-life situations, but he stresses that the operative word in all research should be “quality”. He advocates that the researcher make the choice of a structural or philosophical perspective based on whatever is suitable for a particular purpose, and cautions the researcher not to limit one’s research possibilities by
refusing to use a procedure because it is, or is not, within the boundaries of either quantitative or qualitative methodologies.

Swanwick (1994, pp. 57-67), eloquently outlines the main concepts involved in qualitative research. I feel it is worth quoting in its entirety, because it is a cogent and powerful support document for involvement of the total (holistic) person in one’s professional work:

*Qualitatively-inclined researchers* are likely to be *field-focussed* rather than laboratory-based and would see themselves as *engaged persons with an interpretive role* rather than neutral gatherers of data. *Intuition* lies at the heart of all knowledge, including music, mathematics and science, as well as the activity we call research. Intuition is an active way of construing the world. Intuition makes possible all other ways of knowing. We cannot know anything without an intuitive leap...It is not a question of knowledge being obtained either through the imagination or through the intellect but of knowledge gained through the *interaction of intuition and cognition in active fusion*...[there are] *three distinct phases of the research process*: a) hunch and method; b) induction and deduction; c) findings and interpretation...research in the social sciences...often begins life as an intuitively apprehended problem, brought to light by a particular experience within a specific context...no researcher can be absolved from the responsibility to analyse...even within the intuitive, qualitative paradigm...there is a *commitment to analysis*, giving visibility to the process and permitting critical review...in a move from hunch to method...theory and data are interwoven in the construction of the research method. *Theories tend to be seen as emergent*, inductively formed from explorations of data...The main issue here is that of *internal validity*, for Guba and Lincoln, ‘credibility’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1981)...validation is through *‘triangulation’ and multiple interpretations*...findings from data gathered in one social context can never be totally confidently transposed to another. Perhaps for this reason, it is the *inductive process* that is most often emphasized in what is called qualitative research...in the final phase, the *interplay of analysis and intuition* centres on ‘realizing’ these limited findings, relocating them in the field...but the *most important outcome of any research is that it gets us thinking*. Lively and critical theorizing is one...way in which, as Popper says, ‘we can transcend ourselves’...we ought not to be afraid of speculating, interpreting rather than merely reporting one study in isolation...we need to criticize and contextualize...research...is a willingness to engage in critical scrutiny, to analyse intuitive insight, to have second
thoughts, and to speculate imaginatively - to ask 'what happens next?'
(emphases mine)

Qualitative methodology offers wide and varied theoretical and procedural frameworks for research. The popularity of these methods has steadily gained ground in the educational research community from the time serious attention was paid to the ways anthropologists, also working in socio/cultural settings, gathered and analysed data on the human interactions they studied. There are many methodological perspectives within the diversity of scholarly research which can be placed under the 'umbrella' of qualitative methodology, each with its own focus, yet blurring or interweaving with some others as well. Those methodologies most applicable for teacher-researchers working in classrooms on interpretive inquiry involving artistic expression are discussed below.

**Classroom Ethnography**

Ethnography has traditionally been the tool of anthropologists to study specific communities and/or cultures. Observation and description have been the primary source of data, gathered by the researcher who is apart from and does not intervene in, the group studied. Data are collected in settings that are natural rather than scientifically contrived, and interpretation of data are contextual. Questions are asked that produce description and explain phenomena; the purpose of ethnography is not to test hypotheses. Often, the meanings found result in more questions than answers. “In many respects, ethnography is the most basic form of social research...it has a very long history...also it bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, pp. 1-2). Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe a naturalistic
paradigm for qualitative research in which they position research in normal settings, undisturbed by the researcher. They claim that “the assumption of a naturalistic paradigm has greater validity...in the area of sociological/behavioural inquiry...Discrete variables and their relationships [tools specific to investigations based on scientific models] do not seem to be sufficient to dialogue with the complex interactions and patterns of human behaviour” (p. 81). Data collected under various social situations will be radically different, and with the naturalistic paradigm, situations that benefit by on-site, natural settings can produce viable information for interpretive study. Such settings would also benefit from the naturalistic design structure, which “emerges as the investigation proceeds; moreover, it is in constant flux as new information is gained and new insights are achieved” (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 73). Classrooms are one such setting which benefits from this type of research paradigm.

Researching in classrooms under normal, non-manipulated circumstances, is a far cry from the laboratory settings of scientific paradigms. Classroom ethnography implies a set research structure (ethnography) within a particular setting (classroom). Research procedures in this methodology combine observation and description with measurement and analysis concerning the specific relationships between the situations and data collected (Hammersley, 1990). McMillan and Schumacher (1993) use the term ‘educational ethnography’ for the same methodological structure, calling it, also, a “process, a way of studying human life as it relates to education” (p. 406). They, along with other ethnographers and social scientists, believe that the observed reality of a particular class setting, including viewpoints, perceptions and beliefs, are social constructs, and the educational ethnographic methodology, as process, “is inductive, [building] abstractions from the particular social constructions
(data) that have been gathered” (p. 406). In classroom ethnography, the researcher may be an observer only (as in anthropological, phenomenological ethnography), or a participant observer (both involved and uninvolved at various times); the researcher may be known or unknown to the participant subjects. Although the researcher’s position may vary, his/her research orientation may not. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), “An ethnographer seeks to understand peoples’ constructions - their thoughts and meanings, feelings, beliefs, and actions as they occur in their natural context...ethnographic research is based on a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy of human behaviour...the researcher is in a unique position to understand the elements that influence behaviour, to articulate them, and to interpret them - to reconstruct these multiple constructed realities” (p. 407).

A version of classroom ethnography which applies to this study is one in which the teacher and researcher are one and the same. It is called ‘teacher inquiry’ by Stephen Rowland, or ‘teacher research’; it differs from classroom ethnography in that the researcher does not vary (always the teacher) but the research structure may take various forms (eg., case study, observational phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology). Where the teacher and researcher are one and the same, one of the basic tenets of ethnography cannot apply - that of disinvlement. By the nature of their job, “teachers...are usually already participants of the worlds they wish to describe and uncover by means of fieldwork and ethnography.” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p. 55) They are totally immersed in the everyday procedures and details of the setting, and are well-known to the people with whom they will be involved. The issues involved in the relationship and rapport between teacher/researcher and students/participants are complex, and have both positive and negative implications. Roberts
(1994) writes:

A great challenge to phenomenological work is to get close enough to the subjects under investigation to be sure to really understand the meanings associated with the interactions...the teacher is an integral social actor in the construction of the school context and as such, each teacher must have a set of meanings already constructed in order to proceed with the day-to-day operations of classroom interaction...[while] the teacher’s knowledge of the day-to-day social reality in the classroom must be viewed as a major and significant advantage...teachers have the interesting danger of being too close...it is impossible that the teacher-researcher should avoid the fallacy of...over-rapport...and the quest is for rapport combined with objectivity (pp. 29-30).

For the teacher who is also a researcher in his/her classroom, there are changes in role. In regular teaching, one is instructor and leader much of the time. Depending on individual style and/or student needs, a teacher is facilitator and guide as well. When doing classroom research, however, the teacher becomes primarily a facilitator, in order to investigate the student-participants’ ideas, behaviours, and understandings. The teacher-researcher gives up the lead role, becoming, instead, a co-participant in an on-going conversation of sorts with the students. The teacher-researcher thus becomes a “reflective agent...to help students articulate understandings within a supportive context. Working this way, it is important for the tutor...to have an open mind to the possible meanings of the student’s work” (Rowland, 1993, p. 29).

A classroom is not a predictable setting; studies conducted in classroom settings are subjected to many unplanned, emergent, divergent and even, unwanted, occurrences. For example, during this study the following occurred: absence of students designated as ‘case composers’; sudden loss of all power during videotaping, due to construction of a new wing to the school; missing or unusable technology - tape players and video cameras - due to theft;
cancellation of classes due to field trips and/or special visitors to the school; interruptions during interviews, taping, discussions, performances, etc. by announcements over the P.A. system. Methods for research conducted in this setting need to take into account the ‘real-life’ of that environment.

In addition to research designs for whole classes or large students groups, classroom inquiry lends itself to in-depth study of a few students, particularly when the teacher is the researcher. Case study is a well documented and well used method for such inquiry: case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research, (see Patton, 1980; Cronbach et. al., 1980; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). According to Yin (1981), a case study can be either quantitative or qualitative, and is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used...qualitative research consists of two conditions: a) the use of close-up detailed observation of the natural world by the investigator, and b) the attempt to avoid prior commitment to any theoretical model” (pp. 23,25). Case studies are intended to explore and discover phenomena focussing on “persons, specific events, or processes...[which]...provide an understanding of a concept from the participants’ views of their social realities [and are selected because they are] information-rich situations or people that will give the most data [in order that] a few cases studied in depth yield many insights about the topics” (Schmacher and McMillan, 1993, pp. 376, 378).

A goal of case study methodology is to test a well-formulated theory through “confirming, challenging and extending” it through interpretation which seeks to: explain
causal links in real-life that are too complex for surveys or experimental strategies; describe a real-life context in which an intervention has occurred; explore situations where the intervention being evaluated has no clear single set of outcomes” (Yin, 1984, pp. 47,25).

Because of the constant and various demands on the teacher-researcher as well as the possibility that the situation may allow for less moderation of natural biases, data collection is most reliable when it comes from a variety of sources - for example - observation, field notes, video, interviews, informal discussion, student think-alouds or reflections, and teacher/researcher reflections-in-action or retrospective journals. Good researchers and teachers in any field will self-critique their work, as part of the interpretation and problem-solving processes. A particularly useful tool for this aspect of qualitative research is to use an heuristic approach. Heuristic research is “an organized and systematized form for investigating human experience...a way of being informed, a way of knowing [that] involves self-search, self-dialogue and self-discovery. The research questions and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning and inspiration” (Moustakis, 1990, pp. 9-11). This type of research focuses on self-discovery and problem solving whereby all participation and data gathered refer back to the self - it is a way of knowing about the world and how ‘I’ fit into it. The point of heuristic research is to say: “I am able to understand ‘x’ in a new way” (Moustakis, 1990, p. 11). Through orderly and thorough procedures involving reflection, tacit knowing, and intuition, the researcher returns to the data again and again, seeking to discover the essence or nature of a situation or phenomenon, and this knowledge is what changes him or her. “Self-understanding and self-growth occur simultaneously in heuristic discovery...reaching into deeper regions of a human...experience and coming to know and
understanding its underlying dynamics and constituents more...fully...the initial ‘data’ is
within me; the challenge is to discover and explicate its nature” (Moustakis, 1990, p. 13).

As a teacher, I find my pedagogical and research questions within my everyday work and
self-critique as a matter of course. Inspiration and hunches inform much of my planning and,
also, become the mirrors in which I recognize those ‘teachable moments’ that often make a
huge difference for my students’ learning connections. As well, problem finding and solving
form some of the decisions that must be made, and these, too, are utilized by heuristics as
strategies. The heuristic process supports the learning circle which flows from theory to
practice and between the students and the teacher, respecting and honouring knowledge of all
participants through the ‘tacit knowing’ that Polanyi speaks about (1969) when he states,
“We know more than we can tell” (pp. 159-207). Because heuristic research “demands direct
involvement of the investigator with the phenomenon being investigated...it places immense
responsibility on the researcher” (Frick, 1990, 79, quoted in Moustakis, 1990, 14).
Madeleine Grumet calls it a “flexible yet efficient approach” (lecture, 1995). Heuristic
research cannot be sloppy, it requires “rigorous definition, careful collection of data, and a
thorough and disciplined analysis” (Moustakis, 1990, p. 14).

How does one ensure ‘disciplined analysis’? By engaging in metacognition - thinking
about thinking, interpreting the process of interpretation. Hermeneutic research favours
interpretation of this type because it suits the analysis aspect of qualitative inquiry. The word
‘analysis’ seems to imply formal, rigidly structured, methodological procedures perhaps
because the word is so closely aligned with quantitative, scientifically based research
terminology. The challenge is, in qualitative research, to be rigorous without being rigid, for
the purpose of the research is to find contextual meaning, not repeatable ‘truths’. The purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology, according to van Manen (1990), is “...not to arrive at generalizations that are universally ‘true’ and repeatable, but, rather, at theories of uniqueness that may have future application. Through the subjective processes of reflection, dialogue, observation and interpretation, analysis of specific people in specific, everyday situations takes place, in order to discover ‘plausible insights’”(p. 9). Van Manen (1990), Gallagher (1992), Sullivan (1990), and Crusius (1991), among others, use the term ‘interpretation’ for the purpose of finding these ‘plausible truths’. They define it with a wider, broader, deeper meaning than either a simple cognitive definition of interpretation or the traditional meaning of the word ‘analysis’. Interpretation, as a particular process within a flexible framework, must disassemble, discern and ‘dig deep’, to get at the essence of a phenomenon or situation. These four people are among the researchers who put their work within the methodological framework called hermeneutic phenomenology, the term ‘hermeneutic’ deriving from the mythological Greek god Hermes. He was the messenger and interpreter between gods and humans, and hermeneutics is the process of interpretation. The interpreter (researcher), writes Sullivan (1990), quoting McCarthy, (1978), “must capture the sense of this material...find a common language that presumes the rights of his mother tongue [or position] and at the same time respects the foreignness of his text [or different positions of the other participants]. In Gadamer’s terms, a successful interpretation entails a fusion of horizons” (p. 118). More simply put by Crusius (1991), “we do not and cannot exist as an isolated, individual mind or consciousness...we are always immersed in the symbols and language of the culture or traditions we embody” (pp. 15, 21). What we come to know,
through reflection or experience and knowledge, is contextual and situational. Our biases are always with us, and help us filter out and focus, as we interpret from within ourselves and from interactions and dialogue with others (Peshkin, 1994, Crusius, 1991). Dialogue (with ourselves and others) provides situational interpretation which is more relevant than analysis, to hermeneutic phenomenological situations. "...‘a text can begin to speak’ (Gadamer, 76b, 1957) and must be allowed to...the potential for unmaking and remaking must extend...from the interpretation to the text and from the text to the interpretation...philosophical hermeneutics shares with Mikhail Bakhtin, Martin Buber, Richard Rorty and others a desire to keep the conversation going, a certain faith in the value of genuine dialogue” (Crusius, pp. 39-41). Researching in this mode demands full involvement of the researcher, but the main concern is beyond or outside the self - the phenomenon is studied in relation to the thing itself as well as for the impact on the researcher in terms of his/her self-discovery.

The specificity of lived experience focusses on the particular. Historically, voices and issues were related and recorded from a broad-based, male-oriented perspective. That history is based in patriarchy is obvious from readings as early as the Bible, Plato, etc., through to contemporary commentaries by feminists and deconstructionists such as Thompson and Gitlan (1995), Citron (1993), Hawkesworth (1989), Paglia (1991), and Freire (1971). Paglia, in her blunt style, writes that the males dominate, and society perpetuates that domination through art by valuing products: “art makes things...thing-making ...is central to male experience...hence the male domination of art and science [which is] an indisputable fact of history...” (p. 17). Even in creative acts, males were given priority - it was not the emotions which were the basis of creating, as one might expect, but “in the Renaissance, for instance,
male sex potency was considered the basis for creativity” (Citron, 1993, p. 51).

Social relationships, gender bias, cultural, political and religious attitudes and mores are all affected by, and reflect, patriarchy, as evidenced by the silence (absence) of women in historical texts. Kelly-Gadol (1987) holds that familiar, traditional methodological assumptions are neither applicable nor appropriate any longer. “From the advent of civilization...the social order has been patriarchal” (p. 18). (I would add: in many cultures, and certainly in our Western perspective). She encourages readers to be aware of women as social forces and to study the political aspects of the social order in relationship to the place of women. The implications in this for research involve the necessity for paradigm shifts which can encompass various theoretical perspectives (methodologies), procedures, and methods allowing other new voices to be heard, as well as those scientific, rational, normative, quantitative systems which traditionally are associated with, and reflect, patriarchal thinking. In schools, pedagogy, relationships (power hierarchy), even physical structures and timetable, reflect an industrial, hierarchical system based on the historical patriarchal point of view. The feminist perspective alluded to above advocates a “profound skepticism regarding universal claims about existence, nature and powers of reason [cultural ideals]...[it] urges instead the development of a commitment to plurality and the play of difference” (Hawkesworth, 1989, pp. 102-3), in order to allow a wider opening in the ways we view our relationships with our cultural/societal ‘truths’ and values.

Deconstructionists, too, argue for a disconnection from the historical way of thinking and structuring learning and research, defining ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ as being constructed by society and culture, and not universally consistent. This argues for sensitive ‘interpretation’
rather than ‘analysis’, for ‘meaning’ rather than ‘truth’, for acknowledgement of some natural
‘bias’ rather than total, unnatural (impossible) ‘impartiality’, for ‘specificity’ rather than
‘broad generalization’. One interpretation of this approach to methodology designed
specifically for educational purposes, adopts this philosophy into a pedagogical process
(method) called *Emancipatory Pedagogy*. According to Swartz (1996), Emancipatory
Pedagogy “is a process of centring students and teachers (who are all learners) in ways of
teaching and learning that are based on the posing and solving of problems rather than only
on the transmission and reproduction of information (Freire, 1970, Shor and Freire, 1983,
Goodwin, 1994). In this way, it is an approach to teaching students how to think, not what to
think....Emancipatory Pedagogy takes a fundamental interest in equity and social
justice...focusses on transforming the role that schooling plays” (p. 399). It is a process of
discovery where all participants are equally and deeply involved, and all voices are heard in
ongoing dialogue (Jorgensen, 1996). Classroom ethnography, as I approach it in this study,
focusses on listening to the child-composer’s voice and interpreting data gathered through an
emergent, qualitative methodology.

**Music composing methodologies**

Topics for research in music utilizing qualitative methodology commonly involve
investigating the developmental stages/phases in music (Swanwick, 1988; Swanwick and
Tillman, 1986; and Hargreaves and Galton, 1992, among others); music cognition (Sloboda,
1985; Fiske, 1993, among others); culturally related musical perception and behaviours
(Walker, 1987a and b, 1986, among others); philosophical issues (Jorgensen, 1996, Bresler,
1996, among others), and inventing/creating in music (Upitis, 1990, 1992, Bamberger, 1991,

While there are many studies in the literature on most of the available topics, there are few examples of studies in music that involve children interacting directly with sound for the purpose of composing music. Four recent examples of interpretive inquiries in music education utilizing various research methodology are by Bamberger (1991), Van Ernst (1991, 1994/95), Upitis (1990 a&b, 1992), and Wiggins (1992).

Bamberger wrote *The Mind Behind the Musical Ear* in 1991. The study chronicles a whole class' progress in learning to map (notate) a musical task, but focuses on one particular boy who is developed into a case study. It was instigated because of:

> a collection of questions that have haunted [her] from childhood...[and was designed]...in contrast to more traditional methodology associated with objective, controlled, often artificially contrived experimental situations. [Her] experimental designs include rather open-ended tasks that are closely related to the musical activities that generated the puzzles in the first place. Further, the tasks are rich in probabilities for the active participation of subjects and sensitive interventions by the researcher...Throughout [her] work, teaching, learning and research are often entwined [and] although analysis of a subject's work often leads to insight, it just as often spawns new surprises and new questions (p. 2).

There is, therefore, a strong heuristic component in this study as well. It is clear, through reflective narrative text, that although Bamberger is interested in the students' thinking and learning as they move through ability stages, she is primarily concerned with her own understanding of the problems and procedures involved in students learning a particular concept in music and her own abilities to facilitate this learning.

Van Ernst (1991, 1994/95) describes her study as an “interpretive inquiry [in which] emergent theory was the dominant process used...the methodology comprised a combination...
of non-participant observation and thick description. Although there were focussed observations, there was also a free ranging observation of emerging patterns to account for the compositional process...The study was an inquiry into the pedagogical bases for composition finding a place in the curriculum and it focussed on the interaction of the students and the researcher in the learning and teaching process” (Van Ernst, 1991, pp. 1, 16). Her search of the literature came up with “an absence of sufficient prior research on which to base a traditional empirical study, [therefore], an approach was sought which allowed for the maximum description...flexible enough to allow for new ideas to emerge” (Van Ernst, 1991, pp. 3-4). She decided on the classroom as the correct place for her research, citing/restating Hoschmand’s belief that “...a normal classroom setting is an essential part of the study [where] the mode of enquiry must be one where attitudes are ‘open, reflexive and a-theoretical’ (1989, p. 14), with a commitment to inductive observation and thick description...which leads to enriched understanding...In addition, categories used by the informant are used as units of analysis rather than the researcher’s predefined theoretical units” (1991, pp. 120-121). By using various methods and procedures of data collection, taking all participants’ input as equally important, she had a greater chance of valid and accurate data to use for interpretation purposes. Van Ernst, as researcher, collaborated with the regular music teacher of the students selected for her study. She chronicles her responsibilities, concerns, reflections and revelations during the interactions and involvements with the student participants, as she attempts to uncover the essence of the experience for both the students and herself. Although much of the study utilized emergent data, some pre-planned elements were also included in the form of sets of pre-determined
questions for students to answer and a pre-learning plan used to determine a base line for composition knowledge.

Upitis (1987, 1990, 1992), works with untrained children as they create meaning with sound as well as find ways to write their music down visually in their own way, using 'invented notation'. She uses a variety of imaginative and successful pedagogical means to engage her students in the composing process. Her primary focus is the creation of symbol systems through which the child can communicate his/her understandings about music. She stresses the importance of guided play, so that the child has time and means to explore as much as needed, but with a goal to master in mind. She draws parallels to language and the way language symbol systems are developed by referring to music composition as a form of narrative. Like Bateson (1989), Sutton-Smith (1988) and Vygotsky (1962/1996), among others, she believes that narrative is basic and essential to humankind. In her studies, she gives children a series of open-ended tasks, which have some limits to them. She encourages them to utilize a variety of tools - improvisation, dialogue, computers, etc., to reach the goals set. She acts as a facilitator as they move through the composing processes. Upitis uses composition as a means for children to learn about music and express themselves artistically, concentrating primarily on the element of rhythm in her studies on cognitive development (1987, 1992). Her work can be valuable for reference in both creative/inventive and cognition categories.

Wiggins' (1992) study is concerned with:

the nature of children’s musical cognitive processes...representations of their musical ideas...interactions with music...peers and teacher within the context of a music classroom. The study is an analysis and interpretation of musical
decisions and actions of students as they interacted with music....This qualitative study was conducted through the eyes of a teacher-researcher in the non-experimental setting of her own general music classroom. Data were collected in a fifth grade scheduled class during their regular scheduled class sessions over...five months. In addition to general videotapes of the class sessions, two target children were selected...the resultant audio and videotapes were transcribed and analysed for what they might show about the nature of the development of the children's music understanding. Additional data were in the form of interviews with children and their parents, and field notes of the researcher...the teacher provided scaffolding, acted as expert musician, and assessed student progress...a key issue was the interactional relationship among all of the findings within the whole of the classroom music experience” (pp. iii-iv).

The methodology used was based on Rowland’s (1986) classroom enquiry paradigm, which has as its goal, to inform practice. The model for the classroom enquiry structure was based on that of “Miles and Huberman (1984), in which a conceptual framework is established and then used as a basis for theorizing about patterns that might logically occur within that framework” (Wiggins, 1992, p. 69). Her study was action-research, designed to answer specific questions about the ways in which children went about constructing musical expressions, ways in which they interacted while doing so, and the impact these interactions had on the composing process. What is emphasized in the reading of this study is that these children were cognizant that they were, in fact, composing, and not randomly improvising (although exploration and improvisation were part of the process), and, equally important, that they proceeded through the task with an understanding of the whole. These findings may be surprising, considering the students’ age and lack of previous musical experiences in composition.

**Creative writing methodologies**

Language is one of the symbolic systems humans use to make sense of, and find their
place within, the various contexts (school, community, family, religious, etc.) of which they are a part. Exploring language through stories, both oral and written, provides an individual with the “opportunity to try on the language and experience of others (Dyson and Genishi, 1994, p. 5) which may become part of the “repertoire of symbolic tools within their ongoing social worlds”(Dyson, 1989, p. xvi).

Many teachers and researchers study children’s texts (oral and written) as keys to cognitive development within a context (situated cognition, as mentioned earlier in this dissertation). As ethnography, these studies are designed from a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective (van Manen, 1990, Crusius, 1991) in an attempt to “understand what happens in a specific place, at a particular time and under certain circumstances” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 131). Researchers such as Dyson (1989), Donaldson (1978), Vygotsky (1996, A. Kozulin translation), and Lensmire (1994a), among others, investigate children engaged in composing activities, focusing on story creation and the development of the use of the symbolic medium of writing. They have noted that one of the main keys to writing/language development is the ability to both ‘disembed’ and ‘decontextualize’ composing in this modality, while keeping the contextual, embedded connections to their social, intellectual and affective lives alive in their texts.

Researching in the classroom, Dyson (1992, 1989, 1988, 1987; Cowie, 1989; Daiute, 1989a), among others, study emergent writing patterns in an attempt to learn more about the individual’s ‘voice’ as she/he negotiates the building of a social self through story. They, as well as others, acknowledge that functional knowledge of language precedes formal knowledge, and their research and writings focus on this element.
The unit of analysis in this type of research is, commonly, the talk or writing itself. Methodological tools for data collection commonly include: written texts (drafts and finals); process dialogue (with self as private speech, Berk, 1994, or between/among peers); video or audiotapes of collaborative working sessions; self evaluations and critical peer comments. It is accepted that information directly from the particular participants within a specific situation provides the most reliable and relevant data. While writing activities in schools are often individual or solo tasks, particularly from upper primary on, dialoguing and collaboration often takes place spontaneously, even when not part of the assignment. As well, sharing and peer critique is often included as part of the process for all types of creative writing tasks. These instances of interactive dialogue, plus the informal talk between peers, as well as formally set-up collaboration, all help the composer as well as the researcher understand and interpret the composing process.

Peer collaboration is a relatively new research focus for analysing socio-cultural as well as cognitive aspects of language use and acquisition (Dyson, 1993, 1989, Daiute, 1989b, Daiute and Dalton, 1988, Cowie, 1989). These researchers are among those who are gathering evidence for the argument that “writing is clearly situated, [and] peers in the classroom, like key family and community members in broader cultural contexts...play a critical role in individual student’s writing development” (Sperling, 1996, p. 71).

The research that I felt would be most useful in guiding the methodology for the language part of this study was positioned under the umbrella of social ethnography. Researchers who have investigated children writing within the paradigm of hermeneutic phenomenology utilizing an emergent ethnography include: van Manen (1990), Cowie (1989), Zeni (1994),
Dyson (1992, 1989), and Daiute (1989a, 1989b). These studies use interpretive narrative (stories) to describe, observe, and analyse events, behaviours and procedures. In such investigations, data are collected from a variety of sources in a variety of ways: field notes of the researcher and teacher (or teacher/researcher if they were one and the same); video/audio tapes of working sessions, peer sharing (informal or formal collaboration) and peer conferences (critiquing); and think-aloud protocols (or journal entries). Interpretive structures used in these studies include typologies and/or coding, and case study:

1) Typologies or codes:
   a) Dyson (1989) used a typology which consisted of two sets of codes: one, which she devised, for the behaviours and talk during the composing process; another, developed from Graves (1973) for text description.
   b) Zeni (1994) used coded protocols based on the work of cognitive psychologists Swarts, Flower and Hayes (1984), in which each action within a text was labelled by its function in writing: generate, translate, goal-setting, evaluate, detect, dialogue, revise, question, read (statement).

Coding is done for all written samples and/or oral transcriptions, depending on what data are being collected for what purposes. The researcher then looks for patterns, similarities, differences, surprises, in order to interpret both specifics and general trends.

2) Case study:
   a) Cowie (1989), Daiute (1989a, 1989b), and Dyson (1992), use case study to focus on particular interactions in collaboration or trace a child's development over time. Talk or writing samples are the units of analysis; transcriptions of every word and,
sometimes, inference and innuendo, are provided, with the researchers’ detailed
interpretation of significance in relation to the focus or ‘burning question’ of that
particular research study. Using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach,
interpreted data are put in perspective of the particular case child and that specific
study; then, patterns and trends are sought for possible connections to other situations.

b) van Manen (1990), uses the idea of a case study (specific, in-depth scrutiny on a small
focus), in a broader sense, whereby all stories, as anecdotal narratives, become the
units of analysis and the interpretive procedures are adopted for all stories, taking in a
wider field of data. He believes that anecdotal narrative is

“important for pedagogy in that [it] functions as experiential case material on
which pedagogic reflection is possible” (120), involving a “dialectical going back
and forth among...various levels of questioning...in a complex process of re-
writing, re-thinking, re-flecting and re-cognizing” (van Manen, 1990, p. 131).

For van Manen and other researchers, including those mentioned above, narrative is a
powerful tool for phenomenological research and writing. “[Its] significance is situated in its
power to...compel [grab our attention]...lead us to reflect...involve us personally...
transform/teach...measure one’s interpretive sense” (pp. 120-121).

Research into both music and language methodologies reveal that hermeneutic
phenomenology suits classroom ethnography in both modalities. As well, using narrative
text as the unit of analysis suits composing activities in both modalities. In music, narrative
text is the arrangement of sounds into a generative expression called a ‘music composition’;
in language, narrative text is the arrangement of words into a generative expression called a
'story'. In both cases, the expressive narrative gives 'voice' to individual intent through collaborative effort. The methodological paradigms discussed above influenced the study which forms the basis of this dissertation. The methodology specific to this thesis study is described in the following pages.

**Methodology of this study**

The methodologies and paradigms discussed above have impacted on my thinking, and informed the methodological structure I have designed for the particular study I am undertaking. However, my study does not easily fit within one paradigm, and I do not want to bias my data by forcing them to fit into one methodology. Ideally, if I can free myself from any particular methodological dogma, I can be open and sensitive to what the data are telling me, and interpret from the data to the methodology rather than vice versa. The methodology which follows emerged as the study evolved, and was utilized for data collection and interpretation.

This qualitative study is a classroom-based ethnography undertaken in the natural environment of the music classroom, which, as an ethnographic study, produces descriptions and attempts to explain phenomena. Like many qualitative studies, it is most appropriately thought of as a point in the continuum of inquiry, rather than a definitive study. It is a piece of social research and I, as the teacher/researcher, am a social science (or human science) researcher, researching, in pedagogical situations, what van Manen calls 'lived experience'. He writes,

In the human sciences...[and here 'human science' is often used interchangeably with the terms 'phenomenology' or 'hermeneutics']...one does not pursue research for the sake of research...when we raise questions,
gather data, describe phenomena, and construct textual interpretations, we do so as researchers who stand in the world in a pedagogic way...the fundamental model of this approach is textual reflection on the lived experience...with the intent to increase one’s thoughtfulness....Phenomenology describes how one interprets the ‘texts’ of life....(van Manen, 1990, pp. 1-2, 4)

This research approach is not new. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1993, pp. 1-2), “...in many respects, ethnography is the most basic form of social research...it has a very long history [and] also bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life”. Inherent in this type of research is the deep and intimate participation of the teacher/researcher in the lives of the participants in the situation itself. This dual role creates complexities regarding the collection and interpretation of data. Flexibility, sensitivity and some degree of humility are all essential qualities for the teacher/researcher. Since boundaries in such studies may not be clear, or may change as the study progresses, it is advisable that an attempt is made to “avoid prior commitment to a theoretical model” (Yin, 1984, pp. 25). In this way, the researcher lets emergent information from the participants and situation of the study guide the methodology (van Manen, 1990, Hammersley, 1990, Roberts, 1994).

The ‘focus participants’ in this study were three child-composers, who I refer to as ‘focus-composers’. The research strategy used with these children was a case study approach. As outlined by Yin (1984, p. 23), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”. This strategy is, according to Schumacher and McMillan (1993, pp. 376, 378), “appropriate for exploratory and discover-oriented research [where] purposeful
sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from a small sample...a few cases studied in depth yield many insights about the topic...[this type of] phenomenology provides an understanding of a concept from the participants’ views of their social realities...”

I chose the focus-composers specifically, rather than randomly selecting any three children in the class, for the following reasons:

1) they volunteered to be video-taped and observed on a consistent, on-going basis;
2) they felt that they could ignore the camera and ‘hovering’ researcher;
3) they were able and willing to talk out loud, about what they were thinking and feeling, during the process of composing;
4) they expressed eagerness to participate in an ongoing project of composing with both music and language;
5) they demonstrated individual differences in their learning styles at school; hobbies, talents and interests; and informal experiences in their larger socio-cultural worlds.

I chose these particular students because I believed them to be representative of the spectrum of decisions, responses, and abilities one could expect to find within the rest of the class. As well, I felt they were among those students in the class who would talk most openly and naturally during the composing process, thereby providing me with necessary data for interpretive purposes. Interpretation in case studies “relies heavily on the judgement of the evaluator to select pertinent data for inclusion...and disregard less pertinent data...” (Fehrenbacher, Owens, Haenn, 1976, p. 9). It is, according to Peshkin (1994), impossible to not be subjective, and if one is foolish enough to ignore one’s professional, expert judgements, one only succeeds in becoming “empty-headed”. It is, however, important to be
judicious in the use of one's subjectivity. I have attempted to mediate my own biases by involving the participants in reflective verbal and written interpretations with me through the use of informal discussions, video analysis and journal writing. Student composers were asked to both 'think aloud' as they worked, and engage in reflective protocols (dialogue and writing). ‘Thinking aloud’ was accomplished by pairing the children and inviting them to talk about everything they were doing as they did it (peer collaboration). This type of data gathering procedure has precedence in studies by Schon (1987), Bamberger (1991), Zerull, (1993b), and Whitaker, (1989, 1996), among others. Interactive dialogue when composing is, according to Auker (1991, p. 161), “...an important barometer for us teachers when we are trying to observe [children’s] progress. The language they use when they are devising or interpreting music which they play is an important key to the depth of their knowledge and breadth of their attitudes”. Auker (ibid., pp. 161-162) uses Bullocks’ (1975) term ‘exploratory talk’ to describe the children's verbal discourse. “Every human uses exploratory talk as one of the chief ways in which we make sense of our world...When children bring language to bear on a problem...their talk is often tentative, discursive, inexplicit and uncertain of direction”. Whether the interactive dialogue during composing is decisive or tentative, however, much can be learned by teachers and researchers about the developing aesthetic judgements of student-composers from this talk.

For this study, exploratory talk between partners and among peers formed one of the multiple sources of data collected, along with reflective journal entries and my observations and interactions (as teacher/facilitator). Using multiple inputs is desirable in qualitative inquiry. There are a variety of procedures that utilize this practice of re-viewing and re-
thinking data from various viewpoints in order to more deeply explore meanings, among them, 'triangulation' (Denzin, 1994, Carlin, 1994, Hanley, 1994, among others); 'reflection-on-action' (Schon, 1983, 1987); and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). Multiple perspectives treated in this way were used in this study in my attempt to provide ecological validity.

These methodological perspectives for data collection and interpretation were chosen because the questions I was curious about, and which initiated my desire to design and execute this study, necessitated a flexible and open-minded point of view, where emergent responses and behaviours might impact on changes in procedures and/or foci. Some of the questions which sparked this study were:

1. What criteria did student composers use to choose/reject certain sounds and/or sound sources?
2. What criteria did student composers use to decide their piece was finished?
3. What criteria did student composers use to address musical components such as: attention to music elements; use of repetition and contrast in rhythmic or melodic patterns; stylistic preferences?
4. What criteria did student composers use to determine aesthetic considerations of 'liking'? How much, if any, influence did composing group/class peers have on those considerations?

All of these questions seemed to point to a bigger, enveloping question: What criteria did student composers use to make meaning with sound and determine the level of quality with which they expressed satisfaction with their compositions? Based on this question, the main
focus of the study became to identify possible factors which these untrained students used as guidelines to shape creative and critical choices (cognitive decisions) during the process of composing music.

Based on the research literature about music as a cultural, contextual expression (Frith, 1996, Walker, 1990, Cook, 1990), and making musical choices when composing (Sloboda 1985, 1988, Wiggins 1992, van Ernst 1991), plus my own teaching experiences over many years, I chose the following two socio-cultural variables (factors) and four musical strategies which might influence these student composers’ self-expressed decisions, during the composing process, about the quality of their compositions:

**Socio-cultural factors**

**Enculturation**

Sloboda (1985, 1988) uses the term ‘enculturation’ to describe informally learned cultural knowledge that one uses to guide value choices. Enculturation provides a system of common experience; in other words, a context. Baar’s 1993 definition of contexts as “unconscious systems that evoke and shape conscious experience” (quoted in Lane, 1997, p. 44), is very close to Sloboda’s (1985, pp. 195-6) explanation of enculturation: we, as humans, have a “shared set of primitive capacities...a shared set of experiences which the culture provides as the children grow up...Enculturation is also typified by a lack of self-conscious effort and a lack of explicit instructions”. In regard to perceiving and responding to music, Sloboda believes that a child’s exposure to music begins well before she goes to school, and these informal experiences are a major influence on a person’s response to, and knowledge about, music. He writes that, “in our western culture, musical enculturation is the dominant process
up to the age of about ten” (Sloboda, 1985, pp. 195-6). Enculturated learning in music includes such things as being able to recall songs (melodies and rhythms), musical elements or devices in compositions, ability to learn new material, to differentiate between types of styles, and make decisions about liking or disliking certain sounds or combinations of sounds. Sloboda (1985, pp. 195, 214) describes gradual, general changes that can be seen in the child’s behaviour between the ages of five to ten. These elements combine to yield a roughly similar sequence of achievements for the majority of children in a culture, and a set of roughly similar ages at which the various achievements occur. “the main developmental trend...would seem to be the increasing reflective awareness of the structures and patterns that characterize music and which are already implicit in the child’s enactive repertoire...”.

This idea that knowledge is transmitted informally is documented by other researchers in music. Auh (1997) considers informal learning to be socially gathered knowledge in settings outside of school. Her research seems to support Sloboda’s contention that this type of learning is of considerable import and influence for children under the age of about ten years; in her 1995 study on composing, she found that informal musical experience was “the strongest predictor of compositional creativity”. Earlier researchers who wrote about ‘intuition’ in relation to formal structures of music, or literacy in musical thinking, were, I think, using a different term for the same belief in an informally absorbed cultural knowledge. For example, Hargreaves (1986) writes that Rousseau, in 1762, believed that “intuitive musical experience was an essential precursor of musical literacy “; Gamble (1984, p. 11) writes that musical understanding depends on a combination of intuition and conceptual knowledge; Pond (1981) found that untrained children seemed to have an innate
understanding of formal structures of music. Many researchers agree that music is both an expression and a reflection of a cultural context, recognized as such by its style or genre. Frith (1996, p. 84), writing about decisions and preferences about popular music, discusses genre in terms of Franco Fabbri’s work and adopts his definition of musical genre which Fabbri describes as “a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definite set of sociologically accepted rules...”. Fabbri elaborates on his definition by dividing the ‘rules’ into five categories which Frith describes as:

1) formal or technical rules which govern aural characteristics (performance practice, instruments used, studio/recording quality);

2) semiotic rules which govern the ways meaning is conveyed (rhetoric, lyrics, intertextuality/reference to extra-musical entities);

3) behavioural rules which govern relationship between performer and audience (appropriate behaviours on and off stage, ‘patter’ with audience);

4) sociological and ideological rules which govern persona qualities of performers (gender/ethnic issues in music politics, different behaviours of rock/jazz/classical icons);

5) commercial rules which govern the production aspects (ownership, copyright, payments).

In this study, I use the term ‘enculturation’ to refer to informal learning in the same way as Sloboda and Auh use these terms. Frith (1996) believes popular music is the genre which primarily influences tastes and experiences of many people. Judging from their overt statements about musical preferences and experiences and my observations of their
compositional processes, it appeared that musical influences came primarily from the pop/rock genre for most of the children in this study. Like Sloboda and Auh, I believe both knowledge and decisions about preferences relating to music were absorbed informally, as enculturated knowledge. Based on Frith, Davies (1992) and my own experience, I determined a composition to have been influenced by enculturated musical knowledge in the popular genre by examining such musical elements such as: lyrics, rhythm, meter, style of delivery, and instrument choices. I applied Frith’s (1996) lists of identifying qualities for lyrics and rhythm to the students’ compositions:

1) Lyrics have three main identifying qualities:
   a) words are used as ‘sound-symbols’ rather than ‘speech-symbols’ (Stockhausen’s terms, quoted on pp. 172-173), e.g., outside of the song setting they “were usually unmemorable” (op. cit., p. 160);
   b) the rhythm of the words most often involves: rhyming; accent; colloquial phrasing and pronunciation characteristic of the singer;
   c) word rhyme is the basic rhythmic device.

2) Rhythm has three main identifying qualities:
   a) a steady beat in a consistent tempo;
   b) repeated, “interestingly patterned” beat (op. cit, p. 143);
   c) it ‘speaks’ to the body, it is primarily a physical rather than mental response - “popular music [to quote] Peter Stadler, 1962, 125, is music requiring ‘a minimum of brain activity’”.

3) Style of delivery:
a) the main part of the piece is often framed with an introduction made up of words or a musical phrase;

b) emphasis on rhythm, so significant in pop music and immediately attractive, perhaps because, as Frith writes, "...a steady tempo and an interestingly patterned beat offer the easiest ways into a musical event; they enable listeners without instrumental expertise to respond 'actively', to experience music as a bodily as well as a mental matter" (1996, p. 143);

c) the physical set-up usually involves instruments placed in a semi-circle or line, and the performers watching each other for 'cues', replicating/approximating that of groups on stage at rock/pop concerts.

4) Instrument choice:

a) overwhelmingly, instruments which are perceived as appropriate to or approximating instruments those found in a band, are first choices - drums (many and various kinds), beat and accent keepers (shakers, bell rattles, 'bongers').

Frith (1996, p. 109) insists that

musical meaning depend[s] on shared understanding of musical codes...as Leonard Meyer has elegantly argued, this is what we mean by musical 'acculturation'. We may not all have attended music schools, but we have all been to the movies; we may not be able to tell the difference between a major and minor chord, but we do know when a piece turns sad....

Looking at these compositional aspects, in my study, in these same ways, seemed appropriate after reading studies in composition and pop influences conducted by Davies (1992) and Frith (1996), respectively.
**General maturity**

This factor seems to greatly influence a composer's ability to articulate and synthesize both in and with music. The parameters for this factor used in this study are based on a subjective categorization of general development as determined by myself in conjunction with their home room teacher, Erica Forrest. Both of us have been long-time teachers of children in this particular community and we relied on our specific knowledge of the particular children in reference to both their own development and peer comparisons in a wide-ranging, but informal, look at various academic, kinesthetic, psychological and artistic components. Aspects we focussed on included:

a) ability to physically manipulate various sound sources;

b) ability and interest in synthesizing and transforming knowledge, e.g. using imagination, feelings and ideas about sound, sound sources and musical devices to create cogent musical expressions;

c) ability to physically and mentally concentrate during practise, reflection and sharing periods and focus on the task(s) at hand;

d) ability to articulate one's own musical ideas and/or needs using words and/or sound;

e) ability to articulate contributory comments to peers and/or dialogue about critical comments made to one as composer/performer, thereby demonstrating understanding of musical elements and aesthetic judgements.

**Musical strategies**

Many strategies are involved in the various processes of creating. Based on observations
from many years of empirical experience with children, I found that student-composers repeatedly went through the same procedures and made similar decisions. Reading other researchers’ data, I noticed similarities in procedures, behaviours and/or decision-making patterns. For example:

a) Wiggins (1992) found in her elementary classroom ethnographic study of novice composers, that they began with a “holistic conception” (p. 183) of the task set, and then, with a sense of discovery and through editing processes and choice decisions, planned their composing strategies. The complete composing process “…seemed to follow a pattern that moved from whole to part and back to whole” (p. 267).

b) Hargreaves and Galton (1992) looked at phases (related loosely to age and developmental stage) observed as children worked on creative tasks in the different modalities of music, story and visual art. They chronicled four sequential phases through which children move, roughly: development of outlines and basic beginning-end frames, concentrating on a single focus of the task at a time; awareness of and adherence to, conventions and standards of form and content; accuracy in and elaboration of, rule systems and conventional forms; self reflection and individual expression with evidence of understanding of the whole.

c) Davies (1992) found parallels between young children’s developing story-building skills and their song-building skills. She identified exploration and editing attempts in the chants, or narrative songs, they created. The children “…adopt[ed] a singsong method of delivery different from their normal speech” (p. 25), which often included repetition, or connection of several patterns or musical figures. She noticed that
closure was “one of the most noticeable...structural features” (pp. 25, 26). Like stories created by children of similar ages, beginning-middle-end structures were a common feature in their songs.

d) DeLorenzo (1989) described four problem-finding and problem-solving processes engaged in by students in an elementary general music class: perception of the problem; search for musical form; capacity to sense some musical possibilities; personal involvement demonstrated through adsorption and commitment to the task (p. 193).

Distilling all the longitudinal information from the literature as well as my own experience, groupings began to emerge, from which I determined the four musical strategies detailed below.

1) **exploration:** random exploration, whereby any sound sources and musical patterns are played without attention to repetition, variation, method, number or amount of sounds, sources, or musical devices or elements; intentional exploration, whereby one sound or sound source is repeatedly exploited for expansion, depth of possibilities or transformation.

2) **making choices:** conscious decisions are made concerning sounds, sound sources, performance practice, musical elements or devices, which composers intend to keep in the composition; editing is in process.

3) **shaping structure/meaning:** large structure is evident; ‘cues’ or conductor is determined for purposes of keeping together or changing sections; editing is mostly finished and polishing and practising is evident.

4) **completion and coherence:** the composition is complete; there is abundant evidence of
intent through coherent use of musical devices such as repetition and contrast, texture, structure (form), dynamics, accent, consistent use of sounds and sound sources performed the same way more than once, etc.

Both socio-cultural factors were evident throughout the entire compositional process. While the four musical strategies were generally sequential, there was continuous intertwining and re-visiting of all strategies throughout the entire composing project.

I collected data from many sources: video-tapes of working sessions (processes), and reflective discussions about those processes; student-composers' journal entries and self-evaluations, composer and peer verbal comments and my observation notes (detailed elsewhere in this paper). I then looked for an appropriate means of interpreting the data. Interpretations and analyses of the strategies children use when composing have been extensively detailed in the literature. Many researchers, among them Davidson and Scripp (1989), Upitis (1992), and Bamberger (1991), use typologies to analyse data from compositional products as a means for explaining strategies and behaviours. The structures devised often depend on a hierarchical grid whose categories involve abilities to achieve levels of notation of those musical products (usually songs).

In this study, I am interested in the strategies children used in the process of composing, and, while process and product are intertwined in both thoughts and actions of the composers, I have tried to focus on the process elements, in part by excluding notation from the original task given. In order to help organize the data as well as my thinking, I created a framework (see Appendix K, page 304), consisting of the factors and strategies detailed above.

This framework is part of an emergent methodology. It is intended to be used with the
data collected as a tool for interpreting the socio-cultural factors and musical strategies which influenced decision-making of the child-composers. It arose from data from several sources: direct observation during working sessions; reflections on videos of the students’ ‘thinking-aloud’ during working sessions, first with the student composers and, later, alone; students’ written journals; reading of theoretical literature. It was refined throughout the time of this study as information and patterns emerged. Because the methodology used in this study is one which interprets ‘lived experience’, it is important to note that although the framework devised was very useful for this particular student group at this particular time, it may not be transferable to another situation, and, also, that transference is not one of the goals of this methodology.

I used this framework to help inform and clarify my understanding of what these particular children went through as they made meaning through the composing process. There was no attempt to classify products or structure a hierarchical series of processes and procedures. Although some strategies used by the children tended to come before or after others, there was much intertwining in the form of re-visiting and refining of all strategies. I believe this framework is flexible enough to be utilized for both sequential and recursive compositional processes. Using the strategies and factors of the framework, I looked for patterns, trends and surprises embedded in the decision-making processes involved in creating, performing and critically describing, compositions by these untrained child-composers.

Design

This ethnographic classroom study involves children using the medium of sound to create
music compositions. A composition is defined herein as a combination of exploration, editing, polishing and critical dialogue with oneself, peers and the teacher/facilitator; it is not a first response. The composition as creative, artistic expression, is, therefore, an interrelation of the individual, social considerations and cultural knowledge (Walker, 1990, Csikszentimihalyi, 1988). In this study, I looked at what selected, untrained eight and nine year olds do to shape creative and critical choices in their making of musical compositions. Students in this study were one class of twenty-one eight and nine year olds of both genders in a grade three class in a suburban elementary school in British Columbia. They were selected for the following reasons:

1. These students and I were well known to each other, as I taught them music on a regular basis;

2. Their home room teacher, Erica Forrest, and I had a similar pedagogical philosophy about learning, teaching, role of the teacher as facilitator, importance of hearing the child’s voice, and the integral place of the arts in the curriculum;

3. The children in this class were supportive of each other in risk-taking and/or creative activities, had previous experience collaborating in various activities and project tasks, and enjoyed music, drama, and story creation;

4. Both Erica and I felt that the children would be able to sustain their interest and commitment over time for an intensive project and could express and communicate their ideas effectively.

In my dual role of teacher/researcher, I looked closely at the details of the interactions, dialogues and behaviours of the child-composers as they engaged in the process of
composing music.

While I had originally hoped to chronicle all children in their composing activities, it quickly became obvious that Erica and I could not track every child’s processes at the same time, nor were there enough mechanical recording devices (audio or video) available to do it for us. Therefore, I reorganized my data collecting devices based on availability of data collecting tools and constraints of the physical setting of the classroom. I was able to borrow three video cameras from the university media centre, and since I had decided that video was an essential data recording tool for this project, access to these cameras became the determining factor for how many student-composers I could focus on, in detail, during this study. Faced with choosing only three students on whom to focus, it seemed important that they represent, as much as possible, the range of aptitudes, abilities, learning approaches and personalities in the class. To that end, I chose two boys and one girl from the students who volunteered to be ‘focus composers’. I call them Arvin, Tae and Erin, all pseudonyms. The rest of the class is referred to as ‘peer composers’, and any named in this paper have also been given pseudonyms. They engaged in the same tasks as the ‘focus composers’ and were also sources of data.

The adults in this study were myself, a music specialist and the student’s regular music teacher, in the dual role of teacher/researcher, and Erica Forrest, the home room teacher, who is a language arts specialist. Our roles were twofold:

1. To act as facilitators for the children in our respective areas of expertise. We aimed to provide scaffolding for the child-composers in their artistic creating and social interactions, in order to support their discoveries, negotiations of knowledge, and
developing abilities, as they went about the composing process;

2. To be collaborators, supporters and critics for each other, as the project unfolded. It was my intention that the children would see Erica and I modelling the behaviours and relationships that they were also experiencing. It was invaluable to me, as designer of this project, to have Erica's input in the planning of the language component, her intuitive and insightful comments and observations, and her feedback on my ideas. She helped provide a balance to my own perceptions, biases and reflections.

The study I designed involved these untrained grade three students, working in the normal setting of the music room. I set up an open-ended composing task with a "fluid product" (Baker-Sennett, Matusov and Rogoff, 1992, p. 95), whereby the children would choose a working group of peers and use any available sounds to compose something they considered to be 'music'. For the purposes of this study, composing is defined as an artistic experience in making generative gestures in which the child-composer expresses individual and unique ideas, decisions and understandings about music. To focus the composers' imaginations and facilitate planning, I made the following suggestions in my role as 'teacher':

1. the title/focus of their composition be the word "red" (to be interpreted in any way the student-composers chose);

2. the piece of music have a beginning, middle and end;

3. student-composers collaborate with a partner in order to articulate their process ideas to help themselves as well as provide me, in my role as researcher, with data on decision-making.

All other musical choices, such as: formal structure, length, number of voicings and use of
musical elements and devices, were left to the student composers to determine, as were other socio-cultural elements arising from working collaboratively. The composing task set would involve the children in what Abbs (1991, p. 248) describes as four ‘fields’ of understanding: making, presenting, responding and evaluating. These form “an intricate web of energy where the parts are seen in relation, in a state of reciprocal flow”. I was particularly curious about what they would consider musically ‘acceptable’ as they set about using their voices and bodies, classroom instruments, unconventional and found-sound implements, and home-made tapes of environmental sounds, to create their compositions.

In order to allow the child-composers to give their full attention to the process of working with sound itself, I excluded notation from the task parameters. While notation is a useful memory tool and complements written text in such contexts as journal articles, it is not a necessary component of the compositional process. Excluding notation when working with these untrained children helped free them from possible constraints due to lack of skills or abilities in this area.

As their teacher, I was available as a facilitator for both musical and social intervention as asked, and as the video technician for the sharing sessions of in-process compositions for whole-class critiquing. I chose not to act simply as an instructor of specific knowledge, but rather, positioned myself to ‘direct traffic’ as a facilitator for their need to understand, believing, as Meyer-Denkman (1977), that “teaching is more than simply imparting knowledge...”. In this way, the students’ viewpoints, rather than the teacher’s, were primary. The important element in the relationship between student composers and myself, as teacher, was similar to that of Cruz (1997, p. 38), whose teacher/student perspective, which I followed
in this study, is grounded in Freire’s (1970/1993) ‘Critical Theory’. Like her, I “...placed emphasis on active dialogue, with the aim of interconnecting the viewpoints and experiences of the student and myself...I attempted to avoid an oppressor/oppressed relationship. In such a relationship, I would have had the power to impose my own viewpoint on the musical experience of the student”.

To this end, I also restrained from taking over decision-making regarding such things as judging their choices of procedures, sound sources, or any other expressive/artistic decisions. I also resisted the temptation (as teacher) to judge the quality of their compositions with my own adult, professional musician’s ears; the children were given the privilege as well as the responsibility to decide when the compositions were complete and when they were of an acceptable quality to be labelled as a composer’s own creation. It was important for me, both as teacher/facilitator and as researcher, that the student-composers take responsibility for the integrity of their decisions and see the task through to the end based on their own self-determined parameters. Only by allowing the student-composers to make product decisions as well as process ones, could they truly be allowed the full range of experiential and expressive possibilities of the task set.

In my role as researcher, I circulated among all the student-composers, observing and taking field notes of both ‘focus’ and ‘peer’ composers during working sessions, and organized the video-taping of working sessions. I tried to be very clear with the students as to the role I was assuming at any given time, and they adjusted easily to my various ‘personas’. As the teacher/researcher, I made inferences about cognitive processes and influences which impacted on their actions and self-described decisions in their compositions
from information collected from a variety of sources. Subsequently, in my role as researcher, I interpreted those data.

Composing sessions for the entire project took place three times a week for 40-60 minutes each, between February 20, 1996 and June 21, 1996. The music composition segment occurred between February 20th and May 2nd, as follows: Composition #1, February 20th-March 5th; Composition #2, March 9th-April 2nd; Composition #3, April 4th-May 2nd. The language composition segment occurred between May 7th and June 5th, as follows: Composition #1, May 7th-May 14th; Composition #2, May 15th-May 28th; Composition #3, May 29th-June 5th. Responding to student requests, I extended the project time until June 21st, as a ‘coda’, so they could do one more composition, with no externally imposed parameters.

Of the three weekly sessions, two were ‘working’ sessions, in which the composers had the entire time to themselves to construct their compositions. They had open access to all sound sources in the music room, outside in the school environment, and/or their own implements brought from home or self-made. They could work inside the music room or their own classroom, both portable classrooms away from the main school, bordering a playground and wooded area complete with creek and trails. During the working sessions, Erica and I would circulate, answering questions, engaging in informal conversations with the students and each other, and taking hand-written notes. On the third weekly session, volunteer composer/performers would share their works-in-process. All students were invited to engage in critical, interactive dialogue with the presenters. Peers would offer ‘stars’ (things they thought enhanced the composition, or things they liked), and/or ‘wishes’ (things they thought were lacking, or needed changing). As researcher, I would
video-tape both sharing performances and critical dialogues. As teacher, I would participate in the critical discussions.

After each working session, all students wrote reflective journal entries based on questions I devised, sometimes in advance, and sometimes based on emergent factors occurring during a particular session. This activity signalled the end of each composing session. On the two working session days, I would then take the focus-composers and their partners (one pair at a time) to another room in the main school where we could view and discuss the working session video for that day. I would also videotape this reflective session. (This procedure was followed throughout the music segment of the study, as planned. This same procedure was not followed during the language segment of the study, however. Reasons for the change are explained elsewhere in this paper.)

When all compositions were complete, I video-taped them. The following day all students watched themselves performing on the videotape, and wrote a self-evaluation concerning their perceptions about their own contributions to the process of composing in general (for example: focus, commitment, discoveries, feelings about the level of achievement in relation to their expectations) and their judgments about their own musical product in particular (for example: what they liked, what they would change, what was difficult). The evaluation criteria was devised by me, as teacher/researcher. (See Appendices B-G, pages 293-298, for samples)

At the conclusion of this study, a final reflective session was conducted by Erica and me with all twenty-one student-composers, to debrief this project. We discussed their feelings and thoughts about what they had learned, what they would want to do with composing in the
future, what suggestions they could give me for another project. In the beginning, I had sent a letter home asking permission to include each student in the project and explaining the purpose, procedures and content; on this last day, I sent home another letter informing parents that the project was now completed (See Appendices A and I, pages 292 and 301, for letters).
Interlude #5

Interpretation

I've just finished 10 weeks with my intermediate students (approximately 185, 9-12 yr. olds), composing. Grade six and seven students concentrated on listening to and studying contemporary music, (e.g., Westerkamp, Schafer, Truax), and making sound-scapes with graphic notation; the grade four and five students studied Holst's “Planets” and created a 'new' planet in music. The 33 compositions I had chosen were performed in a school concert yesterday, the last day of school before Spring Break. I invited Hildegard Westerkamp to come, and she did! What a treat for me, and for all the kids - they were really impressed (and a little nervous) that a 'real-live' composer would come to hear them. She was a wonderful addition to the audience, and spoke positively to me of the works she heard. I asked if she would mind writing a little note to the kids that I could share with them. She did, and in part, here is what she said:

“I thought that your students did imaginative work. I noticed and loved their concentration while performing and am convinced that their intense listening to each other made the performances so successful...please tell all your students that they can be proud of their achievements. I thought the composition were well done...not too long and not even too short. I never once got bored and was impressed by the many different musical ideas that they had. Structurally, the pieces were really clear and well thought out. I very much enjoyed the way in which each group worked together. There seemed to be a real connection between the musicians and the composers while performing, with attentive listening, enjoyment and disciplined playing.”
She noticed that one of the pieces wasn’t over when the audience started clapping (there was more after a big bass drum beat, but the audience thought that it signalled the end--they do really respond to the “big finish”).

Thinking later about her comments, I began wondering about interpretation of artistic expressions - how do we decide what is ‘good’? (social icons and all that)...I realized that I wanted to talk more to her, as someone who understands the kind of musical efforts the kids do, and the kind of musical knowledge I’m trying to teach them and understand myself, in terms of their aesthetic sense and previous, enculturated, informal musical knowledge. I wrote her back feeling it was such a treat to be able to enter into a dialogue with someone other than myself for a change. “Forgive me if I ask too many questions”, I wrote, “but here they are”: (‘you’ is Hilde and/or Peter, her partner who also came to the concert)

1) How did you judge ‘goodness’?

2) What would make you feel bored?

3) How did you decide what made a composition ‘imaginative’?

4) Did you notice a particular lack of coherence or skill or structure or anything we tend to credit trained musicians with?

5) Given all the samples of unconventional sounds we heard and performed, I was surprised how closely they stuck to approximating traditional sounds and forms - do you have any thoughts/comments on this?

6) If you could do more composing with these students, where would you go from here?

I am anxiously awaiting her reply.... (I received one, and recount some of her thoughts later on in this thesis).
Today, I heard Varese’s Ionization for the first time in a long while. He used the term ‘organized sound’ in his work with unconventional sounds, and I couldn’t help but feel that many of the compositions my kids did had the same attention to: patterns of rhythm and pitch; shape/form, where one sound seemed to lead the listener to the next in a coherent way; texture, with a real awareness of how individual tone colours went together or stood out from each other. There was a sense of the whole, a definite comprehension of how the parts were related....I am so sure that these untrained children, contrary to so much of the literature, do far more than improvise; they consciously and critically use their imagination, intellect and emotions to compose. Now, I just have to find ways to see if and what the actual musical samples of their work (now I’m referring to the group of students I used for my dissertation project), tell me about how they go about this composing. I will have to find ways to use the processes and the products in my interpretation of the data. I get so excited by what I see/hear; like Hilde, I am aware of the students-composers’ sense of the whole while being able to manipulate the ‘bits’ into coherent music, and I’ll have to be careful to interpret what is there, and not ‘find’ what I expect to be there (personal bias, etc.)? ; what will I find?....I’ll have more to think/write about on this topic later, I’m sure.
CHAPTER FIVE

Interpretation of Music Composing Results

Interpretation of the music compositions of the three focus-composers is detailed below. Taking one child-composer at a time, all data from the various sources were first reviewed and reflected upon by me, piece by piece. Then, using the framework categories I had determined, I attempted to match appropriate data. The following interpretation discusses in detail, each focus-composer’s process and product within the appropriate framework category. In addition, I have encapsulated Tae’s composition on the framework grid itself, as an example.

Following the individual interpretation of the focus-composer’s compositions on “red”, there is a discussion section where patterns, trends and differences among all the student-composers in this class are interpreted. Expanding the data pool with the input from the nineteen other peer composers allowed me to explore findings, implications and questions more fully.

Tae

Tae, whose birthday is March 11th, is eight years old at the beginning of this study. He is serious and achievement-oriented regarding school. He is intellectually quick-minded, curious and articulate. Self-motivated, he often prefers to work alone, but enjoys the social interaction of discussion and sharing of ideas with classmates. He is persistent in pursuing ideas or tasks, sometimes verging on stubborn, but is generally willing to listen to others’ ideas and try to incorporate them into his own plans. He likes to keep records: during the entire span of the composing project, ideas and musical plans are written in a notebook daily.
He keeps himself, his belongings, and schoolwork very neat and orderly. He eagerly approaches challenges, composing included, with intellectual curiosity and imagination. For example, over the weekend between the time I told the class about the composition task and the start day, he arranged with his partner to get together and share ideas about what and how they would proceed. Results of his experiences and contributions to the composition “red” are as follows, based on my interpretation of data collected.

Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *exploration*.

From the beginning, Tae explores a wide variety of sound sources (home-made, unconventional and traditional). He spends time with each new sound source, randomly exploring the myriad of possible sounds, interested in the variety each could produce. Through his comments and observations, he demonstrates intentional exploration, in that he was ‘listening’ for sounds that he perceived to be like rock and roll or jazz (his self-proclaimed style focus for interpreting “red”). For example, taking a woven Chinese bamboo fan, he holds it like a guitar and strums it in fast strokes with his fingernails. He and his partner, Bobby, explore their own sound source choices individually, but listen and talk to each other constantly about their discoveries. Over most working sessions they also experiment with various words, chanted in rhythm or sung, to accompany their music: e.g., “red hot jazz”; “ah, ah, ah, re-e-e-d!”; “red, red, red....yeah!” The interweaving of lyrics and sound, as well as the rhythms explored, are pop music-oriented.

Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *making choices*.

Tae is vehement in his wish to compose in the style of rock and roll; it is his favourite kind of music, and he tells me during a reflecting session that as soon as I gave the title

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“Red”, he immediately thought ‘rock and roll’. Bobby was equally determined to compose jazz. Tae is reluctant to use the jazz style because, to him, jazz seems to translate into ‘unusual sounds’, although he admits that rhythm is important in jazz as well. This difference of the way each child perceives jazz becomes the cause of argument for several days. As they play sounds and sound sources over several days, however, the music they make is more ‘in sync’ than their intellectual interpretation of the styles, and eventually, they decide to incorporate both styles. They decide that important aspects are lots of noise, lots of instruments, fast tempo, and a ‘big finish’. I can never get a clear idea, verbally or musically, what Bobby thinks jazz is, and the composition seems to me to be greatly influenced by pop music characteristics. On working day one, Tae positions various instruments so that he can “play the drums with my feet because I’m out of hands”; by working day two, he decides “we have too many instruments”, and decides they can do without a small drum and cymbal. Sound source choices seem to be made to approximate rock and roll instruments: drums, wooden temple blocks hit with hard sticks; autoharp, stringbox and fan used as guitars (all the real guitars have been taken by others); maracas. All instruments are played fast and as loud as possible, and this is pleasing: “I can do this!” smiles Tae. As both composers play their instruments, their heads bob up and down and their bodies move; they decide to use the phrases “red, red, red” and “red hot jazz” as they play, to complement the musical styles. Later, as we view the video and reflect on the working session, Tae says, “I think I’m embarrassing myself”; he wants to look and sound like a rock musician, in theory, but in practice, it seems he is not ready to see himself that way.
Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *shaping structure and meaning*.

From the very beginning, Tae and Bobby "...have a plan, and repeat some things from last time and some new things...we don’t improvise everything new each day". They spend much of the first working session talking about their ideas; for Tae, particularly, the thinking and planning came before the sound exploration. At the end of working day one, I ask, "What did you do today?" Tae replies, "We haven’t done a single bit - we’re thinking...it’s never easy to get started". He gives me the impression that he considers this a negative way to spend time because it is unproductive in the sense of a concrete result. We discuss the importance of process, and I sense that he feels somewhat relieved, although habits die hard; on working day four he hides behind a drum so the camera can’t record his discussion-only with his partner. Tae works on shaping structure and meaning in several ways. He experiments with various rhythmic and vocal patterns, practising each one over and over, dialoguing with Bobby about each one, before choosing ones which will fit the planned structure he has in mind: "What about this?...let’s try this now". Patterns they decide to use approximate those used in pop songs; for example:

- **maraca:**
  - \[\text{TTTT} \text{TTTT} \text{TTTT} \text{TTTT}\]

- **drum:**
  - \[\text{TT} \text{TT} \text{TT} \text{TT}\]

- **tone block:**
  - \[\text{TTT} \text{TTT} \text{TTT} \text{TTT}\]

- **voice:**
  - ah----ah----ah----ah (step-wise, downward sequences)
  - re----e----e----ed

Their song builds, and Tae devises other accented, pitched phrases, accompanied by strums on the fan or stringbox for accompaniment and also as instrumental ‘bridges’. As the project
progresses, the parameters for inclusion narrow; when Bobby finds a new, squeaky sound on the stringbox, Tae says vehemently, “Never!”

Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *completion and coherence*.

Tae and Bobby complete a coherent musical composition by the end of the project time. It has a loose A B A form: ‘A’ is a spoken introduction with strummed accompaniment; ‘B’ is a melodic song about “red”. It includes phrases like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>m</th>
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</table>

Red is the col-our, the col-our of life

sung in a folksy-pop style; ‘A’ is spoken again, with a ‘big finish’. The intent is clearly that of a rock song: the vocals are rhythmic, repetitive, accented, with melodic sequences in stepped phrases; the beat is strong and regular with a count of 4; there are strummed tags accompanied by “yeah, yeah, yeah”. Tae wanted the composition to be “like a movie where there are songs”. The introductory dialogue ends up like radio station patter: “This is 96.3 FM...[a weather report] ...now, red hot jazz”. Watching the video of a working session, I ask, “Do you wish you had electric guitars?” Both boys respond, quickly, “Yeah!”,” “That would be awesome!”, said Tae.

Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *exploration*.

Tae is extremely ‘able’, both physically and mentally. He seems to intentionally explore sounds and sound sources, listening for specific stylistic sounds. He converses with me and his partner, clarifying and asking questions about different sound sources and sounds, regarding performance practice and tone colour. He uses musical terms appropriately, and intuitively understands musical and artistic effects and devices within the bounds of his
informal music experiences which have become part of his funded experience. In initial exploration, he concentrates on tone colour, dynamics and tempo on a variety of sound sources, searching for all possible ways to get sound out of the sources at hand. His musical abilities and understanding expands as the project progresses, and by working day four, he writes in his journal: “Our composition features tone colour, tempo, dynamics, rhythm and melody. We use dynamics and tempo and tone and melody in one part only, [and] rhythm to accompany the words”. Clearly, he understands how and what he is thinking in sound.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: making choices.

After several working days of arguing about which style, jazz or rock and roll, to use, Tae and Bobby resolve their problem by deciding to incorporate both styles. Although both children are vehement in their choice of style, they demonstrate flexibility in their willingness to pursue a way to keep both composers feeling positive about the project and keeping a high standard of quality for the music, which they determined according to their own parameters.

Tae seems to make his own musical choices after careful consideration. For example:

Me: *Do you like the tone blocks' sound?*

Tae: *Yes.*

Me: *What does it do for your piece?*

Tae: *It makes it better...it's an interesting sound.*

Me: *How will you use it?*

Tae: *In the opening part.*

(Later in the working session I come back; he is now hitting the blocks with the end of a maraca)
Me: Do you still like the tone blocks?

Tae: Yes.

Me: Do you like the two sounds together?

Tae: [At first]...I didn’t like it...then I decided to listen to it and make the choice.

Me: (Watching him frown as he plays) What is it you don’t really like?

Tae: (He can’t really explain, except to say it has something to do with the rhythm; he spends much time with this problem and asks to come in to continue during lunchtime)

On another day, as we watch and discuss a working session video:

Me: What do you think of your composition so far?

Tae: Okay.

Me: Just ‘okay’?

Tae: Yeah, just okay.

Me: What do you think you might change?

Tae: The texture’s not good.

Me: Do you think it’s just a question of more practice, to get the right balance and mix?

Tae: Yeah, I think so.

He seems aware that choices concerning each sound source, sound and section, impact on the whole and seems to have some internalized aesthetic measure of the level of quality which he strives to reach in each area of choice in his composition. Even where he has difficulty articulating what he is aiming for musically, it seems clear to me that he intuitively knows what he wants.

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Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *shaping structure and meaning*

Tae has an understanding of both the whole composition and separate elements. He strives to make individual sounds exactly ‘right’, as well as organize the compositional whole. He prefers to move through the process of creating his piece in his own way and rate, and while he is very open and interactive with Bobby, and willing to accept suggestions from me (as teacher/facilitator), he wants to control how and when he interacts: e.g., I notice that he always has his book with him and writes things down throughout the working session. I ask, “You have this all down in your music book?” “Yes...it's private”, he mutters, trying to not offend me and yet making his position of independence clear; on optional sharing days, he refuses until he thinks the piece is polished, repeatedly saying, “We need more practice time”. Bobby, sensing how important it is to Tae that the composition be at a certain level of quality, defers to his wishes. I think that Tae is as concerned about audience response as he is about the music itself; he seems to want his peers to think his composition is a good one.

Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *completion and coherence*.

Tae is determined that his composition is coherent and complete. He works consistently and is focussed on the task at hand at all times. While working diligently to the high standard he had set for himself as both composer and performer, he seems to have patience with both himself and Bobby. He recognizes that “it’s never easy to get started”, and is content and satisfied to write in his self-evaluation, “There is nothing I don’t like about my composition; I don’t want to change or add anything”. He liked working on his composition because “we made great music”. When this composition was performed for the class, there were many positive comments. The children seemed impressed that it was so polished and, in spite of no guitars or drum sets, sounded like a ‘real song’.
Tae was relentless in his striving for what he considered to be quality. He treated himself and his partner with respect and patience, yet never lost sight of his goal, for which he was willing to put in more extra time than any other student composer in this class. I felt, as I watched the final performance again, later, (on video), that this composition was one of the most coherent, musically, and the most pleasing, aesthetically. Setting the scene, as it were, in a radio station format, was a ‘hook’ for the audience, as it immediately transported them into a familiar setting. Sharing their interpretation of the word “red” in a familiar song form whose lyrics told that “red is the colour of life”, added sophistication and a ‘real life’ connection to the compositional task. This composition embodied socio-cultural influences within an original and imaginative artistic frame. Tae went about the compositional process in a mature fashion: he demonstrated flexibility in his creativity when the main sound source he wanted was not available; he demonstrated willingness to work through disagreements with this partner until a mutually-satisfactory solution was reached; his curiosity, imagination and artistic integrity were intact throughout the entire project, and he was willing to spend whatever extra amounts of time and effort necessary (even to cajoling his partner when he wasn’t as eager). Although Tae approached most challenges at school in this positive manner, I know that this creating opportunity was especially important and satisfying to him: one day I received a telephone call from his parent asking what I was doing in music class, because Tae had said that it was only worth coming to school on the three days a week that he had music. (True to his nature and sense of privacy, he never said anything to me).
Table 1. Interpretive Framework for Strategies and Factors Affecting Decisions by Tae When Creating Musical Compositions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies Factors</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Making Choices</th>
<th>Shaping Structure/Meaning</th>
<th>Completion and Coherence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enculturation</td>
<td>explored a wide variety of sound sources for all possibilities</td>
<td>wanted noisy/loud sounds in combination</td>
<td>started with a plan: red = rock and roll</td>
<td>loose ABA form to completed composition</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>listened for rock/pop sounds because “red makes me think of rock and roll”</td>
<td>wanted fast tempi</td>
<td>some improvisation, but he also “repeats some things from last time...we don’t improvise new each day”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>explored chanted words relating to the topic: “red hot jazz”; “ah, ah, r-eh-eh-d!”; “red, yeah, yeah”</td>
<td>wanted ‘big finish’ (crescendo to loud, accented sounds and/or words)</td>
<td>repeated and accented rhythm patterns on various sound sources, including voice, that is common, simple rock/pop pattern:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>words combined with music in rhythm and phrasing common to rock/pop song genre</td>
<td>sound source choices were: drums, strummed instruments (autoharp, stringbox, fan held like guitar and played with fingernail)</td>
<td>practised, polished chosen sounds</td>
<td>practised, polished chosen sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>played drums with feet so he can add more sound</td>
<td>rejected new, possible sound offered by partner</td>
<td>rejected new, possible sound offered by partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>articulated ideas clearly used musical vocabulary appropriately</td>
<td>found ways to work out style differences with his partner; flexible without losing his own integrity</td>
<td>each musical element is used intentionally for specific purpose or effect</td>
<td>he is aware of difficulties and complexity of the task: “It’s never easy to get started”</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>concentrated on tone colour, dynamics and tempo in the beginning; over time, expanded exploration into rhythm, melody and larger form/structure</td>
<td>open to changing his mind due to new aural information seemed to make choices based on impact on the structural integrity of the whole composition</td>
<td>he had a sense of privacy during practice time; he was aware of external (critical?) input from others</td>
<td>he is able to evaluate himself: “I don’t want to change anything”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wrote neat, complete, coherent notes on each day’s activities and ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td>had a sense of beginning-middle-end concept; structured an introduction, body and ending, seemingly relating/integrating ideas from both story and song form</td>
<td>he is able to assess work done with his partner: “We make great music”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lyrics are sophisticated in that they relate the task to life experience: “red is the colour, the colour of life...”</td>
<td>he worked diligently and consistently in all sessions; also had patience with himself and partner when things were not going smoothly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>he chose to spend extra time on his own polishing his composition to meet his own goals</td>
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Erin

Erin, whose birthday is March 3rd, is eight years old at the beginning of this study. She is a self-assured, articulate child with curiosity and a willingness to try new things. She is independent of thought and action and likes to be a leader. I would not consider her bossy, however, because she is interested in others’ input and responses. She likes to have a plan and can get frustrated and self-critical when things take longer than she thinks they should. This said, she is also able to ‘play’ and take time for light-hearted fun. She seemed to take a holistic view of the task set, interested first in ‘framing’ the whole idea of “red” in a musical and cognitive context involving such things as exploration, extension, and transformation of ideas. Results of her experiences and contributions to the composition “red” are as follows, based on my interpretation of the data collected.

Factor: enculturation; Strategy: exploration.

From working day one, Erin seems very sure of tone colours and rhythms that she was seeking. Exploration is intentional, and seems, primarily, to involve practising and polishing patterns and combinations of sound sources, whose sounds she was already familiar with. She does not seek out unusual sounds, nor does she randomly or intentionally explore any sound source to determine the full range of sound possibilities. She seems to equate deep, low-pitched sounds with a ‘dark’ quality, which is how she chooses to interpret “red” in her composition. She uses accents and loud staccato sounds for emphasis to accompany the phrase “dark! dark! red!” She explores rhythm patterns that followed the word rhythms in various tempi: e.g.

| Dark Red! | Dark Red! | Dark! Dark! Red! | Dark! Dark! Red! |
Over several working sessions, she favours explorations of tone colour and rhythm on various drums (snare, conga and bongo), which she hits with a variety of mallets and hand positions. Her motivation to explore these sounds seems less to investigate the sounds themselves and more for musical expression relating to word interpretation. Over the working sessions, she explores extra-musical aspects such as changes to word order and dramatic actions devised to go along with musical segments.

Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *making choices*

Erin is goal-oriented. Focussed on the composing task, she spends little time with a sound, sound source or pattern that she perceives would not fit her idea of “red”. She is sure of her choices, and seems to be able to make them quickly. She tells me she has an idea for using drums before she starts actually working on the composition: “I like choosing the instruments, especially the drums”. She gravitates to sound sources whose sounds can echo and reverberate - she rejects the wooden tone blocks because “it didn’t fit in”. Her idea of “red”, includes the ideas of ‘light’ and ‘dark’, but she perceives both aspects to include round, full sounds, and the tone blocks have a rather flat, hollow sound. She practises rhythm patterns chosen over and over, grimacing when she plays a repetition ‘incorrectly’ (one extra beat). Mostly, she plays one sound source and one sound at a time, and uses few sound sources in total: “I think I’ll get rid of one of these instruments...there are too many to control”. She discusses her ideas and choices easily and constantly, with both her partner and me, when I come over to listen. She talks about individual sounds, the order of sound sources, and tries to explain exactly what she feels is wrong with a particular sound. She accepts suggestions from both me and her partner, and eagerly attempts a variation in order to find a sound she likes better. She clearly has an aesthetic sense of what she
wants to hear, which, according to Broudy (cited in Barrett, 1996), involves the child’s ability to perceive the ‘expressive form’ (38), and understand its essence. As well, Erin has the patience to explore and master the sound source in order to achieve what she wants. Choices of sound sources are made within the first two working sessions; the order of sounds and interplay of sounds and spoken dialogue change and modify over several sessions. Both Erin and her partner seem to make most sound and rhythm pattern choices individually, without much discussion.

Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *shaping structure/meaning*.

Erin seems to have specific goals in mind from the very beginning, and gives shape to her ideas early on with text and drama integrated with repeated rhythm patterns, specific sounds on a narrow range of sound sources, all organized carefully. She controls everything and is eager to practise and polish her piece to a particular level of quality and standard. As the sessions unfold, the story-drama seems to take over, with the music becoming accompaniment and/or springboard. Although sounds are used at a catalyst for further sounds and action, it seems to me that the musical aspects of the composition became secondary. She understands musical terms and is able to use them accurately when she remembers them: watching the video of a working session, she says, “We get louder and louder here”. I remind her that the musical term is ‘crescendo’; “Yes, I forgot what it was called”. Another day, I notice that she and her partner use the terms ‘soft’, ‘loud’ and ‘crescendo’ to appropriately parallel “light red” and “dark red” spoken/played parts. They prefer endings to crescendo and end with very loud accented beats; this ‘big finish’ idea is very popular with most of the children, and I tend to think it comes from their informal exposure to pop/rock music. Also pop-influenced are the rhythm choices; the simple pattern, \( \Pi 1 \Pi 1 \), is repeated throughout. Also used are rests, and Erin nods her head in the silences to keep the beat.
Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *completion and coherence*.

The complete composition depends largely on a storyline which includes dialogue, action and music. Erin and her partner developed the storyline over the working sessions of the composing project, and my intuitive sense is that they gravitated toward what was known and comfortable - making up dramatic stories. The new element fit into the creating/composing experience was the use of sound, a relatively new medium. Erin is, however, able to incorporate musical elements and devices in an integral way, resulting in a complete and coherent whole at the end. In this composition, it seems that the funded experience these children had in creating stories and dramatic action is the guiding structure for the new experiences with music. The finished composition is complete and coherent musically; it uses accent, dynamics, and various performance techniques on several sound sources; sections which are independent musically but connected through the storyline; interrelation of text and sound rhythms and mood; repetition of rhythm patterns; echo; changes in dynamics for certain effects (e.g., crescendo at the end); and a steady drum beat through most of the piece. Musical effects support and enhance the words and story: Erin explains that “the music is low...it’s like the meaning of dark red...because it’s darker and lower”. The composition was intentionally constructed to mimic common elements of pop/rock music, which Erin says is her favourite type of music: “When my family buys music, I ask them to get ‘Ace of Bass’ or some other kind of rock...I like rock, jazz and pop a lot...the drums are my favourite sound”. My opinion is that the piece uses pop techniques in a rather superficial, predictable way; however, the composers are satisfied with the end result and feel that the piece measures up to the level of quality they were seeking.
Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *exploration*.

Erin spends almost no random exploration time with musical sound sources, and even her intentional exploration time seems to be directed at pre-determined goals. She does not interact with the medium of sound as an artist ‘dialoguing’ with her materials; her explorations seem to primarily be within the larger story-drama-music context. She often apologizes for time spent ‘playing’, and rarely allows herself to step out of ‘reality’ and into the fantastical world of free exploration. For example, she says to her partner as they are working out dialogue, “...oh, hello, come to my house and we’ll play music...(laughs)...no one would really do that!”; watching the video of a working session, she tells me: “I wouldn’t watch this part, it’s where Penny gets cuckoo”. Erin functions at a high level of competence in her schoolwork. She works easily within school time constraints, and appears to be comfortable with function/goal expectations. In creative activities, she structures her time and activities similarly, and although she appears to enjoy the composing, I (as an observer) intuitively wish she would spend more time playing-in-the-spaces.

Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *making choices*.

Erin and Penny choose ‘dark, dark, red’ as their interpretation for this “red” composition. The first choices involve tone colours and rhythms. Choices are made over several working sessions by “…just try[ing] to change rhythms and finding what we want”; at one working session, I am invited to listen to a segment: “I made up this cool pattern”. Erin self-critiques as she practices. Some observations I make are:

a) her face and body language are intense as she focusses completely on learning and perfecting a pattern;
b) she asks questions of me or Penny regarding our response to sounds she is playing;
c) she is searching for a particular timbre for ‘dark’ with a conga drum and is not getting what she wants (it is placed flat on the carpet). “I have an idea”, she says aloud, and re-positions the drum on a chair at an angle so the sound is ‘rounder’.

The first three working sessions are spent on music alone, and then the focus shifts to the dramatic elements: “before we didn’t do the skit part, just music”; on day four they make the choice to talk about ordering the piece and expanding the story-drama. Erin is able to clearly articulate her ideas and logically create a sequence of events for her piece. She and Penny are able to dialogue together and solve musical problems. There seems to be little disagreement about any aspects of this project; Erin likes to be in charge, and her partner is content to let her try out all her ideas because “they are good ones”. Erin does, however, check out Penny’s responses to her ideas for both words and music, and willingly modifies her own with encouraging comments to her partner for her input.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: shaping structure/meaning.

Once Erin and Penny begin to focus on the story-drama, the composition begins to take a clear shape. As I observe the working sessions, it seems that the focus is over-balanced, with the music taking a secondary role to the story. When I ask, however, I am told “No, we’re doing both together”. Upon a closer listen, I realize that they have interwoven the two aspects of the composition thoroughly. As the larger structure develops, the order and combination of sounds change, but rhythm patterns and instruments stay the same. Erin says, “We majorly changed it...we used the same instruments”. They do not interfere with the specific sound sources or sounds chosen by each other, and constantly dialogue as they practise and polish the various parts of the composition to the level of quality and mastery they have chosen:
Erin: “Look, I’ll do the title and you do this...let’s start over...”

Penny: “The ending’s not right...”

Erin: “Yeah...how about we take turns doing all these things”

Penny: “Can’t you just feel it?”

Erin: “Yeah!”

Their communication takes various forms, some overt and some intuited. They seem able to relay both musical and contextual ideas easily to each other. Watching the video of their most recent working session, Erin excitedly points to camera and tells me, “That’s the best! That’s the best!”, and Penny smiles and nods in agreement. Erin seems to have the maturity to decide on and reach musical goals, working through the process carefully and artistically; I see a shift in her perspective towards this creating project when, on working day five, she tells her partner to “take your time”. She seems to have developed flexibility towards this kind of learning task over time.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: completion and coherence.

Erin has had a holistic vision of her composition from the beginning. She is working toward a specific level of quality which she and Penny have determined. When I tell the children that I will end this project after two more working sessions, she asks to come in at lunchtime to practise, as she feels the piece will not be ready. The composition is complete and coherent. Contextually held together by a loosely-woven story, the piece is also musically coherent: there is a sense of sections, with repeated rhythm patterns and tone colour combinations at various points; echo patterns are used by both performers, which serve to connect ideas between different sound sources; careful attention is given to keeping a steady beat and playing together when this is the intention. The two composers ‘read’ physical and musical as well as word clues from each
other, as they perform. The class enjoys their piece, and this pleases the composers, who feel content with their piece and happy that their 'message' about "red" was understood and enjoyed. Erin writes in her self-evaluation: "I like working with the instruments...everything about doing this was fun".

Through her behaviours and interactions throughout the composing project, Erin demonstrated her awareness of and adherence to, goal-oriented learning. I noticed that she has developed a degree of flexibility over the time of this project, which seemed to me to be a beginning toward an artistic frame of mind with which to approach future aesthetic judgements. Erin is, to me, typical of many mature children; she sparkles with energy and curiosity, is sensitive to expectations adults have for her, and capable of working within the short-term time constraints so often demanded in school. She seemed more influenced by social enculturation than informal musical knowledge. My overall impression of her composition was that it was built more around drama and story than music. Her perspective, however, was that music and text were balanced, and she seemed to need the formalizing aspects of the story-drama framework, with which she is more familiar, to feel aesthetically satisfied with the quality level of the composition. Her maturity was evident, in part, by her ability to notice and attempt to adjust to the stretched time allotment for this project. Her informal musical experiences have given her funded experience about popular music, which she used naturally and imaginatively in her composition. She is a most capable child and has demonstrated her ability to transfer and transform knowledge across curricular boundaries.
Arvin

Arvin, whose birthday is November 8th, is eight years old at the beginning of this study. He is a gregarious, soft-spoken child, with a light-hearted manner and an impish smile. He is chatty and active, and finds it difficult to sit still for lengths of time. He moves quickly and is curious, a tactile person who verbally explores experiences at the same time that he kinesthetically explores them. He is eager to participate in the music project because he likes to explore and experiment with new sounds and sensations. Although he does not have the formal vocabulary to discuss his musical experiences, he has a ‘good’ ear and can (and does) talk about what he hears as he makes sounds, using words that makes sense to him. Results of his experiences and contributions to the composition “Red” are as follows, based on my interpretation of the data collected:

Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *exploration*

Over the first three composing sessions, Arvin engages in random exploration of various drums, electric piano sounds, large standing cymbal, paper clips on various instruments and in various containers, and the performance order of the sound sources at hand at any given time. There seems to be no method, order or intentionally attempted patterns. However, he seems to demonstrate intentional exploration in that his curiosity tends to keep him re-playing any sound source/sound he found, until he had exhausted the tone colour and dynamic possibilities. In composing sessions four and five, he explores new sound sources (soprano glockenspiel, small cymbals, tambourine and old porcelain wiring insulators) in similar ways as he had the other sound sources. Focus on tone colour of sounds themselves continues throughout all eight sessions. This child demonstrates an ongoing affinity for the timbre of individual sounds, particularly those that vibrated a long time and had a complex envelope. He is able to stay focussed over time in his exploration of raw sound, in spite of the noise in the rest of the room.
Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *making choices*.

Arvin chooses large bass drums, snare drums, tambourine, electric piano (vibes or harpsichord tone colour), and unconventional sound sources (paper clips and old electric tubes). His affinity for loud sounds, crescendo patterns and unusual timbres is demonstrated in all of the eight sessions. He explores ever-widening ranges of possible sounds of the sound sources chosen; he shows an interest in 'pushing the envelope' of sounds and seeking new sounds. He chooses a small variety of sound sources to explore and experiment with, right from the first day, and keeps most of these throughout the sessions and in his final piece. He prefers to make his own choices for sounds and sound sources he plans to play himself, rather than discuss them with his partner. He also does not willingly share those he chose with anyone else (e.g., a child from another group wants to use the electric piano as well, and Arvin simply and definitely says “no”).

Although Arvin is clear on his own choices and is not influenced by instruments others are playing, he is aware of other people’s choices; I notice that when he hears an interesting sound from somewhere else in the room, he goes over and listens for awhile. He spends little time on devising and practising particular musical patterns, with the exception of the ‘big finish’ idea of crescendo and accelerando to a cymbal or drum crash. Primarily, he concentrates on the musical elements of tone colour, dynamics and texture. He likes loud sounds; the only sound sources used in all composing sessions and in the final piece were the bass drums and cymbals. In session six, he chooses his sound sources, and concentrates for a time on practising a recurring rhythm on the bass drum:  

\[ \boxed{\begin{array}{c|c|c} & & \\ \hline & & \\ \hline & & \end{array}} \]
Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *shaping structure/meaning*.

For the first three sessions, the overriding idea seems to be finding the right sounds: “I’m not saying any words...just sounds that sound red...” Arvin and his partner discuss their interpretation of “red” and are in agreement that ‘loud’ and ‘big’ and ‘thick’ forms the basis of both structure and meaning of their piece. The search for sound sources and sounds dominates and although there is an extended period of time spent on exploration, there is definite purpose and a sense of holism in their work: “...we love red....red is LOUD....I like all those drums!”.

Musical structure is evident over several days; from day one a search for the perfect ending ensued: “At the end, we’ll have a big, big bang...I like loud”. A greater sense of the whole composition coming together is evident around days four and five through comments made and my observations about pattern and order:

1) Arvin says: “You start with this”; his partner says: “Okay, I’ll say 1,2,3,4”.

2) I observe Arvin starting a rhythm pattern; as he continues to practice it, his partner begins to listen; soon, he is imitating the same pattern, and they take turns echoing each other in a call and response format, taking turns leading and changing the pattern - all this is done without verbal interchange.

3) I observe the ordering of rhythm patterns and sound sources; the phrases “I like red” and “My favourite colour is red” are used to signal changes in patterns or sections.

4) On day seven, I observe that they primarily signal changes to each other with glances or slowing tempo. I have not heard any discussion concerning ‘cues’; it appears that they are intuitively ‘in sync’ with each other. I ask, “How do you decide when to change instruments or patterns?” “We feel it”, Arvin replies, “one of us stops and signals the other”.

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Factor: *enculturation*; Strategy: *completion and coherence*

From day one through day seven, Arvin and his partner work from an idea of “red” based on sound (tone colour and texture, primarily), and extend their musical idea into a composition. Using the musical form of a ‘through-composed’ piece (beginning-middle-end) and a text phrase “I like red” (and variants), their piece evolves into a coherent whole. Starting with strong, loud sounds and using text to signal changes in patterns and sound sources, the composition ‘rambles’ through a middle improvisatory section, to a ‘big finish’ of loud, accented beats and slowing tempo. The composers inform me that the improvisatory section is intentional; a variety of sound sources and patterns are played as each composer wishes, sometimes together, sometimes alone, sometimes echoing or following one another’s lead, etc. It sounds to me, as I listen each time, that the boys wanted this section to be like jazz improvisation (I inferred this from a variety of comments they made about liking jazz, and their attempts to have clearly different sections to their piece). In this section, the big structure is evident, with improvisation the focus, as evidenced by the fact that musical details vary with the moment, the performance, and the composer/performer. During this section, the partners watch and listen to each other, looking for and responding to visual and musical clues. I ask Arvin about this section: “It’s different every single time. I like to make it up...we use all the same instruments but make up new sounds”. In his self evaluation, Arvin writes: “I like everything about my composition...I don’t want to do anything to [change it]....I like working on the composition because of the way you can go wild and make any sound”. For Arvin, informal musical experiences outside of school consist primarily of pre-recorded music heard on television, radio, in the larger community - all primarily pop-rock music. His interest in loud sounds, drums,
unusual sounds and fast-paced, almost frenzied tempos all seem to point to influences from his informal listening experiences with popular music. He seems at ease with 'odd' sounds not normally thought of as musical (e.g. dropping handfuls of paper clips onto a vibrating drumhead or shaking and banging old porcelain wiring insulators), and is undaunted by the loud, big drums, as some other children are. He is captivated by sound, and his ear seems to pick up nuances that he extrapolates and puts in the forefront of his composition.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: exploration.

Arvin is adept at expressing his musical ideas verbally, and once given a musical term, uses it contextually and appropriately. For example, when I ask students to answer this question in their daily journal entry: What is your favourite sound so far, and what do you especially like about it? Arvin writes: “My favourite sound is the paper clips. I like it because of the way it vibrates”. He is able to concentrate over time on a musical task, exploring, synthesizing and transforming sounds, which demonstrates his ‘tuned’ ear and well-developed integration of curiosity, imagination and intellect.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: making choices.

After an interactive discussion/demonstration of the elements of music, I ask composers to tell, as a journal entry, what elements they are concentrating on or featuring, in their pieces. Arvin writes, “We are concentrating on texture...our composition features tempo. We use the elements in our whole composition.” I notice that he does not talk about tone colour - it is almost as if he takes for granted that this is an obvious essential aspect of the composition. I am also surprised that dynamics is not one of the elements written down, as loud sounds are discussed by both Arvin and his partner in working and reflective sessions. Again, I wonder if,
to him, it is such an obvious aspect of the composition, that it does not seem important to write down. I actually hear little effect of tempo - there are no definite changes or repeated attempts to mark a certain tempo. Texture, however, is primary. He is so inspired by the vibrating sounds made by paper clips dropped on the bass drum which was first hit with a mallet, that he suspends the large drum between two chairs, with only the wooden rim touching the edges of the chair, to lengthen the time the head will vibrate. Then, he crawls underneath it, hits the drum from the underside, and lies there listening to the loud, echoing sounds with a huge grin on his face. When the class hears the composition during sharing time, everyone looks and listens a little more carefully at this part, following Arvin's lead...there are lots of smiles from other children as well! In a reflective session I ask why he went under the drum: "You can feel the vibration if you're under there". "Is that why you like to be under it?", I asked. "Yeah!", he answered with a big smile. In spite of his enchantment with the paper clips' sound, in the end, he does not use them. Instead, he substitutes a tambourine on top of the bass drum. I believe this is because the sound of the paper clips is not loud enough to be heard over other sounds, and, therefore, his personal parameters for his composition are not being met. Although he does not discuss this, the choice of tambourine as replacement seems, to my professional judgement, to be one that requires maturity and understanding of the complexity of sound textures.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: shaping structure/meaning.

While sound sources and use of musical elements are determined early on, decisions about form or the holistic shaping of the piece, come later. For the majority of the working sessions, there is no apparent order or patterns of sounds, sound sources, use of repetition and contrast, rhythms, etc. Except for the decision about the ending, Arvin demonstrates little interest in, or
need to, order things. The decision to work on shape seems to just emerge as the partners are practising, sometimes through verbal discussion, but just as often, through visual or musical signals. There is a definite communication between the two boys, and some intuitively understood idea about sharing responsibility for structure decisions. I particularly notice the seriousness with which they worked on perfecting the ending, and the definite intent to have an improvised section, where each composer/performer could play what they wanted, without restriction.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: completion and coherence.

The two composers think of this piece as being complete; it has a definite beginning, middle and end, and the way in which the composers interpret the theme “red” is incorporated through the use of words and musical sounds chosen specifically and intentionally. I would not call it coherent, in that there is little attempt to connect or define sections with commonly used devices like repetition, extension, variation, etc. There is also little concern about audience response; this is an example of the artist interacting with the medium, without attention to external communication. The finished piece is quite long; watching the composition on video, Arvin sits smiling, and when it is over, leans to his partner and whispers, “It’s long”, with what sounds to me like confidence. Other children, when it is over, sigh, and I hear a few comments: “Finally”, and “Too long”.

My first response to Arvin was that he was somewhat less mature, serious and focussed, and according to his classroom teacher, these observations were consistent with her observations of him in other learning situations. I made these decisions based on observations that he was more playful, more self-forgiving, and not as goal-oriented as some of the other children. While he
was curious and motivated to mastery when working with sounds, he was not very interested in the reflective sessions where we dialogued while viewing the video-tapes of him working. During the first few sessions, he showed interest in watching himself and in re-hearing the sounds and talking about what he had found (particularly on the day he found a magnet and used it with the paper clips). Beyond that, or when I asked him questions, he would often become restless or distracted. When I commented on his wandering attention, he re-focussed quickly, but this seemed to me something he did to please me, rather than because of any self-initiated interest. In this regard, then, I think he can be considered less mature that some of the other children who could reflect and verbally interact on a deeper level. He really liked the freedom to construct the piece in the way he wanted, and was satisfied that he had achieved the level of quality that he wanted. He immersed himself eagerly and tirelessly in the process of exploring sound. Whereas other children were aware of time and, in some cases, hurried themselves to ‘finish’, he seemed untouched by time constraints. He was able to ignore outside noise and social expectations, and concentrate fully on making music. As a teacher, I noticed his apparent lack of socialization in regards to this issue of time sensitivity, and yet, as a composer and artist, I applauded his ability to let his art guide him. In his various experiences with music, he had acquired a respect for different media, and had the self-security to follow his intuition into experiences with the medium of sound. As I re-visited the data collected from all the various sources, I began to shift my perceptions about Arvin somewhat. Although he was not able (interested?) in communicating his thoughts or musical decisions to others, and this could be interpreted as being less mature, he was, in fact, responding to the medium, and acting like an artist - just as I had hoped the children would do when I designed the composing project the way I did. I realized with a jolt how ‘teachery’ and behavioural-goal-oriented I had become.
CHAPTER SIX

Interpretation and Discussion

Music discussion

All focus composers possessed funded knowledge (Dewey's term, 1934), made up of facts, empirical experiences, use of imagination and feelings. Socio-cultural factors, general maturity and specific knowledge within a modality (e.g., music or language), are all influenced by, and, in turn, influence, funded knowledge. Like Whitaker (1996), I found Dewey's term useful for delineating elements which make up the term 'knowledge' as used in this study.

In their attempts to make decisions about music, all focus composers engaged in a discovery process. In order to accomplish the task set, they had to both find/define and solve, a problem. The procedures utilized to do this were determined individually by each child, but included collaboration with a partner. As teacher/researcher, I was interested in the decisions and choices made as each composer went about expressing an idea using the medium of music - sound. In order to be able to dig as deeply as possible into the experiences of the student-composers, I asked that they 'think aloud', thereby allowing me (and their peers) into the experience with them. It is important to emphasize that although there were similarities in decisions and procedures, each composer, like each composition, is unique. As researcher, I was looking at the ways the same, particular influencing factors and strategies affected each child, and looking for any recurring patterns which might allow me to draw parallels. However, as well as looking for similarities and any appropriate generalizations, I found, like Gromko in her 1996 study, that "...every individual...worked out an idiosyncratic strategy for accomplishing the tasks" (p. 44). Similarly to a successful composition, a successful study of this type must allow for each individual voice to sound within the polyphonic texture of the whole.
Socially and musically, I was delighted at the children’s ability to solve the musical problem set, and generate an imaginative artistic expression which communicated meaning. The level of complexity and degree of sensitivity used to reach mutually satisfactory compromises in the collaborative effort that kept the integrity of the individual’s ideas as well as a satisfactory level of artistic quality to the whole, was, in many instances, beyond the expectations I had for these student-composers at the onset of this study. I observed dedication and commitment throughout the time of the project, as well as a sense of enjoyment. As each working session came to an end, I would announce “five minute warning” for finishing ideas and cleaning up. Most days it was met with groans of “already?!”, “I’m not ready!” and “I don’t want to stop yet”.

The students’ desire to make a ‘good’ composition was evident in their efforts to revise and polish their creations. DeLorenzo (1989) and Paynter and Aston (1970), among others, suggest that “exploring with sound involves both the ability to produce sound and the capacity to evaluate its expressive importance” (DeLorenzo, p. 196). By ‘thinking in sound’ (Walker, 1992), the composers went beyond the execution of a physical or deductive activity, albeit in different ways; some stayed with one repeating pattern as the unifying factor, some focussed on textures of sounds, some worked holistically with a larger form in mind. Kagan (1971) states that the “...cognitive processes of perception, memory, generation of ideas, evaluation and deduction...form higher-order mental structures that help the child solve difficult problems” (pp. 144-151). All these processes were clearly evident as the composers strove to find and solve the musical ‘problem’ of “Red”. They went about their tasks differently, sometimes leaping into the middle of an idea, then backing up, trying various combinations of musical ideas/sounds. One day a composer would be sure he was finished, and the next, he would discard much of what had
been done before, etc. Gromko (1996) describes the uneven composing process as “stumbling” (p. 45), and although I think that word might make the process sound too unmindful, there is a very real sense of emergent and unknown quantities waiting to present during the creative process that must be acknowledged as important elements of the ‘lived experience’ of composing. The students seemed to have clear ideas about their composition, both as a holistic entity and various separate elements (like rhythm patterns, sound sources, etc.). Although many of their ideas seemed to be in response to informal knowledge grounded in an unconscious process (enculturation), the composers made conscious choices within the boundaries of the task set. In this way, they were able to evoke and shape intuitive and funded knowledge with newly acquired empirical information.

Although student-composers ‘borrowed’ characteristic musical elements from pop music, either verbatim or in altered form, I found, similarly to Davies (1992), that “they do more than just imitate...they abstract from the borrowed song” (p. 46). The synthesis and transformation of musical material resulted in imaginative, expressive, individual renderings of knowledge about structures and content of music absorbed through informal acquisition (enculturation). For example: Tae says, “We can sing the title”, and he and Bobby explore ways to fit their title and core phrase (‘red is the colour, the colour of life’) into a four-count accompaniment pattern ‘strummed’ on the fan, with repetition and accents similar to the rock-pop songs they like; composer Hilde Westerkamp, responding to my question about what she felt made compositions she heard, from similar children to those in this study, imaginative, said, “...in particular the detail of their choices...showed a lot of individuality” (see the Final Comments section of this dissertation for more complete comments).
All composers went about each day’s work with a sense of seriousness, and the desire to polish the composition to a standard of self-determined quality. Most composers in the class, and two of the focus composers, were particularly interested, it seemed to me, in the practise/polish part of the composing process. Students considered more mature (by virtue of their articulation ability and adherence to school behavioural and academic structures), spent less time exploring and more time reaching for a recognizable/objectivised goal. They seemed uncomfortable with the unstructured, unmeasurable part of the composing process that involved exploring, or ‘playing’ in and with, sound. These children have left playing behind, for they consider time spent this way to be wasted: Tae’s statement that “we haven’t done anything yet” referred to time spent talking and thinking and randomly exploring sounds. I think this attitude is symptomatic of the prevailing educational view that has lost sight of Bruner’s invaluable recognition that play is children’s work. However, this is the ‘teacher’ in me coming out. As the researcher, I acknowledge each individual’s unique way of looking at and functioning in, his/her various worlds, school being one. Each of the focus composers seemed to be comfortable with the way he/she progressed through the task set. It remains to be seen in future studies if experiences with similar tasks will result in different procedures and/or perspectives by these student-composers.

This study shows a correlation between the complexity and variety of musical strategies and the socio-cultural factors of enculturation and maturity in decision-making on composing with select, untrained eight year olds. The level of musical quality at which student composers expressed satisfaction with their compositions seemed dependent on these factors and strategies.
For teachers, implications involve awareness of the possible impact of informal learning on students’ musical choices. In many school settings, it has been assumed that without formal training, children have little or none of the musical knowledge necessary to be able to compose. It has also been assumed in some school settings, that only children with some innate ability (or talent) should have the opportunity to engage in music activities in depth and over time. Although innate musical ability is an asset to imagination and creating, it seems clear that all of these children had some (encultured) sense of quality and a desire to produce worthy artistic efforts. General maturity, as seen in this study, seems to function much the same way as in other curriculum areas - just as it facilitates the articulation and synthesis in the artistic expressions in music, so it seems to facilitate expression in other pedagogical tasks. Teachers can, I think, expect just as high a level of quality in music expressions as those in other curriculum areas where creating is an intrinsic part (creative writing, drama and theatre, Social Studies research projects, etc.). I, like Davies (1992), Wiggins (1992), Gamble (1984) and Barrett (1996), among others, found that children of this age and experience are capable of both conscious composition and of greater understanding and depth of expression than some of the research literature which describes developmental stages (e.g., Piaget, 1976; Swanwick and Tillman, 1986; Kratus, 1994) has previously led us to believe. It is important for teachers to provide challenges for children which will allow them to express themselves to their capacity; underestimating children’s abilities can result in an “…impoverished curriculum [which] may ‘de-skill’ children” rather than stretch them” (Davies, 1992, 47).

Setting up this study as an open-ended task with a fluid result allowed composers to have no constraints on either ‘what’ they did or ‘how’ they went about doing it. Neither technical
competence nor notation were issues of importance for these student-composers or their peer audience. None of the children seemed particularly concerned, either, with traditional use of sound sources: for example, when Tae strummed a bamboo fan like a guitar, everyone accepted it, because both visually and aurally, it approximated the 'real thing' and 'worked' in the context of his composition. The traditional expectations for music literacy were not an issue for me, as teacher. I was interested in the ways the composers used and transformed sound and musical elements to convey intent. Decisions about levels of quality seemed, for the most part, to be influenced by popular music, as evidenced by approximations and borrowings from that style: e.g., four beat segments; accented, steady beat; simple, repeated rhythm patterns; short, repeated melodic sequences; the idea of the 'big finish' with a crescendo, accents and stretched out last beats; quick tempi; and the intertwining of text/lyrics with music. Similar findings for children in similar situations to those in this study by Davies (1992), Dowling (1988), and Barrett (1996, 44 &56), make reference to children's "innate understanding of the function of formal procedures...a number of compositions...in which a considerable grasp of structure and form was displayed, were produced by children with little musical experience or training". These studies, mine included, support Sloboda's (1985) statements about enculturated learning as a base for funded knowledge in children of this age.

This study shows that untrained children of this age possess musical knowledge, and teachers should encourage children to utilize both their funded experience and intuitions as they engage in making and reflecting upon music. Teachers need to be prepared to construct opportunities for children to define, describe and solve their own artistic problems and demonstrate their knowledge in ways that include a variety of expressive media. The most common method of
instruction and communication in schools is by words, primarily in written form. Many researchers, however, write about the limitations of this mode of expression. Polanyi wrote about ‘tacit knowing’ (1958); Gromko (1996) writes in her observations from a composing study with children, that “...language seemed to follow understanding” (p. 45), and gives an example of a dialogue which illustrates “the futility of language as an accurate reflection of understanding” (Gromko, 1996, p. 45); Wittgenstein is quoted in Barrett (1996) as writing, “There are...things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest...they are what is mystical” (p. 59), and, in a study based on a listening task, Madsen, Brittin and Capparella-Sheldon (1993) comment that children displayed “inadequate verbal expression to convey experience” (p. 58).

These researchers, among others, acknowledge that what is ‘known’ can be demonstrated before it can be explained. Teachers may want to rethink what traditionally passes for ‘literacy’ in the music classroom as they explore artistic (eloquent, expressive) decision-making, musical understanding, and aesthetic awareness of the essence of the medium at what Webster (1987) describes as the “deepest levels of feelingful response” (p. 163).
Interlude #6

Reflections on the Transition: from composing music to composing stories

“I am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story, and this must be sufficient...”

(Elie Wiesel telling a story about a Rabbi speaking to God about his doubts in trying to follow in the footsteps of a celebrated Rabbi, in Keen, 1990, “To a Dancing God”)

I may also be speaking to ‘higher’ beings, but I also have nothing more to offer than to tell the story...about narratives in sound and in words........

- The majority of the kids express disappointment when the task shifts from music to story composing. Several beg to add drama (others overhear and add their voices) - I capitulate (emergent methodology!) and agree to the last story (#3) having drama, music, etc. included as they wish.

- Many tell me it’s easier to compose stories than it was to compose music: “It’s easier to do a story - not so many things to worry about”; “It’s just words and sentences and ideas”. Some kids can’t articulate why, but they agree it’s easier. I suspect familiarity with the medium is a factor...when I ask “Could it be easier because you’re used to working with words?”, several answer “Yes”.

- Observing them working, it seems there are fewer disagreements and that the process, generally, is smoother. Also, the compositions take less time to complete. Again, I wonder if this is due in part to familiarity with the medium as well as previous practice in constructing story form and writing stories via the ‘process writing’ format of drafting, editing, polishing, etc.
• I originally expected aural music composition to parallel oral storying, but the patterning regarding story creating is too strong for the kids - they are so uncomfortable when I ask them to put pencil and paper away, I let them decide whether to write or tell their stories. They tell me they feel more secure with writing ideas down because they can remember better and work on them more easily; one group of three tries storytelling - the orator of this group says he feels freer just telling and likes to be able to change (improvise) bits of the story as he tells it. His group supports his doing this; he is, naturally, a good storyteller (humorous, giving detailed description, animated in his delivery).

• There are different time frames for stories - we work in the student’s home room where there are no interruptions of classes coming and going every 40 minutes; most days we work 45-60 minutes. I stop when I sense they’ve had enough, or when someone tells me they are ready to quit for the day. (Somehow, that extra 15+ minutes each working session makes all the difference!)

• The kids continue to use the outside spaces to work: I have wonderful images captured in my mind’s eye - Pat and James sitting on chairs in the forest next to the creek writing and reading their story out loud to the accompaniment of the water; a big, brass cymbal suspended on a thick tree branch, which, when struck, reverberates through the entire forest behind the classroom, echoing for what seems like minutes; Ben, Dan and Anthony with sticks and cavemen noises standing on the huge fallen tree, acting out their caveman story; Paige wandering through the trees “looking for the perfect spot”, with Shareefa following and complaining that “you keep moving”.

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I didn’t videotape their stories-in-progress because they didn’t want me to - they didn’t want to share the process of making the stories with the camera, nor did they want to share with their peers in in-process presentations. I was surprised, as they were so willing to share their music as it evolved, and didn’t seem to care, for the most part, that I ‘watched’ and recorded them working. Typical comments were: “Let’s wait ‘til it’s done”; “There’s no point in sharing”; “No, I don’t want to share yet”.

I don’t see how I can use the same structure, or even approach, to interpret the data from the stories, as they were conceived and constructed from different perspectives, and I have different and less data.....if I had been successful in having them TELL stories, or, perhaps, did creative storydrama, the processes of composing in two different mediums might have yielded more easily paralleled data. And yet, didn’t they all still explore, make choices, shape structure and meaning and attempt to complete a coherent product????? Aren’t all creative endeavours similar in these procedures?? Check it out.....
CHAPTER SEVEN

Methodology and Design: Story Composing

After constructing music compositions, the children in this study were given the task of ‘composing’ stories. Although this term is not as commonly thought of for story creating as for music, I feel it is appropriate for the purposes of this study. I define composing with language as Chapman (1997) uses it: “composing...refer[s] to the process of construction of meaning...we can compose through talk, movement, music, or drawing as well as in writing” (p. 5). My intent was for students to use narrative through story composing in the same way they had used narrative in music - to express individual ideas. These generative gestures would utilize intellect and imagination acting together through personal artistic expressions and would serve as vehicles for both teaching and learning. According to Daiute (1989), “Children elaborate their emotional and cognitive understandings and construct their own models of how the world works” (p. 3).

I was looking forward to this part of the study, because I had long wanted to investigate whether processes used in creating in one modality would also manifest in another. I anticipated that I would observe similar or parallel procedures and processes, and that I would be able to interpret data collected using the framework I had devised for the music compositions.

This portion of the study was designed to continue the same format of working and sharing sessions, reflective formative journal entries and summative self evaluations by all composers, and my dual role of teacher/researcher. In this way, types of data and means of collection would be the same throughout the study.
As the study unfolded, I was surprised that things did not go as I had planned:

a) I met with immediate resistance to shifting from music to story making - the children were not as excited as I had thought they would be. (From my field notes of May 7: they want to act out the stories, use drums for effects, use props and add music - it's hard for me to explain the boundaries...I appease them by telling them that for the last story (#3) they can include whatever mediums they want);

b) many students refused to be video-taped in-process, and even those that agreed seemed far less enthusiastic about directing their voices/faces toward the camera and/or ignoring it - it was no longer a welcome 'partner' nor was it 'invisible' - rather, it seemed somehow to have become a 'critic'; none of the volunteer pairs (focus-composers) wanted to have reflective sessions as they had in music, where they viewed themselves working and discussed the session with their partner and me (as researcher). When asked, some said it was a waste of time, and those that did agree to a reflective session or two seemed restless, answered my questions with short, often vague replies, did not ask questions of their own, and generally showed little or no interest in watching themselves. The resistance to process sharing extended, for some, to sharing days, where classmates gave 'stars' and 'wishes', acting as peer critics.

This change in attitude had me confused, and it seemed, therefore, that these unexpected events were important to focus on when I came to interpreting this portion of the study. Three key areas emerged for scrutiny:

- starting point, or baseline of student-composers
- attitude issues: risk, trust, privacy, voice
Starting Point, or Baseline of Student-composers

I assumed that the students would be at the same developmental and ability base in both music and language when it came to creating in that modality. In fact, this was not the case. Whereas the students in this study could be considered untrained in music, by grade three, they had acquired knowledge about composing with language, both formally in school and informally through socio-cultural means. They had been taught writing craft through process writing, an approach which combines meaning making and mechanics, whereby “skills [are] taught as students need them, in the context of their own writing, and as aids to making and communicating meaning...” (Chapman, 1997, p. 157). Teachers using this approach help students learn about setting, characters, action, descriptive words, beginning-middle-end, conflict, resolution, etc. and how to develop their ideas within the framework of brainstorming/webbing, drafting, editing and polishing, to create a ‘good copy’ which fulfills the structural demands as well as the child’s original, imaginative ideas. As well, they are taught the mechanics of grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. In this class, the students developed many of their language skills through writing in a variety of genres, narrative among them. According to my colleague, the children’s classroom teacher, she had spent considerable time teaching the aforementioned elements of writing and language within the process writing format on an ongoing basis since September; she was confident that all the children in this class knew, and were able to use, language/writing skills taught within the format of process writing in their story composing. They were, in other words, ‘trained’ to an acceptable standard based on their age and stage at school.
My criteria for their stories were similar to those for music composing: Using a combination of previous knowledge about constructing stories from school and informal experiences reading, listening and writing, as well as imagination, the students would construct a story which met their self-described standard of quality, and whose intended meanings could be communicated to and understood by an audience of peers and myself. Since all participant student-composers were familiar with the form and structure of story writing, having to follow this format and meet my criteria was easy for them. They did not question my directions, nor did they debate or seem threatened in any way. (Field notes, May 7: Tae tells me it’s easier to do a story, because there are fewer things to worry about than in music composing; his partner agrees “it’s just words, sentences and ideas”; no problem for them). Most others also thought composing with language was easier than composing with sound (music).

Content issues were slightly more problematic, partly because I attempted to give them specific topic/titles as I had done with music, and some found this inhibiting: “I prefer to choose my own topics”. I think it is possible that because they were used to deciding on their own topics when they wrote stories, their expectations made it difficult to accept a change in the pattern set for creative writing activities. Some found it easy to adjust: “Blue’s easy because there is lots of topics” (journal entry); many found it difficult: “Blue is difficult because when we composed music on “red” I had enough trouble and writing a story on blue? Impossible!”(journal entry); “Blue is difficult because you have too many things and you don’t know how to put them in”(journal entry). For others, accepting a topic for the first story was fine, but they became so enmeshed in their own stories that they began to take on lives of their own...as the character’s voices became louder, the authors found it more difficult to leave them. For example, two boys
found the remains of a coconut shell I had brought to school for a sound source, and played around with it for some time. Suddenly, they were laughing and calling “Mr. Coconut Head” and talking ‘through’ the coconut shell like ventriloquists. They became so attached to this character and others that evolved in their story, that each successive story became more complex and ‘real’ to them and to the rest of the class as well - (one of the characters was called Samuel Fudge, and one week-end the boys got together and made fudge for everyone to share as they read us their latest installment, story #3); another composing pair had written a mystery for story #1, and said, “We don’t want to do blue [story #2’s topic]- it doesn’t fit into our mystery”. This pair also continued their original story through ‘installment’ #3.

The level of confidence they seemed to have at the onset (and throughout) the story component of the study was different than what I observed during the music composing. They were less needy of my input, and more eager to proceed on their own. They felt able to contradict my ideas/suggestions, as some had with the topic choices, and seemed to interact with me more as equals engaging in the same activity than teacher and students in a hierarchy of learning. I had tried to create a classroom atmosphere free of hierarchical roles (as discussed in an earlier section of this paper), and was pleased to see these children able to function responsibly and creatively in this context. Cowie (1989) has found in her research that this is a productive relationship for students and teacher in a working situation: “Perhaps the most important aspect of the adult’s role...lies in the capacity to listen to what children have to say about writing...it is surely by listening to them...that we can best help them to develop a voice and a sense that what they have to say matters” (p. 102). The struggle for the teacher/adult in such a setting is, of course, to find the right balance between listening and teaching; it is the
facilitation of learning that taxes the sensitivity, intelligence and creativity of the adult to help her students reach for and utilize the potential in a situation and themselves. Massiello (1994) finds this same dilemma in teaching university students; she sees herself faced with a “commitment that seems contradictory...nurturing the creative writer while instructing the college-essay writer” (p. 213).

Another surprise, and difference between the music and language portions of this study, was the issue of notating. I had excluded this aspect of composing from the music part in order to free the students from possible constraints involved with skills and knowledge about musical notation. My intent was for them to tell their stories, just as they had ‘told’ their musical stories, through aural/oral performance, to continue my probe into the cognitive processes involved in composing. However, whereas there had been no difficulty in this procedure for music composing, I found that the children could not create stories without pencils and paper. Repeated entreaties and discussion about pros and cons of telling vs. writing not withstanding, they felt more secure writing their stories. Although Daiute (1989a) stresses that as long as there is conversation (interactive talk) this “situates the writing in an oral context” (p. 3), I found that neither the process nor the product were the same. The three groups that chose to tell the final version of their story, tended to concentrate on the ‘improvisation’ aspect. Their stories were not constructed in the same way as the written ones in regard to editing and polishing (to attain the goal of a ‘repeatable’ story -ie. composition). In fact, several comments from the storytellers mentioned the fact that each time they told the story it was deliberately different. Upon reflection, it seems possible that the language training the children had received taught them to think and write with language simultaneously, as naturally intertwined parts of the single process
of story creation. Chapman (1997), among others, thinks of writing in broader terms than just notating one’s thoughts: “In this book, ‘writing’ always refers to the integration of composing...the process of the construction of meaning...and encoding...the recording of ideas on the page in written symbols” (p. 5). In retrospect, I wonder what the results would have been if I had instructed the children to create storydrama, and stressed the acting out component. I have plans for future research which includes such a study.

It is now clear to me that these students came to both creating situations with very different starting baselines, and my biggest surprise was that I did not foresee this.

**Attitude Issues: risk, trust, privacy, voice**

During music composing, all students were eager to share ideas, compositions-in-progress, new sounds or patterns discovered. Exploratory and process events were made public, and critical dialogue was easily accomplished. In the storying part of the composing project, the opposite was true from the beginning: students refused to be video-taped as they were working (I came upon one pair on the first working day who had barricaded themselves behind books and music stands so the camera could not see them talking and writing, and they were whispering so they could not be heard); many refused to share their stories until they were finished; when stories were shared, composers defended themselves against the ‘wishes’ of their peers in a different manner than before; tone of voice made it seem as if some students were ‘on the defensive’ rather than making reasonable comments about why they disagreed with the critical comments offered: comments like “We just did it”, or “We don’t care, we want it like this” were heard. Students also resisted my input: I told one group that their story was difficult to follow and that I felt there were ‘bridges’ missing...”Can you work on it some more?” I asked. “No”, they said, “We like it the way it is”. “What if the audience misses some of the ideas because the
connections aren't clear?” I asked. “Too bad”, said one child; “I don’t care”, said the partner.

I was quite frustrated at this point. It was going to be a struggle to collect process data, and as researcher, I began to panic - what if I don’t have any data?! I was so wrapped up in my disappointments, I could only keep asking the students, “Why not?” “What’s wrong?” The students would only shrug their shoulders, or shake their heads, or say, “I don’t want to”. It was only months later when I re-visited the data looking to interpret, that I realized that if I could have stepped out of my biases a little bit and let the teacher part of me have a look around, I might have realized that the problem was one involving trust, fear and risk. I was astounded at this possibility - in my room? Never! Yet, these same children who I knew well as open, sharing, curious and outgoing, were now retreating, private, closed. Lensmire (1994a), in When Children Write, talks about trust as a big issue for children, and their differentiating between peers and teacher when it comes to risking hearing critical comments: “[John] trusts teachers as audiences for his texts because they brought more knowledge and patience than peers to his texts and to him” (pp. 17-18). My students, however, did not seem to differentiate; whether it was a classmate or me, most wanted to finish their stories to a level of quality with which they were satisfied before sharing: “Wait ‘til we’re done, there’s no point in sharing now”; “I/we don’t want to share yet” (field notes, June 10).

Reflecting on this difference in attitude, and the appearance of fear in the guise of the desire for privacy, I wonder what the connection is between learning about writing and striving for excellence through the editing process has caused these children to retreat into themselves. (I am assuming there is one because I did not see this response in the music composing portion of this study). Another potentially important issue for future research.

This issue of privacy and risk/trust brings another emergent question to mind: the
relationships between the artist and medium and the artist and audience - different children placed different levels of importance on the audience response to their composition, and different kinds of intensity and immersion towards the medium used. In writing stories, most student-composers seemed more aware of the audience and placed more importance on either defending their work in front of others, or, in seeking their approval. Finding one’s place as artist in relationship to socio-cultural expectations is an ongoing dilemma for artists working in all mediums. These student-composers seemed to intuitively reach for some sort of balance, with which they felt comfortable, between their own creative voice and others’ judgement.

Lensmire (1994a) describes this same quandary in his work teaching writing to young children. “This conflict is visible in my field notes...I am worried that John will lose his creativity and uniqueness if he bends his work too much to peer audiences...writing is risky...we risk exposing ourselves and our work to criticism when we share it with others. On the other hand, audiences are sources of support...”(pp. 88-89).

I also have the same concern about adult audiences as Lensmire does about peer audiences; teachers, too, must be careful to facilitate the child’s voice and instruct on a ‘need-to-know’ basis, rather than ‘lead’ or put adult criteria to a child’s experience.

Collaboration

Collaboration was an essential part of this study in order for me (as researcher) to access the student-composer’s cognitive and creative processes as they explored, discovered, made choices, edited and polished their stories. Talk is a natural component of collaboration (Daiute and Dalton, 1988, Daiute, 1989, D’Arcy, 1989, Auker, 1991, Dyson, 1992). It was through observation and recording their interactive dialogues (think-alouds, Schon, 1983; exploratory talk, Auker, 1991), that I was able to enter into the experience of ‘hearing’ their thoughts.
I set the composers an open-ended task with a ‘fluid product’ (Baker-Sennett, Matusov, & Rogoff, 1992, 95), just as in the music task. The student-composers were encouraged to keep the same partner they had had while composing music. Once again, I was surprised at the overwhelming sureness of their decision to disagree with me: all except one pair told me they would work better with new partners, and they quickly and with a minimum of discussion, regrouped. And, once again, they were right in their judgements, for the storying part of the study moved along more quickly (the time to complete each story was two sessions, whereas music compositions took four, six and seven, respectively), and with fewer arguments than the music part. Why? I ask myself...are they now used to the procedures? Have they weeded out the problematic partnerships?...are they experienced at collaborating on writing and know whom they work with best? When I asked students, their answers were vague and evasive. Perhaps their reluctance is connected to this whole privacy/trust issue that has arisen?? I did not learn the reason(s) why they chose their current partner, but I did find out that my perceptions about how they work are correct: I asked one pair how come they have finished their story so quickly (one day) and was told, “We work well together, we have the same ideas. We write lots of stories and read lots of books”.

By revisiting and reflecting on this data, I realized that the kind and amount of data, as well as the knowledge/experience baseline of the participants, were different in the two composing modalities. I wondered if I would be able to interpret the storying processes by breaking down the available data within the same framework categories for both language and music compositions. However, by looking at the data: written rough drafts; field notes of observations/listenings to their talk as the student-composers worked; the in-process videotapes I did manage to get as well as the videotapes and ‘good’ written copies of the stories; and student
self and peer evaluations, it was evident that they were influenced by the same socio-cultural factors and the same composing strategies when creating in both modalities. Their attitudes about trust, risk, privacy, were all directly attributable in part, to enculturated learning about quality and judgements in writing text. Their abilities in use of grammar, syntax, depth of characterization, complexity of plot, etc., all pointed to maturity as a factor in story building. While enculturation and maturity were influencing factors in the story composing, just as they were in the music composing, the content and level of decisions and judgements based on these influences were different in both parts of this study. The student-composers also used the same strategies (albeit different labels) for creating music and story compositions: they explored (brainstormed), made choices (drafts), shaped structure and meaning (edited), and completed a coherent product (polished a good copy). Once again, however, they approached these procedures with different attitudes, particularly in regard to interaction with others during the process. Left alone with the medium, the behaviours and decisions were remarkably similar, but the intertwining relationship between the influencing socio-cultural factors and composer had a different degree and kind of impact on the creative process in the two composing portions of this study.

In the music composing segment of this study, I concentrated on the two important socio-cultural factors of enculturation and general maturity. There was, however, one more potentially influential factor that I felt needed consideration, but did not apply in that situation - training. However, this factor became important in the language portion of this study, as these students could be considered 'trained' in language learning appropriate to their age and school grade. Training, then, was added to the influencing socio-cultural factors in the interpretation of language composing. Not only had the students spent concentrated on-going time learning to
write with pencil and paper, but they had had this learning reinforced during computer time twice each week, when 'good copies' of stories were written and printed. In addition, creative writing instruction was also a part of the curriculum in grades one and two. I think that the amount of training in language and creative writing accounts, in large part, for the difference in approach, attitude, and baseline between the composing in music and language.

At the end of this study, I asked the student-composers if they thought music and story composing were the same or different, and if so, why or why not? and, what made a 'good' story or music composition. Here are some of their responses, many of which were repeated by several students:

- Stories and music are the same because sometimes they can both tell a story.
- I think a good music composition has texture.
- A good story has adventures.
- Music and stories don't both have words all the time. They can both have words.
- A story has more talking than music.
- A good story has a beginning-middle-end. A good music composition has rhythm and melody.
- Good tempo and beat makes a good music composition.
- Lots of action makes a good story.
- The same thing about composing music and writing a story are the words and the thinking.
- A good music composition has lots of music, rhythm, texture and tempo.
- A good story has detail and lots of action or excitement.
- They both have voice and people in them...they are different because stories have no music.
- Music and stories are different because music has instruments.
- Good tempo or good rhythm makes a good composition.
• Good descriptive words makes a good story.

The comments made by these student-composers seem to express understanding of the complexity of composing in each modality. The children have a sense of similarities and differences, as well as an awareness of quality, in each area. Through discussion and critiquing, as well as the making of their compositions, they demonstrate an understanding that there are points of interrelation between these modalities: they have a natural tendency to ‘act out’ or add sounds to their stories, and/or add words to their music. Although experts in language research tell us that there is a hierarchy of language learning, from dramatic play to pictorial representation through to the symbol system of words (Dyson, 1986a, 1986b, 1989; Cowie, 1989, Chapman, 1997), I see creative language use from a slightly different perspective. I think children should be encouraged to continue blending the various artistic forms of language, drama, music and visual art in their generative expressions, rather than focussing on only the one which most teachers feel is at the top of the hierarchy - written language.

Methodology for this study: story composition

Composing with language includes a variety of abilities and understandings. As with music, it is a complex interweaving of artistic, intellectual, physical and emotional components within a social context. According to Dyson (1989), a child composing with language engages in a process which includes the following:

1) the use of symbols (kind, order, style, etc.) reflects the individual’s sense of self, place in the community, and perspective about the wider world;

2) reflection and synthesis of experience and the developing ability to both embed (integrate) and disembend (string together) experience and the language used to communicate those
experiences;

3) the acquisition and use of functional knowledge before formal knowledge;

4) interaction between the composer and audience and composer and other composers, creating a loop which becomes a catalyst for continuing dialogue and learning;

5) involvement in various media: one artistic medium seems to be strengthened by involvement in others, as worlds discovered in one area are utilized in another as the children “negotiate sense” (Dyson, 1992, p. 28);

6) ability development and deepening knowledge which occurs over time as more experiences take place;

7) general developmental acquisitions, which, over time, are seen through particular behaviours:
   • ability to differentiate between symbol systems, modalities and mediums, in order to extract elements for both separate use and integration with other elements;
   • ability to edit and make judgements about appropriateness and quality;
   • ability to choose the appropriate symbol system(s) to communicate desired ideas;
   • ability to use ideas from imaginary and real worlds;
   • ability to use structural, syntactical and grammatical aspects correctly;
   • ability to recognize that repetition, variation and elaboration are common features in subsequent stories (can create sequels).

There are a variety of storying structures that children engage in, in school. I chose narrative for the following reasons: it is commonly used and children are familiar with it; it is an extension of the self (Chapman, 1997); I felt it would provide a relevant context from which to glean rich detailed data on cognitive processes during creating. Chapman (1997) lists the “central features
of narrative that elementary students can learn about:

- introduction: character and setting (time and place);
- complicating action or problems;
- attempts at resolving the problem;
- closure or resolution.” (p. 225).

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the children learned and could use all of these things, albeit to different degrees.

Some of these elements parallel or are similar to those used in composing with music, therefore, commonalities in both processes are evident. Looking specifically at data from the language composition segment of this dissertation project, I wondered if the student-composers had engaged in similar compositional strategies in both modalities. Intuitively, I felt that creating in either modality might include the four strategies I had uncovered in music. In looking and re-looking at the language data, I decided that the composing procedures were similar, although there are specifics inherent to each modality that are obviously different (e.g. vocabulary, and certain component parts). I assigned descriptive labels of the strategies in both modalities as follows:

Figure 2. Comparison of Strategies in Composing in Music and in Language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 exploration</td>
<td>brainstorming, webbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 making choices</td>
<td>making drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 shaping structure/meaning</td>
<td>editing/revising for structure/meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 coherent, complete composition</td>
<td>coherent, complete composition (oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘good copy’ (written)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) exploration: brainstorming, webbing:

Brainstorming and webbing are two exploratory tools commonly used in creative writing activities. Brainstorming is a random act of exploration, whereby participants try to name as many things as possible that can be associated with a topic or title. Choice, categorization, etc., all come at a later time. Webbing is one of the strategies used to organize thinking around a topic. It is intentional exploration, whereby a visual, pictorial diagram of sorts is created showing elements or aspects of a topic in their relationships (things that go together are connected by lines or encircled), and is advocated by Chapman (1997), among others for its versatility and utility: “I prefer a story web because it can be used as a general template and filled in with specifics from a story. I also like the flexibility of the story web because if can be adapted to suit different types of narrative...”(p. 227). These are two samples of commonly used exploratory devices in language that parallel random and intentional exploration with sound and sound sources, various musical devices and patterns, etc. in music.

2) making choices: making drafts

Drafting, in creative writing, is the choosing and roughing-out of ideas. It includes some detail, but primarily concentrates on the ‘big picture’, trying to get a sense of the whole shape, general storyline, setting, characterizations, etc. The drafting stage in the writing/storying process usually takes the bulk of the time and effort, starting with very ‘rough’ drafts, and proceeding through an editing process that refines as well as details, the story ideas. In music composing, making choices is the narrowing down part of the process, making decisions about
musical elements, sounds, etc., which will be combined and, as in the story process, edited.

3) shaping structure and meaning: editing/revising for structure/meaning

This strategy is a continuation of sorts of the choice/draft procedure. Editing is different in each modality, but the purpose is the same - to give a sense of the whole as well as detail parts. This part of the process, in both modalities, often involves re-visiting the exploration strategies, as well as re-visioning choice and drafting procedures. Polishing or practising (speaking, playing, writing), takes place at this point as well, once the choices and draft details are determined and edited to the best of the composer’s ability.

4) Coherence/completion: ‘good copy’/final draft

This strategy involves reaching the goal set for a comprehensive, imaginative, quality expression in the specified modality. Criteria will be different in each modality, obviously, and may also vary from composer to composer, and circumstance to circumstance within one modality. This ‘goal’ involves the product, whereas the other strategies are primarily concerned with process. The goal of creating recognizable expression which meets and communicates predetermined goals is the same in composing across modalities.

I planned to use these four strategies from music to interpret language compositions as I noticed, taking a cursory look at the data, that student-composers had engaged in these procedures to compose their stories, just as they had engaged in the parallel ones to compose their music. Naturally, I next began to wonder if the same socio-cultural factors that influenced choices made in music composition would influence choices made in language composition. Investigation of those same factors used in the music segment of this study resulted in the
following information and decisions.

**Enculturation and Language**

Learning to use language for oral and written purposes is contextual, like all other learning; it is one way people make sense of their various social ‘worlds’ (Dyson, 1992, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978, Bakhtin, 1981). Similar to the informal acquisition of knowledge in music, Chapman (1997) writes that “much of language and literacy awareness occurs through independent explorations of reading and writing. Krasher and Terrell (1983) refer to this as acquisition, a subconscious process on the part of the child, without formal teaching...as children participate in their social worlds, they come to understand...that talk can be written down and that talking and writing are similar in many ways” (p. 31). *Acquisition*, as referred to by Chapman, and Krasher and Terrell, is parallel to Sloboda’s idea of *enculturation* (detailed earlier in this thesis). Both processes are utilized by children to absorb knowledge of various kinds from the social contexts of their lives, without formal training or teaching.

Acquired, or enculturated learning involves different knowledge from different sources in different modalities. Similarly to evidence found in music research for the influence of socio-cultural information (Sloboda, 1985, Auh, 1997), findings in language research also recognize the powerful and pervasive role socio-cultural influences, in the form of popular media and interactions with other people, play in the content, action, characterization and dialogue of children’s stories. “Stories reflect...the contexts in which [they] have lived [their] ‘socially charged life’ (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293)...Some of that ‘taste’ comes from the medium itself - a television screen, a cartoon strip, a library book - and from the voices of peers, teachers, parents,
and other adults that may surround both medium and message” (Dyson, 1997, pp. 113-114). Children absorb the 'rules' for speaking writing and behaving, of the socio-cultural group(s) in which they take part, and use a variety of forms to explore both these conventions as well as their boundaries. In language, Cowie’s (1989) research “confirms the observations of Wolf and her colleagues (1988) that children seem to experiment with a range of symbol systems which they possess and that the process is one of active exploration rather than imitation” (p. 88). Two of the most powerful of those systems, documented in many studies over time, are narrative and dramatic play. The “narrative mode is one in which children spontaneously engage from a very early age, writes Cowie (1989, 87). As Upitis (1992) and Sutton-Smith (1988), among others, have agreed, telling stories is one of the most natural urges humans have. It is a means of telling others who we are, and finding our place within a community. It lets a composer ‘play’ with fantastical possibilities, to find either a safe harbour creating within acceptable and known boundaries, or to totter on the edge of peril.

‘Story’ can be expressed in a variety of ways. Student-composers in this study told their stories in music as well as with language. According to Cowie (1989), narrative structure can be seen, also, in young children’s dramatic play: “...conventions mark their narrative: these include formal beginnings, formal endings...use of tenses and the device of dialogue...use of a specific story voice...stock characters and events” (pp. 92, 94). Smith (1984) writes that fantasy and socio-dramatic play that children engage in can be thought of as precursors of story telling and writing that they create when they are older and have more control over mechanics, structure, and style of the medium. Story and drama depict familiar social roles or activities, a moral sense or evidence of empathy, and the content often comes from movies, T.V., or known stories/books.

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In the stories student-composers in this study created, influences from community, media, family, and literature, were evident in the characters, storyline, and dialogue used.

Although some of the storytelling/writing young children engage in is playful and fantastical and continues to be a rich source of ideas when the school-age child is maturationally into a different stage, reality issues (concerns, fears, hopes), are also sources of inspiration for both content and characters (Sutton-Smith, 1988, Cowie, 1989, Egan 1992). Developing telling/writing skills include the abilities to synthesize, transform and articulate ideas, giving 'voice' to issues that are important to the individual composer.

**General Maturity**

The opportunity of 'giving voice' is one of the gifts teachers can give their students through creative telling/writing experiences. Appropriate use of vocabulary, articulation, description, grammar and syntax are some of the elements of story and language use that children learn over time. As with music composing, more mature students express themselves better with words. In much the same way as we had looked at the students in this study and delineated criteria for maturity in music, the classroom teacher and I categorized the children as more or less mature based on their abilities to do the following:

a) appropriately use storying structures as taught in the Writing Process, syntax, and grammar;

b) articulate their own story ideas/needs using words and gesture; express themselves in written form (this was an emergent criterion; it was not part of my original intent);

c) self-critique; articulate contributory comments to peers and/or dialogue about critical comments made to one as composer/reader, thereby demonstrating understanding of story
elements and aesthetic judgements;

d) synthesize and transform knowledge; express imagination, feelings and ideas in words to create cogent stories with which the composer felt satisfied his/her self-described goals for a ‘good’ story;
e) concentrate physically and mentally on the task at hand, during working, reflection and sharing sessions.

Training

Training in language, according to Chapman (1997) and Dyson (1989) among others, includes “teaching that involves explanations and analysis...explicit attention to a particular aspect...or providing an explanation about how and why...Krasher and Terrell (1983) refer to this process as learning” (Chapman, 1997, p. 31). Learning, in language, involves constant and ongoing exposure to reading, speaking and writing, throughout the school day. Learning in language blurs across curricular lines; it does not only take place in the time of day set aside for language skills or creative writing activities. Chapman (1997) refers to this broad-based learning as ‘literacy development, and says that learning to write is part of ‘emergent literacy’ (p. 23). Obviously, informal or acquired/inculturated ‘learning’ continues even once the child is in school, and knowledge acquired in this way becomes part of the literacy development of the person.

According to Chapman (1997), one must be aware that there are “individual differences among children who vary in their learning styles, abilities and rate of development...[as well as] cultural...diversity in children’s writing in different contexts...” (p. 24). She states that generally, however, children between the ages of seven and nine can be called ‘developing’ writers and
display the following behaviours:

1) enjoyment in writing and sharing that writing with others in a beginning awareness of audience;

2) increasing ability to share own writing and respond to others’ writing;

3) may combine drawing with writing but writing can stand alone to convey meaning;

4) begin with understanding of writing as ‘ideas written down’;

5) increasing knowledge of: letter/sound relationships; common spelling patterns; expanding range of genres; writing vocabulary;

6) produces increasingly conventional writing which includes: standard spelling; punctuation; writing from left to right.

7) produces stories/writing that contain: connected ideas that make sense; two or more characters; at least one full page in length; expressions in various genres.

While general maturity and training are individual and independent influences, there was overlapping in the ways they influenced the student-composers in this study. This was not evident so much in the process data as from looking/listening to the composing products. That all children learned the mechanics of the writing process and uses of language grammar and syntax was corroborated by the classroom teacher and the stories themselves; therefore, training was evident. However, the utilization of that training varied, based in large part on the maturation level of each child, hence the ability to synthesize and transform the knowledge learned. Chapman (1997) details a rubric for narratives which I found useful in assessing that there were, in fact, degrees of variation in the products, thereby corroborating my interpretation of the data and information from the classroom teacher’s evaluative language reports on the
individual children. Chapman divides her evaluative criteria into four hierarchical categories which contain the following descriptors:

Figure 3. Evaluative Criteria for Story Composing (After Chapman)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>strong plot; rich description; sustains reader interest; effective dialogue; accurate and effective figurative language; strong personal voice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>clear, logical and consistent storyline; sustains reader interest; description of characters and setting; interesting language and images; some figurative language and/or dialogue; personality of the writer is felt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>basic story elements (setting, characters, problem, sequence of events, resolution); reader interest held at various points; some details of setting and characters; beginning-middle-end structure; events in logical order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>storyline limited to main ideas, few details; some story elements only; language limited to basic words and sentence patterns; reader attention not captured and/or sustained; may not have beginning-middle-end structure; sequences (ideas, events) difficult to follow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the student-composers in this study, training was an influencing factor in the language segment, although it had not been applicable for music. From the time children enter school in Kindergarten, they engage in learning language and writing skills. By the time they are in grade three, and the age of these students (eight and nine years), much training has taken place. The students in this class had been given instruction in language, writing and creative writing on an ongoing basis from September. Their classroom teacher, Erica, was confident that they understood much of the mechanics of writing and story construction, through exposure to and instruction in, process writing. They engaged in some writing every day, on topics both self-chosen and teacher suggested, depending on the task. Pencil and paper as well as computers were used for writing notation; while the concrete writing tools provided penmanship and coordination experience as well as language learning, the computers afforded ease, flexibility and
speed in editing and polishing for ‘good copy’ publication. Joan felt, like Cowie (1989), that “the word processor can give children confidence in their ability to engage in the process of drafting, revising and editing by giving them scope to add details...or to clarify points...” (p. 102). (Although the children had no access to computers during our working sessions, several noted their final stories using the word processor, either at school or at home.) Previous to this study, the students had worked both alone and with partners in various writing activities. They enjoyed both the creating and the writing processes, and were generally flexible in their attitudes about working alone or with others.

It seemed to me that there were clear connections between the processes involved in composing in both modalities. I decided, therefore, to attempt to interpret data from language compositions using the same framework (see Appendix K) I had devised for music compositions. Although it was originally my intention to interpret language compositions using the same framework elements, as already stated, I quickly realized that whereas in music composing the children made their process decisions explicitly, for the most part, in language composing many of those same decisions were made implicitly. While I could legitimately see influences by the same factors, and delineate use of the same strategies, the data I was able to collect from the same multiple sources, was skeletal by comparison.

I noticed that the children’s process decisions and overt behaviours (speech and gesture) were deeply affected by both enculturation (acquisition) and training. These decisions/behaviours manifested themselves in changes in the format and context, relationship to the video camera, discussion and behaviour attitudes, time frame parameters, and the process/product balance.

For all focus-composers at some point in at least one of their stories, composing became an exercise in creating a television program. The camera’s eye suddenly became a T.V. screen, and
much working time was spent getting the station identity, commercial interruptions and/or announcer 'blurb' written and performed for the 'camera'. One composing pair (actually a trio for part of the task time) spent almost an entire working session on the commercial and station-break, rather than the story. Stories became fixed within a media context, and with that shift in format, the camera became a 'critical eye' and the audience of prime importance. The whole focus of the composing task seemed to be altered for these student-composers; I was surprised (again!) at the fact that this happened, and, that all the focus composers seemed, independently, to frame their story in a similar way. There was a shift in attitude toward sharing process work, as well. This was evident across all the multiple data-gathering tools I used: less was said in informal discussion with me; interactions with partners seemed telescoped (less words, gestures, time); journal responses were less explicit and contained less detail; less enthusiasm was displayed for sharing stories in-process, and for reflecting on their own process work through dialogue/viewing sessions with me. I sensed a 'let's get on with it and stop talking about it' attitude from these student-composers, which was, for the most part, also demonstrated in the attitudes of the rest of the peer composers. This, in turn, shifted the emphasis from a process orientation to a product one. The children were eager to get peer responses to their finished stories, and dialogue about their feelings and intentions, once they had shared their 'good copies'.

Upon reflection, I must conclude that these changes in behaviour and attitude decisions have a great deal to do with the expectations they have of themselves and their creations due to the training they received in story writing and language use.
Interlude #7

Integration and my framework

Just saying the word ‘integration’ to a bunch of teachers starts an argument. As a topic for educational focus, ‘integration’ began as a relevant and important philosophical shift in educational thought and practice, and long-overdue (in my opinion); a move away from the industrial model of compartmentalization which has held public education in its vise-grip for the duration of this century. Unfortunately, for many, it has become synonymous with superficiality and lack of standards; many teachers feel that crossing and connecting modality boundaries means a loss of quality, understanding and learning, in the individual disciplines. I suppose for some, integrating allows glossing over and mushing up qualities of individual disciplines, but I think good teachers understand that it offers opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, for expanding one’s own knowledge, and for presenting learning in the same way life is presented to us - holistically. Life does not appear in 40 minute chunks, all bound up neatly in labelled binders; we live with constant blurring and overlapping of boundaries, even, sometimes, with spaces or ‘black holes’ to deal in or with. I believe that by stressing linear and packaged thinking in our teaching methods, we have lessened the life-skill and coping strategies of our children. Life is a global issue, and we need to think, act and feel holistically in order to survive as ‘humane’ humans.

One of my teaching goals is to present my students with challenges that have many possible solutions, and help them approach these challenges with open minds (I try to provide a safe environment, ask ‘what-if’ and ‘what else’ kinds of questions, and do everything I ask them to do so they see me fully engaged with them, etc.). It seemed natural, therefore, that when I was
looking at the framework and thinking about patterns and trends in children’s composing processes and decisions in music, I also thought about the open-ended composing tasks I have given my students over the years in creative dance, improvisatory drama and creative writing. Having a hunch that students composing in different modalities might utilize the same/similar strategies, I re-viewed and reflected on pedagogical projects and research studies I had conducted in the past. The same procedures kept reappearing in my notes, research data and memory:

- **exploration** - no matter what the task, all children spent some time and energy ‘playing with the medium (sounds in music, words in language, actions and facial expressions in drama, and movements in dance). Depending on the task, time, student(s), previous knowledge, etc., how long and what kind of exploration varied, but, it was always part of the process. Sometimes it was playful, sometimes serious, sometimes random and sometimes intentional and highly structured, and, it occurred and recurred throughout the creating process, not just at the initiation stage.

- **making choices** - at some point, again depending on the child(ren), time, task, etc. a selection process took place. Narrowing down the options included beginning to make form and structure decisions. Often, there was changing of minds (and some arguing), and more exploration was sometimes needed to make choices the composing group was content with.

- **shaping structure/meaning** - editing and polishing the choices into a recognizable, acceptable artistic expression involved more choice-making and, often, exploration. Most students understandably spent most of their task time on this part of the process; depending on the individual/group’s level of concern with the medium/audience, different aspects took precedent. Generally, it seemed that the maturity level of the student-composers impacted on
the degree to which audience reaction was important, regardless of the medium/modality.

Most students seemed most relaxed and, at the same time, most focussed, when they were concentrating on themselves as artists relating to their medium, rather than when they began thinking about audience response.

- completing a coherent product - process and product were interchangeable and intertwined for all the students and projects, as best as I can recall. Although they could differentiate (obviously), and were aware that the goal of each task was a ‘product’, the active ‘making’ (process) and reflective listening and/or performing (product), were essentially entwined. The level of quality exacted in the end depended on the maturity, ability and interest of the composers, but the striving for a ‘good’ creative, artistic expression seemed to be a goal for everyone. I was, and am, always gratified (for me) and thrilled (for them) when they share their compositions, both in-process and when complete; the peer critics are always so supportive and happy to applaud and give ‘stars’. I am proud of them when they give ‘wishes’ too, because they do it in such thoughtful ways. Perhaps their patience and empathy is enhanced because they all are performers as well as composers?

I realize that embedded in the discussion of musical strategies, non-musical factors influencing musical choices were mentioned- socio-cultural influences are inescapable - enculturation and maturity are two variables which I found re-occurred always (verified by any professional colleagues working with the same children). How can one escape the ever-present media-driven demands on our value judgements? In addition, of course, are parental and community values - all absorbed unconsciously for the most part. Maturity is an obvious influence in terms of intellectual, physical and emotional development, which, in turn, affect
decision-making in all areas. In regard to composing activities, it seems socio-cultural influences are seen in: what is thought to be ‘good’ quality; level of importance placed on ‘other’ opinions (peer and/or adult); flexibility and willingness to risk, trust, share ideas; physical, emotional and mental abilities to transform knowledge and manipulate sound sources.

In thinking about this framework, and ‘real life’, the idea of training came to mind, as an influence in composing. From my master’s thesis, which looked at sound preferences of both trained and untrained children, I know that training is an important factor in decision-making in music (and would be also, in any area of focus for the child). In reflecting on it in relation to the data from many sources, (my studies and research readings), it seemed that training affected the ways the composer utilized the musical strategies. If I want to put this influence on the framework grid, it should go in the same column with the socio-cultural factors, so, visually, one can see that it intersects with all the musical strategies....but, it is a musical aspect - will this confuse the issue?? For my dissertation, it won’t appear at all, because all the student-composers were untrained; but, if I want the framework to show everything I think influences decision-making in the various acts of composing, then ‘training’ needs to be put in somewhere on the grid.

Synthesizing how I feel about integration in general....

“Inspiration and perspiration”... years of research experiments and finally...”Eureka!”...
painted-over canvasses: creation and discovery in various modalities seem to have components in common. Most of what is ‘new’ is imaginative transformation of what is already known (am I in trouble now with the ‘art-police’?) I don’t think saying that negates interest or authenticity or value in any way, because I think we do more than copy, we make something our own, when we
create. However, rather than creating being a totally inexplicable ‘bolt from the blue’, there is much in the creating process that repeats and is traceable over time (not all, of course, because there is always that moment of discovery when you know or feel or hear something new that was absent a second ago, and that you do not know how you suddenly now ‘know’ it). There is always the mystery, which I am not the least bit anxious to dispel...I just want to be the best teacher I can, and my curiosity is part of my passion in teaching and the pleasure I get from working/playing with the students as we all learn more.

Back to the framework for a moment...my intuition, as well as information from previous studies, tells me that this framework can be used in creating/composing activities across modalities; I feel a future study/project bubbling in the back of my mind (if I ever finish this thesis!!)
CHAPTER EIGHT

Interpretation of Language Results

Facing the task of interpretation of the language compositions, I had to accept the fact that I had far less explicit data for them than I had for music composition. While I believe that implicit data are useful and relevant, I realize that in order to use the framework I had constructed I need a certain amount of explicit data for each category. None of the three composing pairs provided me with the amount of explicit data that I had collected from the music composing. The most overt detail in verbal behaviours for the language compositions were from Tae and his partner; I repeatedly exhorted them to “talk about everything you are doing out loud”; they are both students who tend to respond to direct instructions; and, they both have a natural proclivity toward attention to detail. In addition, they are among the most mature students in the class, and had set a very high level of self-determined quality as a goal for their composition, thereby necessitating much attention to detailing and polishing all aspects of the story process. In looking at their process data I found I could separate the discrete parts of the framework in order to detail their interactions and behaviours with relation to the decision-making during the whole composing process. With Arvin and Erin, however, the explicit data were considerably less, and to break down the process into individual segments was a labourious and not altogether productive endeavour on my part. Therefore, I chose to interpret Tae’s story composition using the framework elements in the grid format (see Appendix K), as in the music interpretations, but use a more interrelational approach to analyse those same framework elements for Arvin and Erin’s stories.
Tae

For the language component of this project, Tae chooses a new partner, Alec. He is as quick-minded and serious as Tae, and also enjoys creative challenges. Both boys are both articulate and among the most mature in the class. They seem very well suited in their similar approaches to learning and creating; as well, they seem to have similar interests in reading material. They continue as partners throughout this segment of the project and have one of the smoothest working relationships of all class members. While both contribute ideas, Tae is the primary recorder in working sessions.

Factor: enculturation; Strategy: brainstorming/webbing.

Tae reads a lot in and out of school. Currently, his particular favourites are the "Boxcar Children" mystery books. This genre sparked the idea for his story; as he thinks of, and discusses, plot and character ideas, he seems to be ‘judging’ them, possibly against his perception of the “Boxcar” books. Exploration in the form of brainstorming takes place for only a short time on the first working day, because when the idea of writing a mystery comes up, they decide to centre their story on this. Further exploration is intentional, taking the form of informal webbing approaches which involves story elements and structures relating to the topic chosen.

Factor: enculturation; Strategy: making drafts.

Once ‘mystery’ is the decided topic, other aspects of this genre as found in young people’s books are also chosen: action, adventure, animals and humans verbalizing together, characters consisting primarily of males. Dialogue is the predominant way voices/personalities of the characters are displayed. Language chosen for dialogue has many colloquial phrases heard on T.V./movies, and/or read in action-oriented children’s books: for example, “Butthead!”, and “Get outta here!” I ask Tae and Alec, how they think of new ideas:
Tae: "We read a lot of books, we're getting ideas from those books - not copying, but getting ideas."

Alec: "Tae read the 'Boxcar Children' and gets a lot of his ideas from there."

Tae: "Uh-huh", he replies, smiling.

Me: "How else do you get ideas?"

Alec: "We give ideas and if someone doesn't like the idea they say 'no' and we choose another idea." (Tae nods to corroborate)

Factor: enculturation; Strategy: editing/revising for structure and meaning.

Structure and format of the mystery develops: "Here's a clue!" said Thomas; the 'hero' is an eagle, personified as superhuman (an idea from T.V. perhaps). The story is action-oriented, with fight and chase scenes, but these include dialogue with detail to enhance the plot, and the boys as well as Eagle, the hero, act and talk in character. Problems are created and solved: Tae and Alec seem aware of both the general storyline and tension/release principles, and of the need for detail, in order to maintain audience interest. They work on making the story 'flow' from incident to incident.

Factor: enculturation; Strategy: final draft/'good' copy.

After the last sentence of his story, Tae skips a space on the page, and then adds this ‘tag’: "The next story is The Case of [the] Great Wall of China". This is a typical addition in series books as a way to entice the reader to look for/buy the next installment. In this instance, it was effective; the class had enjoyed both mystery stories by this composing pair, and made positive comments after this announcement about looking forward to the next story in the series.
Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *brainstorming/webbing*.

"The first thing we did to begin our story was we began to talk about what our title is going to be", Tae writes in his journal. They decide that they are so involved in their mystery that they want to continue with the same theme instead of taking the title I had suggested for story #2. They decide they have enough ideas and feel secure enough to ignore my idea for their own. Exploration takes the form, mainly, of intentionally webbing ideas extended from their first story. They do some brainstorming for new characters, including trying out various voices; they look for new problems to be solved, asking each other: "how about...?" or "maybe he’s visiting...".

Factor: *general maturity*; Strategy: *making drafts*.

Narrowing down the possibilities into a rough draft of their story, they start with one problem for the original characters to solve, and let the action take them to other choices. For example, they choose new characters to ‘fit in’ to the plot that is developing; they tell me, “we like to have a story with lots of problems”. For the most part, they make their choices easily, agreeing with whatever idea one partner comes up with, and working to find a way to include it in the story. Tae says, “We include Alec’s and my favourite things in our story by agreeing”. Tae explains that if there are any problems, “we argue about the ideas until finally someone says ‘fine’”. Their story is full of action and some violence, and they choose an ending which treats the villain with empathy (as noted by Smith and mentioned above):

_Eagle didn’t want his brothers to die so he jumped on the wolf while the wolf was sitting on James, Alan and Thomas._

"Yeehah!" yelled Eagle. "Boom! Boom! Pow!"

_They brought the wolf to their house and started eating the wolf up. The wolf_
fainted...then they went for some lemonade, and heard someone saying, “ow, ooh, eee”

“Who was that?” asked James.

....to find out who said that, read the next story....

The other students wanted to know why the boys did not eat the wolf up entirely, and why they all went out for lemonade. They expected violence, but Tae and Alec were not swayed by peer pressure to change their idea.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: editing/revising for structure and meaning.

Once their storyline was outlined and some detail was added to characters and dilemmas, etc., they worked on the details, adding expressive reading voices, weaving in minor characters or hints of plot/problem for the next book, etc. (For example, the ‘strange man’ who kept appearing in story #1 was not explained then, but was brought back to become a more important figure in this story). They demonstrated their knowledge of story structure and various techniques, as well as ability to express their own ideas clearly: “we showed texture in our story composition by our character’s voices and expressions”, a comment that I think illustrates understanding of a rather sophisticated concept; “we showed form and structure in our story composition by making a good ending...and in the beginning we start with our good opening sentence”.

Factor: general maturity; Strategy: final draft/’good’ copy.

This story is complete in itself, as well as being part of the larger ‘sequel’ idea. The boys have a clear idea about story parts and the overall shape, as well as an awareness of audience response: I overhear them discussing length, and they mention that “this can’t be a really long story”, even though Alec talks about wanting to try (sometime) to see how long he could make a story. As it is, although they have been working diligently, they are not finished when the rest of the class is.

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I tell them that they only will have the next working session to complete their story; they arrange to work at recess and lunch because they want to finish the story a certain way, and not just end it abruptly when the working time is over. The finished story demonstrates their ability to synthesize and transform knowledge, as well as utilize all facets of the story form studied, at a high level of quality. Some sample excerpts of story and language elements used appropriately throughout the story are:

1. (defining a character):
   
   "Which way to go?" asked Thomas.
   
   "Don't ask me, ask that bird!"

2. (detailing a scene):
   
   So Eagle and Thomas biked down the hill, hoping to see the strange man...they biked for about four hours.
   
   "No luck", said Eagle.
   
   "What are we going to do?" asked Thomas.

3. (action, suspense):
   
   Then Eagle saw something moving in the bushes -
   
   "What's that?" said Eagle.
   
   The chase was on...they wrestled him to the ground...

4. (transition to new action) [I consider this a particularly sophisticated element in story form. Tae and Alec's ability to use transitions effectively demonstrates a very high level of maturity for their age].

   They brought the strange man to their house. James and Alan were still fighting.

Factor: training; Strategy: brainstorming, webbing
Tae and Alec explored ideas for their story with imagination, focussing on fantasy and adventure. Their exploration was not random, because they paid attention to knowledge that they had about story writing. They brain-stormed and discussed ways to connect (web) new ideas to old, paying attention to details of the storying structure: plot, characters, setting, action, problem setting and resolution, etc. They brain-stormed for new ideas, at various times and at various points in their story: “we have to get a [new] problem”; Tae: “Now what?”, Alec: “Maybe he starts going to the other house?” (They continue to discuss...) Factor: training; Strategy: making drafts

Tae knows about sequels from the books he reads. In school, the children have learned about extending and carrying forth elements from one story to another. When I suggest the word “blue” as the topic for story #2, Tae writes in his journal that “red was hard enough, blue will be impossible!” Both partners want very much to continue the ideas from story #1 - they liked it and so did the other students, and they still have many ideas to work on; alternately, they tell me they have no ideas for “blue” and do not know how to include “blue” in the story they are thinking about making: “we’re not ‘blue’ fans, we don’t think about ‘blue’ much”.....I ask them if it was easy to start their first story: Alec says, “At the start it was hard, but then we got really good at it”. I defer to their creative judgement and tell them to carry on the way they wish: Tae: “We’re starting where we finished off last time”. They seem to feel very confident within the mystery genre, and proceed smoothly to create another story.
Factor: training; Strategy: editing/revising for structure and meaning.

Polishing their story, it is evident by their comments and the story itself, that they both understand and are comfortable with using the elements of storying, syntax and grammar. In his journal Tae writes: “We are using the story elements by:

characters: Alan, Eagle, James and Thomas Crystal

descriptive words: we describe animals and sounds

setting: the boys’ house (I am impressed by his correct use of the apostrophe!)

Factor: training; Strategy: final draft/‘good’ copy.

The final draft/good copy of this story demonstrated several elements of training:
It was four and one-half pages long, double-spaced, printed clearly and neatly. It had chapters; Tae had drawn three diamonds in the middle of the page and left some blank lines to visually show the reader when and where the divisions should be. Throughout its length, the storyline proceeds in sequential and logical fashion, developing plot, clearly creating settings and characters, who fit into the storyline and relate to each other, furthering the action. Proper punctuation is used; I was particularly impressed that these children could use dialogue punctuation accurately. A sophisticated addition was humour, an element not always found in mysteries: for example,

“Who was that?” asked James, spilling his lemonade. (As a reader, my first response was that they wrote this to illustrate that James was afraid).

“I don’t know”, said Alan, also spilling his lemonade. (But, when Alan spills his drink, too, the tone suddenly changes to a humorous one.

The story had a definite sense of beginning-middle-end, as well as the ‘tag’ to hook the reader to watch for the next story.
I feel this was a most polished, coherent and complete story; as a listener, I enjoyed their delivery, the action and characters kept me interested, and there were enough unexpected moments that I could not guess everything that was about to happen. Using Chapman’s (1997) evaluative criteria, I would rate this story as ‘exemplary’. The other students also liked this story. All comments were ‘stars’ except one wish for Tae to “speak louder”. Peer evaluations included:

1) “I liked this story because it had a lot of detail, and a lot of funny sayings”;

2) “I liked Tae and Alec’s voice. I would say they got an A+” (the A+ is written in huge letters on the critic’s paper)

3) “They had good espresshion [expression], it was funny too”.

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Table 2: Interpretive Framework for Strategies and Factors Affecting Decisions by Tae in Creating Oral/Written Language Compositions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Strategies - Socio-cultural Factors</th>
<th>Brainstorm/Web</th>
<th>Making Drafts</th>
<th>Editing/revising for Structure/ Meaning</th>
<th>Final Draft/‘Good’ Copy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enculturation</strong></td>
<td>Topic ideas from stories read are explored: adventure/mystery chosen.</td>
<td>Dialogue used, characters, structure, all taken from the adventure/mystery genre.</td>
<td>Details of plot, conflict and resolution checked.</td>
<td>Corrections made to punctuation, action development; dialogue mechanics checked. A ‘hook’ is added for ‘next installment’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Maturity</strong></td>
<td>Ideas are webbed (they continue from previous story); ideas are expanded and extended.</td>
<td>Check done for “problems” and “favourite things” that fit in with on-going plans for characters and plot.</td>
<td>Previous ideas expanded and extended; details checked. Attention to maintaining audience interest through structure and content ideas in keeping with on-going ‘series’ ideas.</td>
<td>Attention to maintaining audience interest through structure and content ideas in keeping with on-going ‘series’ ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td>Intentional exploration within the genre; revisits brainstorming as needed for characters, plot, conflicts.</td>
<td>Attention to ‘fit’ of plot, characters, action and structure between sequels.</td>
<td>Attention to accurate use of story elements as taught in writing process lessons.</td>
<td>Checks correct structure, mechanics, syntax, grammar; attention to details between stories; audience interest maintained through action and humour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Erin

Although working with a different partner, Erin demonstrated much the same personality and goal-oriented behaviours in her story composing as she had in her music composing. Much of the time she took a position of strong leadership, sometimes mentoring and sometimes bullying her partner. Their interactions ran the gamut between open arguing, covert friction and happy, supportive collaboration. The following transcriptions from Erin and her partner Julie's videotaped working sessions on day 1 of story #2, on the topic “blue”, and days 1 and 2 of story #3, illustrate peer power politics and the various types and levels of communication engaged in throughout the composing processes by this pair.

Erin:  (begins by writing a title in chalk on a lap-sized slate board and showing it to the video-camera)  Okay, now...our ideas...[stops partner, Julie, from talking]...how about ‘once upon a time’...[Julie starts to get up from her chair]...Julie, wait! Okay, just talk...here we are today...I'll tell a little about Erin. She has a dog, a sister...this is story telling; we're going to make up stories about our families? Shhh, okay, this is going to be about ‘blue’....Julie...[no answer]...Julie!...[no answer]...

Julie:  I'm trying to think of something.

[they argue about ideas made for several minutes]

Erin:  Okay, that's what we're going to do - okay, Julie, what makes you think about blue?

Julie:  Once upon a time there was a little girl...

Erin:  I mean, what makes you think about blue? Not the colour blue.

Julie:  Why do we have to write things down, why can't we just share our ideas?
Erin: Because...[Julie cuts her off]

Julie: We’ll have to remember them.

Erin: [continuing her thought] Because, it’s what I want to do. You don’t have to pay attention.

[silence from both girls for a few moments; they sit on their chairs looking around]. Tell me your ideas...

Julie: I don’t have any ideas...[pause]...I’m trying to think of something...[long pause].

Erin: I know what blue makes me think of, it makes me think of different places in B.C. [she reaches for a picture/study book on the shelf next to her seat].

Julie: [face perks up] It makes me think of the sky and water - they’re blue.

Erin: [holding up a page of scenery from the book, and then passing the book to Julie and taking up the slate and writing on it]:

“It’s going to be about blue” and then “Is this blue?” [she tells Julie that they should both read the last phrase out loud to the camera as she holds it up]. Yes! [clapping her hands].

Julie: Why don’t we teach them what blue is?

[The story moves smoothly on, with the girls talking about their ideas for places and things that are blue, writing key phrases on the slate, and developing their story events from (primarily) a resource book on British Columbia in the form and delivery style of a classroom lesson.]

Erin: I’ve got a really good idea...let’s do one about woods. [she holds slate up to camera on which she has written the word “woods” in large letters]

Julie: Blue woods?
Erin: [In an excited voice she tells a story about people lost in the woods who saw a blue robin, blue sky, etc. while walking] One person says ‘I only thought there were red robins’...Something interesting like that, okay?

Julie: Okay. [She writes the key words on the slate that Erin has already mentioned: The Blue Sky; bluebird; blue mountain. As she writes, Erin interjects: not handwriting, it takes forever!]

[As the story develops, they take turns going around the classroom looking for blue things as visual aids and stimuli.]

Erin: [Speaking directly to the camera]: These are some ideas that we’re taking and we’re thinking about blue in our story.

[Another student calls out: ‘I can hear you over here’]

Erin: [She calls back emphatically]: We’re taping, we’re supposed to be loud!...[continuing the story]...We hope you like our show, we’re continuing, this is our commercial break.

[They continue with other blue things]

Erin: Come on, Julie, you have to be in camera [range]...you’ll have to memorize your parts.

Julie: I don’t have parts.

Erin: You will...come on, give me ideas.

Julie: I have to think, the brain...thinks. [She seems annoyed at this point. Erin has been hurrying her greatly]

[Erin starts writing ideas on paper in story form: ‘One day a week ago...’. Classmates are beginning to lose concentration and wander over to those still working: “Go away” both
Erin and Julie tell anyone who comes over to watch/listen. They spend some time talking about how many people to have in their story, and get stalled.

Julie: I don’t know [how many we should have].

Erin: I know.

Julie: Why do we have to talk about people?

Erin: All stories have people.

[They argue for awhile]

Julie: [Brings her face right up to the camera and whispers]: The code for our storytelling thing, so no one else knows...now this is the code - SJESWW(check mark, vertical squiggle, vertical squiggle) [She writes it on the slate and shows it to the camera as she says it quietly. They continue talking and Erin writes the ideas they keep on paper]

Erin: This is what we have so far...[they take turns reading what they have on paper. Whoever reads comes right up to the camera so her face covers the entire screen, and whispers].

Julie: [When they have read everything on the paper]: None of my ideas are there.

Erin: Yes they are.

Julie: No! None of them! You never write my ideas down!

Erin: Ju-li-e!...Okay, write your own ideas down.

[Julie plugs her ears as Erin is speaking, waits a moment, and then goes and gets her own paper]

Erin: [When she comes back, Erin speaks to her in a somewhat fussy and self-righteous tone]: I am going to do your ideas...and then you get mad at me!
The working session is called to an end at this point; they get up and put things away, with their disagreement unresolved. I am curious about how they will proceed the next time, both in terms of solving the social problem of balancing their creative input, and in making creative and critical choices for storying strategies. Unfortunately, Erin is away ill and Julie is left to work by herself. I invite her to choose to either continue the story she began with Erin or work on her own, new story. She elects to work on her own story and talks to the camera as if it were her ‘partner’. I suggest that when Erin returns they can finish the story they began together. As it turns out, when Erin returns she also decides to write her own story. The two independent stories are variations of the story they began together. Both stories are short, with little detail, developed storyline or characters. On the whole, they were clear, organized attempts, but without a real imaginative spark. Both girls wanted to finish their stories at the same time as all their classmates. To me, the stories seemed ‘thrown together’, more to complete the assignment than from any real interest on the authors’ parts. Using Chapman’s evaluative criteria (1997) as discussed above, I would rate both their stories somewhere between ‘undeveloped’ and ‘competent’. In spite of the appearance of a breakdown of communication as partners, Erin and Julie decide to continue their collaboration for Story #3. Work on that story, which was a more complex effort than Story #2, is accomplished easily and happily. In both their self evaluations for the third story they say that they preferred working with a partner to working alone, and that they enjoyed working with each other.

For their third story, whose parameters included the option to include music/sounds along with story text, this pair decided to write a poem with music accompaniment:
Erin: You want to write a poem?

Julie: Okay.

Erin: I really want the instruments, it makes it easier to start with the instruments...we could go [explores various sound effects with rulers, a pencil sharpener, a glue tube and a long piece of string]...I need the instruments. [She tells me later in our reflective session that “we could not get instruments from the music portable so had to use other things”. Next day, they use the stringbox, triangle, drum and tambourine.]

Both explore various sounds and sound sources as they build their story, and intertwine the music and text, working on both parts simultaneously. They combine both modalities naturally and easily, sometimes favouring one over the other, but always using both as integral parts of the story:

Erin: [beginning the story]: The daughter says, I have made a new instrument, but no one knew what ‘instrument’ meant. [both partners continue exploring various sounds and make up a story around each sound. At one point, they go outside to collect sticks, and continue their story talking about weapons as a focus.]

The next day, when they have instruments, Erin works on rhythm patterns on the drum, and strumming patterns on the stringbox. She tells Julie to play a specific pattern on the triangle, deciding who plays and says what and when:

Erin: Why don’t we call the story an Indian poem? Then we can make a poem inside a story and call it a musical poem...it could go like this: One day, there was an Indian...this is what the poem was...so and so, so and so, and so and so...the end.
Julie seems to understand this rather cryptic beginning-middle-end outlining of their story/poem/song, as she is nodding as Erin explains her idea of the general structure. They continue to talk through their ideas for the middle section(s), and when they disagree, they turn their heads away from the camera and whisper, so ‘it’ cannot hear or see. When they reach agreement, they sit next to each other, with the instruments in front of them; as they sing/play, they look at each other for cues.

Julie: [singing in a dotted four-count rhythm]: Walking through the forest, we will come, we will come.

Erin: [writing down what Julie is singing]: The first part’s kind of neat, the second part’s kind of dodo...did you say ‘walking’ or ‘rocking’?

Julie: Walking.

Erin: You can just put it in two times [writes 2x on the paper]

Julie: [she keeps singing] Walking through the forest, here we come, here we come. Looking at the birds and squirrels...[Erin joins in] here we come, here we come. [Julie sings it again, changing the words to ‘looking at all the birds’]

Erin: That’s too much [in response to the different word rhythm created by the changed text phrase]

Julie: It’s too much?

Erin: I know how to do songs!

[Julie continues to sing, and Erin continues to write down what she sings, editing Julie’s ideas as she goes. After a little while, they change jobs, and Julie takes the paper and }
writes down what Erin sings. At one point, Erin looks over Julie's shoulder and says, ‘Yeah, that looks good’. She then comes over to the camera and says: ‘We got our ideas from our (shrugs shoulders) heads’. Julie looks up at this statement and gives her a ‘what-do-you-think-you-are-doing-talking-to-the-camera? look]. What’s your problem?! Just finish writing this!

Julie: Do you want to write this? [she pushes the paper towards Erin, who replies, ‘No’.] Then I’d like some respect, excuse me.

[With this exchange, they both stop for a moment. To me, it seems as though they are remembering what happened the last time they got ‘stuck’ in an argument, for they quickly both apologize and continue on with their song.]

This effort culminates in a song which, although shorter than their intended effort (they lost their finished song and rewrote it by memory on the day of the final presentation), contains some interesting and imaginative musical effects within a well integrated story-song structure.

Including this effort (#3) along with the prior one, it is clear that Erin is capable of a high level of achievement in story composing. Her social interactions, as well as her attitudes towards strategies employed to reach her self-described goals, were similar in composing both stories and music. Her most successful effort, according to peer, self and my evaluations, was #3, which included music elements integrated with story elements. She found the song/poetry format inviting and challenging, and was definitely more interested in composing a story within this context. In a reflective session, she told me: “We wanted to do something different...I like poetry, it’s fun...We like using instruments and we like doing choruses...I like rhythm and tunes".
She and Julie both think poetry is "...a lot easier [than story]...you don’t have to write as much...you don’t have characters". Using Chapman’s evaluative criteria (1997), I would rate this piece between ‘strong’ and ‘exemplary’, including both story and music elements in my assessment criteria.

Collecting data from two storying attempts gave me a fuller picture of the processes Erin engaged in as she composed with language. My interpretation of the influencing factors and strategies for the decisions made as she proceeded through these creative composing tasks follows and was based on these data.

There seemed to be few direct influences from enculturation during the composing process with language. I noted the following effects of enculturation as Erin and Julie explored ideas, mostly through brainstorming:

a) the story starter - (Julie starts, “Once upon a time there was a little girl...” for one beginning; Erin tries, “One day a week ago...” another time, both for the story about “blue”;

b) the use of people - both stories centre around people dialoguing; “Why do we have to talk about people?” asks Julie. “All stories have people,” answers Erin;

c) the poem/song - verse/chorus, and folk/pop song rhythm and phrasing influence decisions for story #3.

It was difficult to separate and extract influences, particularly those of enculturation, because so much of the creative/working process was covert and implicit. The only other obvious enculturation influences were seen in the choices involving music in story #3; using the triangle to keep the beat and instrumental accompaniment for rhythmic, poetic text, seem to be references
back to folk/pop music known and liked, which, as Erin reminded Julie, was something she knew
without training - “I know how to do songs!” In trying to understand how/what they did in the
drafting and editing stages, I asked (story #2): “Did you plan out structure beforehand?” “No”,
replied Erin, “we just kind of said ‘let’s do this, let’s get our ideas’...we decided by talking.” The
‘what’ was obvious by listening to them talk together, but the decision-making (‘how’), was
unclear from their comments, and difficult for me to discern without the possibility of distortion
from my own biases/adult perspective. So, although I can state that their ideas came from their
own experiences, I cannot be sure if they were sparked and influenced from enculturation,
maturity or training separately, or some combination of those three, because, according to Erin,
“We just got our ideas from our heads...we just thought of it.”

Maturity seemed to influence decision-making through some of the strategies used. Erin
spent little time in the exploratory segment of storying regardless of which story she was working
on. As in the music segment, Erin seemed focussed on the goal of producing something, rather
than on the process of getting there. Watching the videotapes of working sessions, I noted body
language and spoken conversation of both partners, and timed the developments in the process as
a whole. It was apparent to me that Erin was ‘pushing’ Julie quickly through the brainstorming
part of the composing. In the transcripts above, Erin leads her partner, and tries to hurry her
through her thinking or silent times; for example, “Julie...Julie...tell me your ideas....what makes
you think of--”. Erin also demonstrated her maturity in her ability to interweave the elements of
music and text into a song (story #3). While just about all the child-composers in this class
understood and used the basic elements of story structure and form, and could, when asked,
transfer the beginning-middle-end form they had learned in language/story writing to music, none of the other child-composers initiated writing a song for story #3, although many used sound effects along with text or added dramatic action to their stories. And while Julie understood (and sang) the repeated phrase, it was Erin who turned it into the chorus and decided which and how the instruments would accompany the words to achieve the effects she had in mind.

Training had a strong influence on decision-making across all the strategies. Training seemed to influence the decision to make the story about “blue” into a lesson, using pictures from a book and key words to ‘teach’ about the word “blue”. The ease with which Erin and Julie adapted to the beginning-middle-end form in both the music and story composing tasks, as well as the use of people conversing in dialogue, suggests a good deal of instruction in these language tools. In story #2, the action gets ‘wrapped up’; in story #3, “We ended our story by using instruments because we wanted a defanet (sic) ending.” Also, from the beginning, writing ideas down was integral to the storying process for Erin.: “I have to write!” (As discussed earlier in this paper, learning to use language, in school, is inextricably bound up with writing it down.) Erin and Julie seemed to enjoy writing on the slate, putting down key words or phrases, and then erasing them to make room for new ideas. At some point in the working session, however, pencil and paper would be brought to the work area. I wondered at the timing of this development, and realized later, when I was re-looking at the video-tapes, that the decision to write their ideas on paper seemed to come when both brainstorming and drafting were over (although nothing was said out loud). I assumed, therefore, that editing was beginning; in fact, somehow, much editing had already taken place, for few changes were made once the words
were written on paper. The rapid editing and extending processes seem to illustrate a high level of ability (from training) as well as maturity which allowed for the synthesis and transformation of both ideas and judgements into a cohesive, complete product.

The language composing was telescoped in all ways regarding process; the time frame was shorter, discussions were less complete, there were fewer changes. In all, decisions seemed to be made according to some pre-formed plan which I assume was the result of classroom training in language/story composing. Due to the circumstances surrounding story #2, I think Erin and Julie's third story is more representative of what they are capable in this area. In their self evaluations, they wrote that they enjoyed working together; when asked what the favourite part of the story was, Erin wrote, “I injoyed (sic) everything”; Julie wrote, “the poam (sic)”. They both thought their finished story/song was good, although they were upset at themselves because they had lost their original one, had to re-write it the day of the final performances, and could not remember all of it. Nevertheless, Erin wrote, “I think my best [story] is #3”. Peer evaluations were also positive. There were only two ‘wishes’; one was that it was longer, and the other noted Erin’s difficulty at one point in “keeping in beat”. ‘Stars’ included:

“I like how when they said ‘here I come’ they got softer and softer”; “When they faded away it sounded good”; [this same sentiment was mentioned in various ways by several peer critics];

“I liked their poem and their voices and rhythm”;

“I really liked Erin and Julie’s composition”.
Arvin

Arvin worked with two other partners in story #1, and although the group data were rich, information about Arvin personally, was slim. For story #2, he worked alone; again, there were some useful data, but the source I found offered the most detailed information, video, was missing. Therefore, I chose to use data from both storying compositions in my interpretation.

Arvin seems most connected to the imaginative creation of narrative. He is not concerned about product, does not equate thinking in language with writing it down, and is uninterested in audience response. He and his new partners seemed to be a well matched group, for they all liked to engage in lots of exploring and light-hearted banter, listening to each others’ ideas and taking criticism easily. Their ideas spark off each other; they set up a storytelling style of fluid, short, vignettes on a topic. When one runs out of ideas, he looks at another partner who picks up the thread. When the topic is exhausted or no one has an immediate idea (the creative pace is quite fast), they stop for a ‘commercial break’ and regroup. The overall format for their story is a television show: “This is A & E coming right back with the special ‘The Fish and the Magic Water’, or ‘The Opposite Way To Heaven’”, or one of their other story inventions. Arvin’s contributions tend to be humourous, fanciful and short. The following transcription is part of a story he began, which illustrates the way in which the boys worked together:

*Arvin: The Opposite Way To Heaven...a story about water...the opposite way to heaven,*

heaven’s up and water’s down...Once upon a time, there was a leak in the ground... all the machines were digging for water. They dug and dug, but couldn’t get to heaven...
Nico: Digging and digging, trying to get to heaven because they thought it was down...he didn't know the way...he got to the bottom, to --

Arvin: China.

Nico: To China. He dug his way all the way to China. He thought he got to Heaven but didn't. It was a shame. He turned around and went all the way the to Canada.

The boys did not seem concerned about time, nor were they goal oriented. They genuinely enjoyed the process of improvising their stories. They were eager for their short stories to move ahead swiftly; they liked the action of 'doing'. They assisted one another with mimed actions sometimes, as well. As I observed them, and re-looked at the videotape of this working session, I felt as if I were watching a theatre sports activity rather than a story-making activity.

At the end of the first working day, I asked if they were finished with their story (they were clowning around, pushing each other and giggling for the camera). Arvin replied: “We’ve gone through at least seventeen stories!” In the reflective session following, I asked why they chose each other as partners. “We co-operate” was the reply - they certainly did! We continued discussing the difficulties involved in including everyone’s ideas in the story process. I told them that the challenge was to weave everyone’s ideas together; Arvin responded exuberantly: “We’ll put our heads together!”, and physically grabbed both partners and put all three heads together close up to the camera. All the boys laughed.

On day two, second working session on story #1, I decided to try to focus the boys at the beginning of the session. I found them already beginning:
Nico: [speaking to the camera] Arvin and Jay are going to tell a story, and I’m going to write it down.

Me: Oh, out of all the stories you did yesterday, you’re going to choose the one you liked the best and --

Nico: [cutting me off] No! No! No! - we’re gonna, he [pointing to Arvin] is gonna tell us a new one.

They all rapidly tossed out ideas and titles, as well as responses to those suggested by the others. Again, they seemed unconcerned if an idea was rejected; they just kept brainstorming until they all agreed on an idea:

Various voices: ...the lightening flash...yeah...the thunder roars...

Nico: Okay...what’s it called again? [paper and pencil are ready]

Jay: The lightening flashes and the --

Arvin: Flash --Gordon...with Flash Gordon as director

[Nico writes their phrases down as Jay and Arvin look over his shoulder and help with spelling and capital letters. Then, they begin the storytelling]

Nico: Welcome to the A.N.I. Show

Arvin: Wait! Before we do it, we’re really quiet for a second [silence]... ‘Announcing’...then theme music and call letters. [he sings]

[They spent quite a bit of time practising this].

Then Nico resumed the story, Jay and Arvin did sound effects and mimed actions. No one attempted to write down what they said; they kept stopping and starting over from the beginning.
Arvin got restless before the other two; at one point, he said: “Take ten...take twelve...take ten million!” They spent more time trying to get the introduction just right and write A.N.J. on the slate in a variety of ways for the station call-letters. Several times during this segment, Arvin leaned over to whisper something to a partner so the camera could not ‘hear’ it. By the end of the session, they had not decided on anything definite for their story, and Jay said, “I'll put the paper in the garbage.” So ended session two!

At the final sharing, Nico, who likes to tell stories and improvise, and happens to be naturally good at it, told the story. “We’re just gonna make it up as we go along, so don’t blame us”, he told the class. Jay did the station introduction and Arvin did nothing.

Arvin and his partners built their vignettes in a fluid and seamless process; they did much brainstorming, some drafting, little editing, and did not seem concerned about completing coherent products. Their language ‘play’ included use of body language and dramatic effects and reflected their training in this modality. Although not polished, their short pieces contained the basic elements of story within a beginning-middle-end structure, and were contextual expressions, not merely randomly improvised ramblings. I found it interesting that whereas they were content to let their stories flow naturally and with much improvisation, they focussed much time and effort on drafting, editing and polishing the ‘station breaks’. This side-track into the television format and delivery style made me aware that their enculturated experiences with the world of media were strongly influencing some aspects of their composing with language. None of the decisions made, either to continue stories or stop and rehearse commercials, were discussed among the partners; by some unspoken communication, the composing unfolded.
Of the three partners, Arvin was the least able to sustain concentration over time. When he
tired of the medium (or the activity), or the pace of thinking up new ideas he stopped ‘playing’
with it, stopped contributing, and began to act in a silly manner by interrupting others to say ‘take
14’, or putting his face up to the camera shutting out the narrating partner. When he was
focused, his imaginative exploration and drafting of ideas demonstrated his training in that he
could quickly construct a storyline and correct form/structure, include characters, dialogue, and
other story elements. His maturity level was reflected in his attention span, in his unconcern for
editing and polishing his stories, and in his lack of interest in audience response. He liked doing
story #1, even though the final effort included him only as a bystander. He seemed content that
some of his ideas went into the final telling, for he wrote in his self evaluation that the best part
of story #1 was “making up our own topic”. Even after composing two more stories, he wrote: “I
think my best story is #1 because it was fun.”

Although they enjoyed working together, this group disbanded for story #2, without
explaining (to me) why they made this decision. However, the split seemed amiable, with Jay
going to another group, and Arvin and Nico deciding to write stories on their own. Arvin also
decided he no longer wanted to be video-taped, creating a two-fold change in my plans. (If
anything seemed constant during the unfolding of this project, it was changed expectations!)

Working alone for story #2, Arvin went through the various composing strategies quickly.
His natural light-hearted sense of humour and enjoyment of fantasy came through in the final
product, even though it was a very short piece. Arvin decided to interpret the word ‘blue’ as
“Canada’s Turning Blue”, settling on this idea early in the first working session. Once he had
this idea, he wrote a coherent, short piece within one session: “I am alone, so I decided [ideas] on my own...I am alone so it is easy”, he wrote in his journal. “You have to include everybody’s ideas” when you work with partners. His short vignette, written below in its complete, final form, has all the story components in a logical and cohesive form, illustrative of evidence of training. For example:

1) Setting the scene, introducing characters and providing conflict:

*Canada is turning blue, said Frank.*

*Yah really, said Joe. What type of weirdo would believe that.*

2) Continuing the action, reaching climax:

*You don’t understand.*

*No, I most certainly don’t understand!*  

*Here follow me.*

3) Resolution:

*Now look here at the thermonoter (sic).*

*Joe laughed.*

*You see Red stands for HOT and Blue stands for cold.*

It is evident from this story that although he has a sense of story structure, Arvin’s level of maturity and training is lower than either Tae’s or Erin’s, as he has not yet grasped the mechanics of dialogue punctuation.

In the final sharing of his story, Arvin caught and held his audience with quick moving dialogue and a touch of humour. He is pleased with his story, because a good story “has action”.
Peer critics also like his story: “it was short and neat”; “He had good expression”. A wish was for him to “talk louder”. Using Chapman’s (1997) evaluative criteria, I would rate this story as ‘strong’. I think Arvin has the potential to write ‘exemplary’ stories, given more time to mature and develop interest and ability in the relationships between artist and medium and artist and audience.

Generally, Arvin did not seem as intrigued by composing with language as he did with music, and his interest in language composition definitely leaned toward oral creation and presentation. He enjoyed ‘playing’ with language, just as he had enjoyed ‘playing’ with sound. He responded more actively to oral/aural activities than to written ones, a characteristic also displayed across his other schoolwork. His injection of humour and the flow of imaginative fantasy ideas seem natural, and appear in his general approach to life. In classroom or playground conversation and interactions, he often has a lyrical or humourous twist on events, as well as an eye for unusual or unexpected detail. I suspect this is a personality trait from birth, but one which his experiences in and out of school have help develop.
CHAPTER NINE

Interpretation and Discussion of Language Results

Language composing processes were very different from the music composing processes. Although there was much conversation, sharing of ideas, arguing, compromising - all the process interactions I expected and have seen many times before in composing efforts by students, I was unprepared for the unspoken conversations (intuition?) that somehow took place between partners. Whereas decision-making concerning composing strategies had been overt, communicated out loud, and discernable individually, with music, it was not so with language. A similar type of unspoken communication between partners in music composing was only noticeable at the performances, when the compositions were complete and known by both partners; most often, it was the improvisation sections where unspoken ‘signal’ were passed. But even then, it was rehearsed or prepared for in some way. With language composing, I did not ‘catch’ any of the signals and do not know if there were any. This topic was not able to be dialogued about; the children could not articulate anything about these processes, and may not even have consciously been aware of the way they went about them. Although I could see evidence of the composing strategies in the language compositions, albeit in varying degrees depending on composer(s) and type of story, the lines between each strategy were blurry; consequently, it was difficult to extract and explain individual decisions the composers were making as they constructed their stories. I found the same to be true of factors which influenced decision-making. While there was some evidence of the influence of the four socio-cultural factors, they were sometimes so intertwined it was difficult to determine which was influencing
what part of the composing process. I recognize that this occurrence is evidence of emergent methodology, a reminder that to be as accurate as possible in my interpretations, I must be prepared to be flexible in how I use the methodologies I have chosen. It is evident from the variety of decision-making procedures and processes as well as the products, that while there are similarities between composing in music and language, there are obviously differences as well. Also, it is clearly important that both enculturation and training form the baseline from which learning and experience are further explored and expressed, hence the different approaches, by the children, to composing in the two mediums.
CHAPTER TEN

Patterns and trends of all students composing with music and language

In addition to the three focus-composers on whom I have concentrated my comments to date, there were eighteen others in this class who also participated in all aspects of this study. With the exception of not being video-taped during working and reflective sessions, these children were similar to the focus-children: collaborative composers, peer critics, video-taped in sharing and final taping sessions, writers of journals and self/peer evaluations, and had access to both Joan and myself as facilitators for their composing efforts.

All students created “expressive gestures” (Swanwick, 1988, 30), in both music and language, which I label ‘compositions’. These compositions illustrated the use of cognitive and imaginative processes in which the children drew from funded, new, tacit and/or intuitive experiences from all their various ‘worlds’, and expressed their own voices through auditory, visual, kinesthetic and verbal means. The compositions represented the children’s attempts at creating and communicating meaning, and involved each one in the various roles of composer (maker or creator), performer, critic and evaluator.

These child-composers demonstrated the ability to work with language and music modalities. They also integrated dramatization at certain points in their works by acting out the musical stories. By working within several modalities both individually and in combination, the composers synthesized and transformed knowledge and expressing feelings and ideas in imaginative ways All children worked collaboratively, in pairs or small groups, on some or all of the tasks presented. They experienced the gamut of peer power politics as well as intuitive
interactions, as illustrated by the transcription of video-taped working sessions of Erin and Julie. With the exception of one boy who consistently found the noise, free movement and activities of others distracting, all students consistently concentrated on and completed the tasks given from the beginning of this project through to its end: “...they are so focussed and keen - excited about their ideas. Erica says they’re working so much more concentratedly - only C— keeps going over to see others’ work, an ongoing thing...even those working in the woods are working - using the woods as a place to work and not to play! The idea and word dialogue/conversations seem very smooth - one speaks, the partner picks up the thread- they alternate with ease...no conflicts, they understand each others’ ideas...” (excerpt from my field notes, May 7)

All student-composers integrated symbol systems and expressive modalities in their compositions. Variations in responses depended on their level of maturity, trained knowledge, and degree of enculturation. Regardless of their individual differences, all children enjoyed including dramatic action or gesture, sounds, words and props, to their compositions.

In terms of the socio-cultural factors and composing strategies included in the framework I used for interpretive purposes, these children generally demonstrated similar patterns and trends in their interactions, processes and products as the focus-composers. For example:

**Composing Strategies:**

All students utilized the same four strategies (*exploration/brainstorming, webbing; making choices/drafting; shaping/editing or revising for structure and meaning; completing a coherent composition/good copy*) as they composed in both music and language. Individual strategies
were more easily apparent during the composing process with music than with language. Time spent on the language composition component was telescoped, with less overall time taken to move from inception to completion, and different composers spending varying amounts of time on each strategy. Generally, it seemed that more care was taken in editing and polishing music compositions, unless a pair was writing a series of stories (sequels). Those who wrote three stories with separate topics did not tend to be as demanding of themselves in terms of quality of the overall story, unless music, visuals or dramatic action/gesture was also involved. My sense was that music compositions, or compositions where story was interwoven with sound and/or dramatic action, were more exciting to these children than words-only compositions (stories) because these were different from the children’s usual classroom language experiences. Considering the length of time of this project, however, I believe their sustained enthusiasm went beyond novelty, and had to do with feelings of success at reaching self-determined creative goals.

**Socio-cultural factors** (*enculturation/acquisition, general maturity, training*):

The whole class, including both focus and peer composers, were influenced by these same factors in as wide a variety of ways as the focus-composers. The trends seemed to be that enculturation was the most influential factor in terms of choices and decisions made in composing music; and training was the most influential factor in terms of choices and decisions made in composing stories. General maturity seemed to be an overall influence on both the other factors and the strategies, determining in large part the ability a child had to utilize, synthesize and transform information gleaned, as well as the ways and kinds of uses made of those abilities during the composing process.

Looking at each modality separately, the following patterns emerged:
Music

There were a variety of approaches to exploring musical sounds and sound sources. Some children took lots of time with this strategy, but those specific sounds and sound sources that were explored differed widely. Some only focussed on drums, others on strumming sources, still others on melody instruments. All spent at least some time with drums and other instruments used primarily for rhythm (triangle, maracas, unconventional shaker sources). Most, at some point and some amount of time, tried a rock-like four count accented beat or rhythm pattern: e.g., \(\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2}\); IT \(\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2}\); or IT \(\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2}\). All students were aware of, and tended to focus on, rhythmic elements in their final pieces, although many included melodic instruments and textural effects for equal focuses. The other major focus for all students was dynamics. Where many concentrated on loud sounds, some intentionally made their compositions full of soft sounds. Many also used texture to create crescendos and diminuendos.

Generally, boys tended to concentrate on loud, rhythmic sounds, and drums, cymbals and anything else that was loud, for their pieces. Girls tended to be the composers who chose melodic instruments and had intentionally soft passages. Girls were also more careful in their blending of sounds, and were more attentive to individual sounds and the relationships between sounds. I wanted to resist gender typing, so I tried hard to encourage all the students to explore and stretch in a wide variety of areas. I also intentionally ignored gender as a focus for this dissertation project, because I wanted my attention to be on artistic rather than social issues. As I found out, socio-cultural factors are embedded in all judgements and knowledge. Another time, I will include gender in the influencing factors in a research project, because I believe it does have serious impact on choices made in creative endeavours of children of this age.

Overall, enculturation was the most obvious influencing factor in the music compositions of
all the students. Tone colour, rhythm, melodic, textural, dynamic, and form/structure choices all involved decisions based largely, I believe, on enculturated knowledge from popular music.

General maturity was evident in the ways the student-composers manipulated those elements: for example, some students composed in complete ABA forms; some had intricate and varying textures; some intentionally created specific styles—soundscapes, songs, or programme pieces.

The more mature the child, generally, the more complex the piece of music. As well, the more mature children were more concerned with polishing their pieces to get them ‘just right’, and increasing performance abilities on the various instruments/sound sources chosen.

Although there were degrees of expertise evident in the various parts of music composing as an entity, all students completed coherent compositions with which they were satisfied. All were interesting and showed imagination. All peer critics were enthusiastic and supportive of compositions produced; but while they made positive comments about texture and sound sources and form, criticisms tended to be levelled if a piece was consistently very loud, or if it was very long and rambling. None of the children seemed unable or uninterested in composing with music, and none lost interest during the duration of the music segment. None of the successive music compositions were intentional continuations of previous ones, nor did any subsequent pieces resemble one the same composer(s) had done before.

**Language**

There was far more similarity in approaches, format and structure to composing with language than there was with music. Obviously, all stories use the same expressive medium (voice), and there is not the timbral variation in voices that there is in sound sources. Variation and
originality must come from content and manipulation of mechanics (style). For these students, structure was also set: characters, sequence of action, form, were dictated. In music, the same form was given (beginning-middle-end). While opportunity was taken by the student-composers for variety, in music compositions, beginning-middle-end in storying seemed to have a more specific meaning; it was not used in as flexible a manner. Most students seemed less inclined to process activities in language composing. They tended to resist sharing, drafting, and exploring, and seemed goal-oriented. They spent less time finding their topics and seemed to take a less playful and free perspective composing their stories. The exceptions to this were the groups who became immersed in their topic and let the characters and story emerge over several sequels.

As has already been discussed, training played a very large part and was a strong influence on all students in their decision-making in story composing. They acted as if they knew what was ‘expected’, and tended to move quickly through strategies to the completed product. They spent time on writing a final, good copy, often accompanied by pictures, and sometimes typed. Both the process and product were very different for most of the peer composers between music and language, just as it had been for the focus-composers.

Gender did not seem to have as much of an impact on content, styles, length or any other story or mechanical elements. Composers of both genders wrote mysteries, had action, chose fantasy, had animal or human characters, drew pictures to accompany text, and used a variety of expressive voices when reading/telling their stories.

There tended to be more awareness of continuation from one story to another, and as has already been mentioned, some intentionally chose to continue their original ideas through all
their stories. Variety began to appear in the third story, when the composers were invited to use music, sounds, poetry, and other variations. They seemed to need me to help them expand their boundaries for composing stories. (I imagine that I unwittingly contributed to their rigidity by using the word ‘story’ which they knew in a particular, specific format). I feel that most of the stories written/told by these composers were ‘competent’ (Chapman, 1997); some were ‘strong’, and only a few were ‘exemplary’.

In my opinion, the children seemed to pay more attention to formal elements when composing stories than imaginative ones. On the whole, I felt that with the exception of two composing pairs who wrote three sequel stories (one focus-composers and one peer composers), music compositions were richer, more complex and of better quality, than language compositions.

After the third story, which was to be the last, the student-composers resisted ending the project, and convinced me to let them do one more composition (#7), in which they could freely incorporate any artistic modalities in any ways they chose. I called it the ‘coda’. Many of these last compositions were really musical skits in which the children worked in groups rather than alone or with one partner. Their overwhelming urge to integrate the various expressive forms intrigued me, because I have long been a proponent of interrelating learning areas rather than compartmentalizing them, as is more common in schools. Allowing the children to design the structure for their learning and expression reinforced my belief in the naturalness of this type of expression for children. When given the opportunity, they construct bridges between the type of learning they normally receive in school and the way learning naturally occurs in real life. For example: they attempted interrelation of the modalities during the composing process, and
seemed naturally drawn to combining music, words and action in their artistic creations; they intentionally included a television format for their story presentation at some point in the process.

As with the other compositions, I designed a last self-evaluation form for the children to complete after the ‘Coda’ composition (See Appendix). Most of the questions were designed to find out about their artistic awareness, cognitive growth, and aesthetic sense, both consciously and unconsciously absorbed during the time of this project. By the time the study ended, after over four months, I felt bonded to these children; our intense, thrice-weekly explorations together had made us learning partners, and sometimes I forgot that we were adult and children, expert and novices, rather than contemporaries. We had come to trust and value each others’ ideas based on our collective, on-going experiences in composing. We treated each other as equal partners, dissolving, for a time, the hierarchical roles which are part of the school structure. One of the questions I decided to ask them in this final evaluation was: *What do you think the differences are between thoughts and feelings?* Ordinarily, I do not think a teacher would ask such a question of eight and nine year olds; however, my experiences with these children made me curious about their responses. Some children wrote what one would expect from people their age:

"Thoughts you think and feelings you feel"; "I don’t know".

But some of the children expressed themselves deeply and eloquently. (Maybe, if I am honest, this is the reason I thought I would go ahead and ask such a complex question - hoping for the unexpected possibilities). I was struck by the intuitive insights, charm, naivety, and clarity of the various responses:
“Most feelings are sort of private and thoughts aren’t usually.”

“Feelings are in your senses (sic) and thoughts are in your mind.”

“I think they are different because you think with your brain and you feel with [your] heart.”

“Feelings are on your body thoughts are in your head.”

“The difference is when you think it’s in your head when you feel things it’s real.”

“I think thoughts and feelings are similar because you usually want to share them or keep them to yourself at the same time.”

“I think feelings and thoughts are both in your head.”

“I don’t think there is a difference.” (Several children wrote this.)

Once again, I am reminded not to underestimate what children can do (or think or feel).

Later, Erica and I look through these responses. She says she doubts that they would have been capable of such a depth of understanding or articulation before we began this project. Partly, it is just natural maturation, for grade three is a year of much development for many children. But also, Erica is convinced that their abilities have been the result of the nature of the tasks they have been given; she believes all of their cognitive, artistic and imaginative selves have been stretched and sensitized.

“Before, they just didn’t want to think...they say things are boring when they are difficult” [she describes a math problem she set as an example]. She goes on to say that she can see a shift in their attitudes, attention, on-task behaviour and concentration to complete tasks, in their other class work since we have been involved in this project. WOW!” (Excerpt from my field notes, May 28)
I cannot help wondering if I will see a marked difference between these children and the other grade three students next year, when they are re-mixed in new classes in grade four. I just hope the understandings gained from the experiences in this project will form part of these children’s aesthetic/artistic judgement foundations as well as aid in their cognitive growth for life-long learning.

In this study, student-composers used multi-modalities (gesture, words and sound) together to create and communicate an artistic expression. Educators must provide pedagogical exposure to a variety of modalities and means by which students can gain and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, for although “we live in a multi-disciplinary, multi-sensory, multi-cultural, non-compartmentalized world, our schools are often the opposite” (Balkin, 1990,32). It is only through pedagogy which includes opportunities to experience and express themselves in a variety of ways that children are able to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which enable them to become artists. And, as Jorgensen (1993, 47) so passionately writes (and I so passionately agree!), “It is on this process of becoming artists that schooling should focus”.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Implications for teaching and further research

As a result of my experiences in and observations about this study, both expected and emergent, interesting questions, unexpected insights and areas for further research and future teaching were raised. Among them were:

Play as a Classroom Process

Play, in the context of the composing classroom, is the exploratory, improvisatory part of the creative process. It can be active, as in random or intentional 'playing in' or 'playing with'; it can also be passive, as in daydreaming or musing. All people need to play, regardless of age. I am reminded of Bernard Shaw's warning that "we do not cease to play because we grow old, but we grow old because we cease to play". Imaginative, curious people in all fields of endeavour play, and they are often the ones called 'creative'. Play gives us a reason to reach for possibilities, to be 'silly' and escape the seriousness of reality for a time; play is a balm for the hard-working body and overstressed soul. As teachers, we often forget that play is essential, regardless of whether or not the time spent in that activity might appear unproductive. This study helped me to remember the integral place play, as exploration, has in creative activities.

Time as Limiting Factor

Time, like play, is a rather nebulous, but essential, element in the creative arts. Time, often everyone's enemy, is definitely one of a teacher's main barriers to effective teaching. The structure of this study was bound, in great measure, by time constraints (e.g., forty-minute teaching blocks). Each year it seems that more is expected to be stuffed into the already
overcrowded curriculum. This means streamlining both learning/teaching and evaluative procedures. But art cannot be produced on demand. Teachers must decide on a philosophical stance and be prepared to defend it with a comprehensive curriculum containing reachable, viable, relevant goals. This is much easier to talk about than to accomplish. Results from this study, including the students’ artistic development, their own comments and transference of learning to other curricular areas, and my colleague’s enthusiasm for the changes she saw in her students, have helped reinforce my beliefs that taking a philosophical and pedagogical stand on this issue is important.

**Gender and Value Judgements in Composing**

Researching ‘lived experience’ (van Manen, 1990) means that one cannot always isolate those things one wishes to focus upon in a particular study. In this study, I purposely chose to ignore gender as a potential influence in terms of decisions made in composing activities. As I looked for patterns and trends in the twenty-one students’ compositions, I noticed that there were definitely places where gender seemed to determine decisions. Implications from the findings of this study make me aware that gender is an area that requires further study in terms of socio-cultural influences on behaviour and attitudes in music and story composing of children of this age.

**Noise and the Composing Process**

Not all noise is unproductive. Teachers who pay careful attention to their students’ working together soon get to know when noise is ‘good’ and when it is ‘bad’. Composing in an inside space with twenty-one students and a wide range of sound sources means that there is usually
quite a lot of noise. Because it is often impossible to hear a voice over the sounds of instruments, I arrange a signal with the students to let them know when I want their attention. Usually, I flick the lights on and off, and they learn to respond to this. What I learned from this study was that different people have different levels of tolerance for noise. Luckily, because I am in a portable classroom on the edge of a playing field surrounded by forest, the students can use outside spaces most days, as well as the classroom. When we are all forced to stay inside, it can get difficult. I am able to tolerate quite a lot of noise, as long as I know it is of the productive kind. I assumed, given the sound-filled world my students live in, that they, too, tolerated a high level of noise. My realization that this is not necessarily true came one day during the music composing segment, when a child ran up to me with a pained expression and said, “Flick the lights or something! I can’t even think!” An ongoing challenge when having children engage in music composing in the classroom, is to create quieter times for those who need that atmosphere to think better, or talk to their partners.

Limitations of Video-taping as a Data Collecting Tool

Relying on video cameras for data was frustrating as well as invaluable. In the end, the obvious worth of the range of data collected was indisputable, but there are many entries in my field notes which remind me of the frustrations and unexpected events involved in the use of video for this study.

There were the logistical issues: locating, borrowing/renting, insuring and storing the machines. This was an unbelievably difficult problem for me. My school has one rather bulky, older video camera. I thought to borrow others from colleagues at other elementary schools, but
school insurance has a deductible dollar amount that is so high, I could not afford to take the chance something might happen. I then tried to borrow some from my university, and while they had some not in use at that time, there was a similar problem with insurance. I finally had to put a rider on my personal home-owner policy and pay an extra fee. When the project ran longer than I had originally booked the machines out for, I had a very difficult time convincing the Education Department Media Centre that my need was worthwhile, and in the end, had to cut short my use of those cameras.

There were mechanical considerations: electrical outlets, recharging units, quality of external microphones, human frailty (mine). Ideally, it would have been wonderful if I could have video-taped all composing pairs during working sessions. In my school, rooms have two or three electrical outlets. This, as well as the proximity of too many sounds within microphone range, severely limited the possibilities. (So did the borrowing problem). My decision to video-tape three composing pairs had to do with logistics and mechanical considerations, for the most part. There were also the times I thought I had turned the camera to ‘record’ but either I (or it) was not working properly, resulting in no recorded data. (Thankfully, that only happened twice in the four months).

There were the realities of daily life: absences, dissolved partnerships, unforeseen school events, time and space restrictions for the debriefing of the focus-composers, use of camera persons. My expectations for consistency of partnerships were not realized, as already discussed elsewhere. As well, there were problems finding both place and time to watch the working videos and reflect on them with each pair of focus-composers on the same day. Our school, not
unlike most, is very short of private, quiet spaces available for meetings. In addition, we have only two playback units, and it was not always possible for me to have access to them when I was able to meet with the children. As well, in order to debrief these children on the same day as they made each videotape, I had to take them out of class, which meant they were missing some other subject. I always felt the pressure of time in this part of the study.

To do the taping, I originally had thought to ‘borrow’ three grade seven students. I sought reliable, academically ‘good’ students able to miss class time, keen to use the camera, able to be impersonal camera people without engaging the student-composers in dialogue. At first, this arrangement worked; they came and taped two times each week, and I taped the whole class on the third day for class in-process, or final, sharing. After about two months, these students felt they could no longer miss class time, so I had to come up with another solution. By then, the focus-composers were so familiar with the cameras, they just set them up themselves. For the last of the music compositions, there was no ‘roving eye’, and the composers had to be careful to set up their instruments within camera range. The rest of the sessions were story sessions, and there was little physical movement on the part of the composers, so this restriction was not a problem.

In spite of the unexpected problems which occurred, video data provided evidence that would have been impossible to collect in other ways. It remains the most complete single tool for this purpose that I know. Both researchers and teachers can benefit greatly from its use; however, it is helpful to be aware beforehand of the possible problems mentioned above.
Issues of Voice, Risk, and Trust

These three issues have implications for both teachers and students. Theoretically, they are individual entities; in educational practice, they are inextricably interrelated. Graham Welch (1996) said that the purpose of music education should be to give students the “power to perceive possibilities.” I agree, and believe that his statement should be extended to include all education, not just music. For this to take place, the classroom must be one where the children can trust that they and their ideas will be safe from peer pressure and potential ridicule, that they can take risks and even fail, all without penalty. The teacher is ultimately responsible for creating a classroom atmosphere where such things can happen. In such a classroom, where teacher and students are partners in an open-ended, flexible learning situation, a careful balance of relationships must be preserved. It is important that “the children’s voice, not the teacher, should direct the development of their symbolic intelligence” (Gromko, 1996,50). The teacher is facilitator, model and mentor in such classroom settings. It is her job to help the students learn to balance privileges and responsibilities in regards to participating in designing and evaluating their own learning. Being immersed in this study taught me many things about creating a classroom in such a way as just described; I have knowledge which I will use in future to enrich my teaching. I feel other teachers might also find benefits in addressing these issues when working with their students.

Concerns About Children’s Abilities in Oral Expression.

My belief that there is a need to expand this part of language learning has already been stated elsewhere in this paper. I suspect that the growing popularity of drama in both elementary and
high schools has something to do people’s need to orate. Storyteller Louise Profert-Le Blanc says that “you have three ears - two on your head and one in your heart”, and that when we listen to each other, we make connections to that other and also hear our own inner selves better.

People are naturally storytellers. Hearing, seeing, touching as we listen/tell stories makes the experience holistic, three-dimensional, real. Most people, when talking, move and make eye-contact, drawing the listener into the experience. Depriving children of this experience is something teachers must remedy by redesigning their curriculum. Ursula Le Guin writes in *Dancing At the Edge of the World*, “Notation...had a huge effect on both the composing and performing of music. Yet there is a lot of music that actively resists...notation...written music...did not replace performance” (183). While the printed note is useful as a tool for memory and historical recording, it has become incredibly important in music education. It is too easy to gloss over the process of ‘making’ (composing, performing) music and concentrate on the notated product - it’s so easy to mark, even though it is essentially dead. “The note”, Le Guin continues, “having no symbolic value by itself, no ‘meaning’, can’t be replaced by a sign. It can only be indicated by one...” (183). She recognized that music is still essentially heard, expressing itself, and she laments that language has had a different fate. “But the written word found a detour past both outer ear and inner ear to non-sensory understanding...a way around the body. Written text can be read as pure sign, as meaning alone. When we started doing that, the word stopped being an event. I’m not complaining...if it weren’t for books, how could I be a novelist?...”(183).

Well, I’m complaining - I’m thankful reading and writing are ‘core’ subjects in school, but
there is much more to language learning and, as well, much more to having language enrich one’s life. I would like to see teachers embark on a campaign to replace the ‘golden silences’ in schools with glorious noises of various kinds of oral expression. The tentative, quiet, often minimally expressive way some of the children in this study shared their stories suggests that orality is an area that researchers might also find interesting for future studies.

**Issues Arising from the Teacher As Researcher**

Being both teacher and researcher at the same time is most instructive and can be both very rewarding and very stressful. There were times when I was trying to be the camera person (researcher), answer a question for a student-composer (teacher/facilitator), and jot down something I wanted to remember, either for future pedagogical reasons or relating to the research project (teacher and researcher). Thinking back now, I realize why some of our sessions left me exhausted! While there is much support in the literature for the validity and value of teacher as researcher, many teachers find the prospect daunting. Some of my colleagues who have not yet attempted research, recognize the value of, and/or have the desire to, scrutinize or alter their own praxis. The most difficult part for them is knowing how to begin. I feel it is important for teachers to be mentors for each other within their roles as designers and implementers of pedagogy; as well, instruction by the research community continues the support for understanding and knowledge between theorists and practitioners. Facilitating open communication between both communities involved in educational pursuits can result in ever-increasing opportunities for rich dialogue and learning for the ultimate benefit of children.
Problems Arising from Notation

Seeing the different attitudes toward creating activities with and without notation by the children in this study reinforced my belief that notation should be used as a memory tool and adjunct for creating process. Based on my observations of these child-composers as they worked with words and music as well as other student groups with whom I have designed and implemented composing tasks, I believe that traditional notation has the effect of constricting the creative possibilities during the ‘making’ process. An exception to this is graphic notation for music, which has the flexibility of being a still-evolving form, unlike the standard music and language notational forms. As a new, non-standardized form, it is useful as a notational tool, able to be as visually varied as the sounds to be notated are aurally various. During this study, I was struck by the effect previous training in the Writing Process had on both the processes and products of language composing, particularly in regard to the attention the child-composers paid to the structural and mechanical conventions learned. Although language teaching is not my area of expertise, I feel further investigation into the relationship between children’s attitudes and decisions during creating tasks, and training in written story forms, would be enlightening to both teachers and researchers interested in this area of the curriculum.

The Question of Informal Learning (Enculturation)

The socio-cultural context of the children in this study includes exposure to mass media which are prevalent and powerful. Enculturated or informal learning from these sources provides a strong, influential set of criteria for decisions about content, genre, style and artistic judgment. These particular child-composers seemed to rely on criteria from popular media conventions in
their decisions about what they considered to be musical as well as what constituted captivating story content. While the research community already recognizes the importance of informal learning on the shaping of value judgements, further studies might investigate:

a) whether these influences are empowering or limiting to the child’s individual artistic and creative expression: e.g., to what extent has the television and print popular media ‘hijacked’ English literary forms/styles that expose children to rich description, metaphors, poetry, etc. and substituted a “Beavis and Butthead”-style of monosyllabic, inarticulate speech patterning?

b) the fact that sounds/words tended to be explored in relation to what was ‘supposed to be’ according to enculturated norms, (e.g.: Tae’s miming an electric guitar by strumming a bamboo fan, and his classmates knowing what he meant and accepting what the resulting sounds were really supposed to sound like), than for their intrinsic value (e.g., is it possible that decisions demonstrated through talk, behaviour and symbolic forms, are a complex variation of Skinnerian behaviour conditioning?) If enculturated stimuli are sufficiently strong, resulting behaviours might not be individuals’ critical and creative choices but rather conditioned responses to unconsciously absorbed cultural influences. Dyson (1997) analysing narratives, actions and verbal comments of children within the context of their classroom, notes child “composers...are not so much meaning makers as meaning negotiators (italics mine), who adopt, resist or stretch available words” (p. 4). Her findings have important and serious implications for methods and content teachers use as well as insights into how children view their world(s) and are able to express themselves;
c) methods possible for use by teachers to deconstruct enculturated norms in order to broaden and deepen information children have, by teaching them to question what they already know, and think critically about the decisions they make as they attempt to express their individuality while creating artistic compositions of quality.
CHAPTER TWELVE

Final Comments

So, what were we doing all those months? These four phrases kept running through my head:

1) *composting the composition* (Carl Leggo, 1997)

2) *deconstructing and constructing at the same time*

3) *process and product entwined*

4) *nothing we do goes as planned* (Timothy Lensmire, *When Children Write*, 1994, 23)

For all that time, the children were engaged in a rather messy, unpredictable endeavour which they found enticing. What makes it so? I cannot be sure, nor is it necessary that I know. What I am sure about, from conversations, journal entries and self-evaluations, is that these children considered our time and activities together important as opportunities for them to express themselves as composers. One boy initially thought he was a composer when creating, but ceased to be one once he assumed the role of performer. After a lively interchange of ideas on this idea with the whole class, it was decided that he, as well as all the other student-composers, could still feel like a composer even after the composition was completed. The boy who brought up this concern was very relieved at the group’s decision, and, this emergent issue had a ripple effect throughout the rest of the project, fostering and bolstering self-confidence in the student-composers.

I was pleased that the students thought of themselves as composers, but what would adults think? I thought back to composer Hildegard Westerkamp’s comments after her attendance at a sharing of thirty-three compositions from my students in grades four to seven. Although they
were not these same student-composers, I think her comments are relevant to the general discussion of whether or not musically untrained children can be called 'composers', so I am including some of them here. The first thing I noticed about her as a listener was that she immersed herself in the situation; she focussed on the students’ use of the medium, opening herself up to receiving what was offered in the manner it was offered. I think this kind of listening is appropriate and necessary when presented with an art form. In return, the children responded to her as artist to artist; the reward was an enriching experience for everyone. She mentioned:

1. Judging 'goodness':
   
   “I think it has to do with a sense of focus that came from most of the compositions. The kids seemed connected to the theme they chose...they seemed quite clear about their choices and conscious about how their choices expressed what they wanted to say.”

2. What would bore me:
   
   “...if the kids had not been involved as intensely...their commitment to the process, their concentration and listening prevented any possibility for boredom. This really applies to any performance in life - if the spirit is missing, the sense of meaning and exploration, then boredom can set in...”

3. What made the compositions imaginative:
   
   “...choice of instruments, choice of sounds...in particular, the detail in their choices...I felt from almost all of them that they had really worked like composers: listening in detail to how a given instrument...can express what wants to be expressed...even though they stuck to quite
traditional sounds and forms, within those choices they showed a lot of individuality...in the age group of your kids I think there are still a lot of traces of that natural desire to fit in by imitating what is surrounding them.”

Unfortunately, not all adults see the value to be found in children’s creative expressions. Rena Upitis writes of her unfortunate experiences in *This Too Is Music* (1990):

while I composed music as a child, I soon stopped thinking of myself as a composer. Perhaps this was because I was made to realize...that I simply wasn’t in the same class as Beethoven or Mozart. Unfortunately, we tend not to think of children as composers of music because we make judgements of their compositions based on adult standards...we are quick to praise...children’s early writing, calling them writers at the outset, but it is simply not part of our practice to praise a seven-year-old’s ‘plunking at the piano’, calling him or her a musician (p. 3).

Thankfully, more teachers and researchers are acknowledging that children making generative gestures need to be judged by criteria appropriate to their abilities. The organic growth of the compositions seemed to reflect the emerging development of the children as artistic thinkers and doers. It gave me great pleasure to watch and be part of the ‘composting’ process; to laugh, and also to feel the agony of a child, who, working at constructing something suddenly realizes the need to tear it apart, deconstruct what was there, in order to rebuild a new but related entity. While I tried, in this study, to separate process from product, the creating by the children involved both at the same time, intertwined in various ways. Although it is useful to look at each part individually for some purposes, we teachers and researchers must recognize that for the children, the two go hand-in-hand.

As the adult in this continuing inquiry into learning, I set myself the task of being a model, partner and mentor. I need to listen, support, be honest, share my knowledge, expertise and limitations. I can say “No” sometimes, laugh, cry, play, and share my passion for composing and
communicating expressive gestures with the children. I agree with Westerkamp (conversation, March, 1997) when she says:

it is the teacher’s role to listen carefully to how students listen and how they create sounds/music from that to which they listen...this applies to all levels of listening...you are challenging them to stay culturally awake and actively creative.

Am I finished now? I’m not sure yet. This document has been part of my life for what seems a very long time...I have revelled in putting it together, hated it for its relentless presence; now I am a little frightened that it actually may be at its end. Like compositions I have made, I already feel it is ‘not quite right’, and know I will begin to pick it apart at the first opportunity. Is this the artist in me? Or, perhaps, the compulsive student? There is something uncomfortable about the printed word/note - it is so there, so unchanging, so unlike real life. Ah, well.....
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bahktin, (1981)


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APPENDIX A
Permission Letter Sent to Parents/Guardians of Children in Division 10

January 12, 1996

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Between February and June, 1996, Mrs. Forrest and I are planning a research project investigating the possible links between creating processes in storytelling/story writing and composing music. Music and language time will be extended and lessons will be led by both Mrs. McCleary and myself. As we guide the students in their composing, we will be asking questions of them in informal conversations and interviews, videotaping their working and sharing sessions, and asking them to keep a journal of their activities and ideas.

I am planning to use the information from this project for my doctoral dissertation in Music Education (U.B.C.). This means that information will be available to people outside Montroyal School: to my Ph.D. committee and, perhaps, in the future, for further research projects in Music Education. It is essential, therefore, that I have written permission to include your child in this project. Confidentiality of students will be maintained: no student’s name will be used either on video or in written text; any child whose parent or guardian has not given permission for videotaping will not be videotaped; any child who is not allowed to participate in this study will be given other interesting and instructional music and language activities in another venue. Please read the statements below carefully, and check [] those which are appropriate. If you have further questions or concerns feel free to contact me, (through Montroyal School at 988-6377), or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Robert Walker, (through U.B.C. at 822-5270).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Joi Carlin (music teacher)

*****************************************************************************
The return of this portion of the parent/guardian letter indicates that Mrs. Carlin has received instructions as to the inclusion of your child, __________, in her dissertation project.
APPENDIX B
Self-evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the First Musical Composition

SELF EVALUATION: COMPOSITION #1

Name______________________________

My partner’s name______________________________

1. I feel like a composer........yes     no

2. I am happy with my composition because it tells about me..........yes   no

3. I might add or change ______________________________________

4. I liked working with my partner because __________________________

5. My partner and I had trouble ____________________________________

6. The best part of working on this composition was__________________

7. The worst part of working on this composition was__________________

8. My favourite part of the composition is ____________________________
APPENDIX C
Self-evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the Second Musical Composition

SELF EVALUATION: COMPOSITION #2

Name
My partner’s name

1. I feel like a composer.......yes no

2. I am happy with my composition because it tells what I think “red” is...........
   yes no

3. I might add or change

   

4. I liked working with my partner because


5. My partner and I had trouble


6. The best part of working on this composition was


7. The worst part of working on this composition was


8. I liked working on this composition because


9. My favourite part of the composition is


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APPENDIX D
Self-evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the Third Musical Composition

SELF EVALUATION: COMPOSITION #3

Name __________________________
My partner’s name __________________________

1. I feel like a composer............yes no, because __________________________

2. I am happy with our composition because it tells with musical sounds what we wanted to say about the topic we chose...............yes no

3. Some part/thing I might add or change is __________________________
   I would change this because __________________________

4. The best part of working on this composition was __________________________

5. The worst part of working on this composition was __________________________

6. My favourite part of the composition is __________________________

7. Of the three compositions - #1 All About Us, #2 Red, #3 ?? with unusual sound sources - I liked working on __________________________ best. The reason I liked this composition the best is __________________________

8. If I were the teacher, these are the things I would say/do in the next composition -

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX E
Self-evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the First Story Composition

SELF EVALUATION: STORY #1

Name __________________________
My partner's name __________________________

1. I feel like a storyteller/writer............yes   no

2. I am happy with my story because it tells about my favourite thing.............
   yes   no

3. I might add or change ________________________________________________________

4. I have written a story by myself before............yes   no
   I have written a story with a partner before............yes   no

5. Working with my partner is...easier than....harder than....the same as....working on a story by
   myself because ____________________________________________________________

6. I chose my partner because ___________________________________________________

7. The best part of working on this story was _______________________________________

8. The worst part of working on this story was _______________________________________

9. The things I (we) thought about and did to make up our story
   were ________________________________________________________________

10. Making up music is different from making up a story..... yes   no.
    (If you answered 'no', answer this......>  What do you do differently?

______________________________
APPENDIX F
Self-evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the Second Story Composition

SELF EVALUATION: STORY #2

Name _______________________________________
My partner’s name _____________________________

1. I feel like a storyteller/writer............yes  no..... because ____________________________________

2. I am happy with my story because it tells about the topic ........yes  no

3. I might add or change ________________________________________________________________

4. If I could write this story again, I would ____________________________

5. I worked with the same partner on this story as I did on the first story.....yes  no..., because ________________________________________________

6. Working with my partner this time was...easier than....harder than....the same as.....working with my partner on the first story because _____________________________________________________________

7. My/our ideas for this story came from _____________________________________________________

8. The best part of working on this story was ________________________________________________

9. The worst part of working on this story was ________________________________________________

10. I/we began this story the way I/we did because ____________________________________________

11. I/we ended this story the way I/we did because ____________________________________________
APPENDIX G
Self-evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the Third Story Composition

SELF EVALUATION: STORY #3

Name ____________________________
My partner's name ____________________________

1. I feel like a writer............yes     no

2. I am happy with my/our story because it 'says' what I/we intended to ......
   yes     no
   (If you answered 'no', please continue.....)   because ____________________________

3. I/We began my/our story by ____________________________
   because ____________________________

4. I/We ended my/our story by ____________________________
   because ____________________________

5. The idea for my/our story came from ____________________________

6. Story elements I/we used in the story were: (for example - main and minor characters;
   plot; action; tension (problems) and release (solutions); repetition; tempo and rhythm
   of the story and of voices during the telling/reading)

   ____________________________

7. When I was creating my/our story, I/we had trouble with ____________________________

8. The best part of working on this story was ____________________________

9. The worst part of working on this story was ____________________________
10. My favourite part of the story is ___________________________________________________

11. If I had more time, I might add or change ____________________________________________

12. Some things I learned about writing/telling stories through doing this project are....

13. I have written stories alone before this project................yes   no

14. I have written stories with a partner before this project................yes   no

15. I would rather work.....alone     with a partner..........on a story
   because...

16. Something I would like to tell Ms. Carlin about story writing and storytelling is

17. I think composing stories and musical compositions are alike in this/these ways:

18. I think composing stories and musical compositions are different in this/these ways:

19. I think the best way to tell someone what is in my mind (communicate ideas) is to

20. A story is good if _______________________________________________________________

21. I think my best music composition was ___________ because _________________

22. I think my best story was ___________ because _________________
APPENDIX H
Peer Evaluation Form Completed by Subjects after the Third Story Composition

PEER EVALUATION: STORY COMPOSITION #3
“stars” and “wishes”

☆ = parts of the story that:

1) worked well
2) I particularly liked
3) were especially exciting or humorous

? = parts of the story that:

1) I did not understand
2) seemed out of place or did not fit
3) need to be extended or edited

My name: ______________________

The story/group I am evaluating: ______________________

My “stars” and/or “wishes” are: 
APPENDIX I
Self-description Form Completed by Subjects after the Study

Music/Story Journal ‘coda’

Name: ____________________________

1. Do you read at home for pleasure? yes no

2. How often do you read for pleasure? (Every day; weekends only; once in a while, etc.)

3. Does someone read to you at home? yes no
   Who? ____________________________
   When? ____________________________

4. What kinds of books do you like best? ____________________________

5. How do you feel when you read a book you really like? ____________________________

6. What do you think about when you read a book you really like? ____________________________

7. How do you feel when you hear/play music you really like? ____________________________

8. What do you think about when you hear/play music you really like? ____________________________

9. What do you think the difference is between thoughts and feelings? ____________________________
APPENDIX J
Letter Sent to Parents/Guardians of Children in Division 10 After Compositions Were Completed

June 7, 1996

Dear parents of Division 10:

The music and language project is now complete. The students composed three music compositions and three story compositions. Basic musical and story elements were taught as bases for creating, and the following themes/titles were given to guide the students in their work:

Music composition  
#1: “All about us”
#2: “Red”
#3: no theme/title - instead, students were asked to use at least two unconventional sound sources to add something unusual to the format used in the other compositions

Story composition  
#1: “Our favourite things”
#2: “Blue”
#3: no theme/title - instead, students were invited to extend prose writing by moving into poetry, using sounds (instruments), actions, or any combination of these - e.g., add something ‘unusual’ to the format used in the other stories

I wonder if your child has given you any feedback regarding his/her feelings about being involved in this composition project, any details about what he/she was doing for any particular composition, whether he/she had any preferences about or problems with any aspects of the work, etc. I would appreciate it if you could write down anything relevant at the bottom of this page and send it along to school with your child.

I am in the process of compiling a tape of the students working on the music and stories, sharing compositions with each other, and writing in their journals. It will contain a sampling of all children who I was given permission to videotape. When it is complete, I would be happy to lend it out - just let me know if you are interested in borrowing it.

Sincerely,

Ms. Joi Carlin

My child ______________ has mentioned these things to me/us about the music/story project....
**APPENDIX K**

Interpretive Framework for Strategies and Factors Affecting Decisions by Children Creating Musical Compositions

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## APPENDIX L

Interpretive Framework for Strategies and Factors Affecting Decisions by Children Creating Oral/Written Language Compositions

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