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How to cite:

Craft, Anna; Cremin, Teresa; Burnard, Pamela and Chappell, Kerry (2007). Teacher stance in creative learning: A study of progression. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 2(2) pp. 136–147.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© [not recorded]

Version: [not recorded]

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2007.09.003>

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Craft, A. CREMIN, T. Burnard, P. and Chappell, K. (2007) Teacher Stance in Creative Learning: a study of progression *Journal of Thinking Skills and Creativity* Vol. 2 (2) 136-147.

TEACHER STANCE

IN CREATIVE LEARNING:

A STUDY OF PROGRESSION

Introduction and background

The concept and application of 'creative learning' is being developed in England in particular through work both in schools and elsewhere, supported by organisations such as Creative Partnerships (Creative Partnerships, 2006; Brice-Heath and Wolf, 2004; Lamont and Hill, 2005), National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2006), the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2005a, 2005b) and partnership organisations such as Cape UK (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). Whilst some of this work builds on earlier conceptual accounts which explore possibility thinking as core to creativity (Craft, 2000, 2002; Burnard, Craft and Cremin, 2006, Cremin, Burnard and Craft, 2006) and the need for innovation, ownership relevance and control (Woods, 1990), little work focuses on how *progression* (i.e. developmental change over time in terms of what children know, understand and can do) in creative learning might be conceptualised.

This paper reports, then, on a significant 'slice' of a small-scale, qualitative pilot study funded by Creative Partnerships, a government-funded project under the aegis of the

Arts Council (England). The slice focused on here is teacher stance, in relation to the overall focus of the study, which was conducted over a twelve-month period from February 2005. The study as a whole investigated progression in musical and written composition and involved children aged four to fifteen (in the language of the English education system, from what is known as 'Foundation Stage' to 'Key Stage 4'¹). The work was undertaken by researchers from the Open University, the University of Cambridge and Canterbury Christ Church University, in partnership with eight school-based practitioners, in four school sites; three primary schools and one secondary school, working in depth with a small number of children and teachers in each site.

In the study as a whole, we aimed to further theorise creative learning and to explore aspects of progression in creative learning in two subject areas. Composition in music and English were chosen to provide a mix of opportunities and demands for creativity, drawn from the 'foundation' subjects (which include music, art, the humanities and others) and the 'core' subjects in statutory English school curriculum (Mathematics, English and Science).

The study is informed by a socio-cultural approach to learning informed by the work of Bruner (1966, 1996), Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and others. Children's capabilities are seen as personal and social meaning-making, where learning journeys are differentiated and pedagogy involves both scaffolding and modelling. Also implicit in the study is a view of learning as increased competence, derived from the Harvard model of 'teaching for

¹ The English education system, its curriculum, assessment and funding, is divided into five Key Stages as follows:
Foundation Stage, or FS (not compulsory): 3-5 year olds
Key Stage 1, or KS1 (compulsory): 5 – 7 year olds, or children in Years 1 and 2
Key Stage 2, or KS2 (compulsory): 7 – 11 year olds, or children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
Key Stage 3, or KS3 (compulsory): 11 – 14 year olds, or children in Years 7, 8 and 9
Key Stage 4, or KS4 (compulsory): 14 – 16 year olds, or students in years in Years 10 and 11

understanding' (Blythe et al., 1998; Wiske, 1998), at the heart of which is the notion of learning / understanding as 'performance', meaning the capacity of a learner to go beyond reproducing knowledge, to applying it in new contexts. The view of learners implied in the Harvard model is of increasingly competent persons (Blythe et al, 1998).

Our processes of inquiry were underpinned by an interpretative paradigm gradually characterising activity rather than seeking causal explanations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 1988). We recognize the situatedness of activity within musical and written composition, in terms of space, time and the body, as well as social interaction, meanings attributed to the task, and significance of children's and the teachers stances. Thus a co-participative research design, was selected to include researching teachers, in the three case study sites, to enhance our insights. This was combined with a collaborative approach to data analysis using an inductive-deductive analytic approach, applying the principles of constant comparative analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The study as a whole is located within three distinct existing literatures: 'creative learning' (chosen because of the increasing policy use of the term in England, by the funders of the study in particular), and composition in music and English. We outline briefly these three literatures first, in order to situate the main focus of this article, which is our analysis of teachers' stance in relation to progression in creative learning.

Creative learning is distinct from creativity, in its focus on the process of learning itself (Jeffrey, 2006). The research literature in the area of creative learning generally, developing in England, is patchy and emergent, in part because of the relative novelty of

the term, and lack of shared understanding around what it could be deemed to mean (Craft, 2005). Examples of what might constitute creative learning are provided and explored by Craft (2005) Jeffrey and Craft (2006) and Jeffrey and Woods (2003). Craft (2005) in particular argues that the distinctions between learning and creative learning are very fine, particularly where learning is understood in a constructivist frame. Collective attempts to arrive at a definition of creative learning have been numerous; the working definition which this study adopted was :

Creative learning develops our capacity for imaginative activity, leading to outcomes which are judged by appropriate observers to be original and of value.

(Spendlove, Wyse, Craft, Hallgarten, 2005).

This definition, which built on the work of the National Advisory Group on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999), takes creative learning beyond 'learning per se'. Firstly, it acknowledges the engagement of imagination. Secondly, it focuses on the production of an outcome which as NACCCE (1999) argues may be a product but may also be an idea; equally this may be derived from individual engagement as much as from collective or collaborative activity. Thirdly, it identifies the need for such outcomes to be judged as original and of value by appropriate observers – thus incorporating an adaptation of Amabile's notion of the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT) (Amabile, 1988, 1996) which acknowledges the possibility of questioning who might be appropriate in making such judgements. In different contexts, it could be argued that such judgements could be appropriately made by teachers, other adults and even children themselves (Craft et al, in press).

Studies exploring creative learning have been informed by social constructivist models of meaning making (Craft, Burnard and Grainger, 2005; Craft, 2005, Jeffrey, 2001; Jeffrey and Woods, 2003). A line of this work emphasises the role of ‘possibility thinking’ (or imagining) as the heart of creative learning (Craft, 2001, 2002; Jeffrey and Craft, 2006), whilst recent empirical work exemplifies what this might involve in children’s learning (Burnard et al, 2006; Cremin et al, 2006; Jeffrey, 2005a; Jeffrey and Craft, 2006).

Some work has emphasised individualised perspectives (for example, in the early years, Bruce, 2004 and Eglinton, 2003, and in primary education, contributors to Jones and Wyse, 2004). In contrast others (Miell and Littleton, 2004, Miell et al, 2005) have emphasised collaborative creativity. In these and other models, for example, that developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) it is pupil *behaviours* which are particularly emphasised. Drawing on a four-year development programme in 120 schools, the QCA identify five elements of creative learning experiences:

- asking questions
- making connections
- imagining what might be
- exploring options
- reflecting critically

The QCA creativity framework stops short of exploring how such behaviours may develop with age. This provided a starting point for our study.

In *musical composition*, we were cognizant of both developmental and cultural approaches to musical composition. In the developmental literature, over the last thirty years or so, studies on both sides of the Atlantic have probed children's musical development as evidenced in musical composition (Gardner, 1982, Ross, 1984, Swanwick and Tillman, 1986, Hargreaves and Galton, 1992). Several have been based on an age-stage version of development closely based on the work of Piaget. Accordingly, progression frameworks are tied closely to ages. Each of the developmental studies suggests the symbolic aspect of music depends on maturation and a well developed stage of formal operational thought. In this view, creative development is normative, stage-based and age-dependent. It should be noted however that the focus in this body of work is *musical development*, and not the progression of 'creativity' or 'creative learning', although it could be argued creative learning and/or creativity are inherent in musical development. We were influenced by cultural approaches to musical composition, notably work by Burnard (2006a, 2006b) and Feldman (1993), who argue for the role played by *culture and creativity* in understanding children's musical composition, seeing creativity, including musical composition, as situated within networks of cultural systems. The National Curriculum in England (DfES, 1999) in its present form implies that progression is a linear process from simple to complex. The assumption underpinning this sense of progression is that it occurs in stages creating and choosing sounds in response to given starting points (Level 1), to choosing and ordering sounds within simple structures (Level 2), to creating and combining several layers of sound with awareness of the combined effect (Level 3); to composing by developing ideas within musical structures (Level 4); then composing music for different occasions using appropriate musical devices (Level 5) to composing in different genres and styles (Level 6) and then creating coherent compositions drawings on internalised sounds (Level 7) in to extended compositions (Level 8).

In **written composition** work was informed by three ‘competing discourses’ (Fairclough, 1989) in the field of written composition studies, namely: cognitive theory in which writing is seen as problem solving done by individuals (eg Flower and Hayes, 1980; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987); genre theory which recognises that writing is seen as culturally situated social communication and (Cope and Kalantis, 1992; Wray and Lewis, 1997), and socio-cognitive theory which is concerned with how individuals assert their intentions and agency within socio-cultural practices (Nystrand et al, 1993; Grainger et al, 2005). Whilst the NLS *Framework for Teaching* (DfEE, 1998) in England is underpinned by the work of genre theorists and emphasises the linguistic features of texts, our study in acknowledging the dynamic relationship between meaning, form, social context and culture, adopted a more socio-cultural perspective. The National Curriculum (DfES, 1999) in its assessment framework, and the NLS (DfES2006) in its recently reworked form, both imply that progression in writing is connected to coverage of the objectives at text, sentence and word level and explicit advances in relation to aspects of composition and effect, such as adaptation, viewpoint, detail, vocabulary choices and pace. Although this is not based on research evidence and in general the assessment of progression tends to privilege quantifiable features of writing and the ‘construction and correctedness’ of the piece produced in relation to the features of the genre (D’Arcy, 1999; Bailey, 2002).

Our theoretical stance, in both music and writing, led us to explore the role of social and cultural context including collaboration, and to document teacher stance on these.

Research design and methodology

This project involved inter-perspectival collaboration between eight collaborating teachers in four school sites, and four university based researchers collaborating closely on data collection and analysis. School- and university-based researchers collected and coded data in close collaboration. Peer-checking was achieved through whole-team analytic comparison sessions to establish credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Two of the four collaborating schools were involved in the Creative Partnerships programme, and two were not, but were featured in the QCA video released May 2005, entitled *Creativity: Find It! Promote It!* All sites were committed to fostering creativity. The four sites were situated in three different regions of England, as shown in Table 1, which also demonstrates tracking across one key stage to the next. Within each year group a small number of case study pupils were tracked, together with the practices of their teachers.

Table 2: PICL Sites

FS-KS1:	Cunningham Hill Infants (Hertfordshire – Southern England)
KS1-KS2:	Hackleton Primary (Northamptonshire – Midlands)
KS2–KS4:	North Walsham Primary to North Walsham High (Norfolk – Eastern England)
KS3–KS4:	North Walsham High (Norfolk – Eastern England)
KS4:	North Walsham High (Norfolk – Eastern England)

The sites themselves were distinctive. Cunningham Hill Infants School is a two-form entry school for children aged 4 to 7, with around 180 children attending it. It is located in a Cathedral city in Southern England. It serves a mixed community of social housing and expensive private homes. It has been awarded numerous honours for its

outstandingly creative and personal approach to teaching and learning and the very high attainment demonstrated by children². Hackleton Primary School is located in a village in Northamptonshire, in the Midlands region of England. It is a school which considers creativity to be of considerable import, teachers plan carefully for creative teaching and learning and make extensive use of the behaviours identified by QCA (QCA, 2005). High profile is afforded research, reasoning and recording as complementary to the traditional '3 Rs'. There is also a strong emphasis on children identifying questions and teachers acting as guides on the young people's learning journeys.³ North Walsham Junior School is a comprehensive of approximately 500 7 to 11-year-olds in Norfolk, in the East of England. High School is a comprehensive of approximately 860 11- to 16-year olds, in Norfolk, in the East of England. In each of the four schools, we tracked closely the journeys of multiple case study pupils, chosen, according to teachers' judgements, as high, middle and lower achievers within each subject area being studied. We collected data from each case in the second part of the 2004/5 school year and after the transition into 2005/6.

Time-sampling was used to bring a focus to field visits and teacher led data collection in which the process and outcomes of specific composition tasks were undertaken, as shown in Table 2; thus our focus data was very narrowly concentrated around certain children and specific tasks at set points in the timeline of their journey through the end of one Key Stage to another.

Table 2 Tracking of multiple cases over years 2004-5 and 2005-6

FS – KS1: Reception into Yr 1 (3 cases)

² More information about the school is at: <http://www.cunninghaminfants.herts.sch.uk/aboutus.htm>

³ More information about the school can be found here: www.hackletonschool.co.uk

Task M = compose rhythm (R); invent tune (Yr 1)

Task W = describe role in 'submarine' play (R); write lyrics (Yr 1)

KS1-KS2: Yr2 into Yr 3 (3 cases)

Task M= represent train journey (Yr 2) /another journey in sound (Yr 3)

Task W= write a postcard (Yr 2); in-role writing (Yr 3)

KS2-KS3: Yr 6 into Yr 7 (3 & 3 cases)

Task M= compose storm music (Yr 6); use expressive elements (Yr 7)

Task W = write a poem (Yr 6); W = write a short biography (Yr 7)

KS3-KS4: Yr 9 into Yr 10 (3 & 3 cases)

Task M = compose ring tone (Yr 9); in given genre (Yr 10)

Task W = write about a film short (Yr 9); write short story (Yr 10)

A mix of qualitative collection and ongoing analysis methods was employed, including participant observation in some sessions, co-analysis of video (some of which was also done with students and audio-recorded), co-analysis of transcribed audio recording of informal interviews with selected students and staff, co-analysis of photographic and other data archived in the schools as well as digital photographs (used as a focus for discussion between pupils and teachers), documentary analysis of teachers' planning/school documentation, use of drawings/concept mapping, and reflective accounts by teachers of children's engagement during the process of composition, together with analysis of product outcomes in terms of making, performing and appraising.

Three sets of data were collected (two in the summer term and one in the autumn) partially by the teachers themselves, partly by the university research partners and by the project researcher. In adopting this mix of perspectives and data and the co-

participative approach, the study aimed to overcome the limitations of relying solely on teacher accounts or observations of classrooms for informing what constitutes creative learning (but which do not necessarily include the processes and outcomes of pupils' work), or in depth discussion between teachers and researchers.

The research team strove to achieve trustworthiness by:

- developing a progression frame to inform the analytical synthesis of written and musical composition;
- defining creative learning in ways that identify and allow for integrated and domain-specific engagement in creative learning across phases;
- adapting the QCA framework, providing a potentially fruitful structure for understanding how teachers and pupils perceive creative learning and the relationship to theoretical and policy frames;
- using multiple sources and forms of data;
- investigating pupil and teacher perspectives and goals as regards creative learning in musical and written composition, in order to provide triangulation with those of the teacher and of the researcher; and
- adopting inter-perspectival collaboration between university researchers and teachers, and, to a degree, students.

Analysis was undertaken using a theoretical sampling approach from which emerged a cumulative and focused framework as an analytic tool for observing progression across the age ranges and the curriculum. This progression framework encompasses a number of elements, namely: task, product outcome, teacher stance, learner stance, composition knowledge, composition skills, composition process. In addition we set

these elements alongside the existing QCA creativity framework to enable us to detect progression in relation to the pupil behaviours and pedagogical strategies identified there. Data for each case across first one school year and then the next, was analysed against the overall progression framework in each of the two subjects.

Whilst domain-focused papers from this study have been presented and published (for example Burnard with Craft and Cremin, 2006; Burnard with Craft, Cremin and Chappell, 2007a, 2007b offering a reanalysis which concentrates on the domain specificity of progression in music composition), this paper is primarily concerned with the 'slice' of the analytic framework concerning stance towards creative learning in the context of composition in each of the domains, conveyed by each teacher; a set of perspectives we are calling 'teacher stance'. Thus the element of creative learning being theorised mainly here is the stance of the teacher towards it. In order to situate this slice within the broader study, we offer a discussion of the broad findings first, before focusing on a closer discussion of teacher stance.⁴

Findings and discussion

Overall, the study documented, in these distinct classrooms and schools, marked consistency in findings. Progression in musical and written composition was marked by a growing competence and capability as composers, and a comparison with adult standards. Apprenticeship approaches to teaching in relation to fostering creative learning were in evidence, with a gradual shift from collaboration and co-participation between children and between adults and younger children, toward greater modelling on

⁴ A more detailed discussion of progression in each domain studied, as well as across the areas of the QCA creativity framework, is given in the Final Report for the study (Craft et al, 2006).

the practices of the field, as children grew older. Given this increased focus on refinement of 'appropriate' ways of composing, we found that, whilst children's intentionality and self-determination grew, their agency diminished over time, as choices were increasingly determined by curriculum and assessment expectations. The study highlights at every key stage, the balance between technical expertise and imagination and originality in musical and written composition (an issue also raised in dance education, Chappell, 2007), the diminishing role of interaction, and of enactive engagement. By contrast, reflectiveness and persistence were documented as increasing over time, together with risk-taking which became more personal with increased age.

The study documented the significance of task, context and teacher expectations/teaching philosophy and attitude, in framing what children do, and the level at which they are able to perform, and therefore progress, in written and musical composition. The underpinning values of the teacher were immensely powerful in guiding how pedagogy was conceived of, how classrooms were resourced, how ethos was developed, and how tasks were framed, supported and evaluated. In both written and musical composition, teachers expected creative engagement and valued it, although not all activities planned fostered this fully. Teachers also valued learner independence as an aspect of learner agency – although again ironically not all activities addressed this fully, a point followed through in the discussion section later. The analysis offers evidence of the powerful significance of teacher stance in what kinds of composition tasks and processes children are offered. In discussing each, we offer some small segments of data to exemplify the categories exemplified.

Areas within which the teachers' stances were particularly pertinent included:

- i. Stance towards learner engagement
- ii. Stance towards creativity and creative learning
- iii. Stance towards teaching for creative learning, including task, structure/freedom, resourcing and time

Each of these is discussed as follows:

i. Stance toward learner engagement

Teacher stance on what was appropriate and possible in terms of how learners might engage, shifted from a strong child-centred perspective in the earlier years of school, to a much more adult-centric perspective in the later years, external constraints were seen to gradually erode or reduce learner agency. For example, the teacher of children aged 6-7, talked about her emphasis on experiential ways of learning with an example from their history-based study unit focused on the Great Fire of London, as follows:

“I will say to them that they used leather buckets and squirts and fire *hooks*, but they will find out how it felt to use them by actually using them themselves. So I don't say, oh, and it was really difficult to use them, the fire *hooks* did this, so they will find out by doing practical things.” (DB, Transcript, page 5).

She emphasises the importance of children learning playfully, as a foundation to both conceptual understanding and basic skill development. Playful visualisation has an important role, as does working with other children. In discussing ways into written composition with these young learners, she says,

“If I feel that ideas are struggling then we stop and say, right, we're going to have a thinking moment, ... and everybody has talking time to their partner ... then they'll ... share ideas.. .to give them a way to move forward from, and just to envisage where they are. So we gave them a description, close your eyes, imagine you're in that carriage, now

you know about the carriages...seeing where you are, seeing what's happening" (DB transcript, p.)

In contrast, the English teacher of 13- to14-year-olds emphasised the impact of national Assessment on the way she teaches written composition:

"the emphasis is on the covering of many different types of writing, most of it non-fiction in order to prepare them for the writing task....the focus [is] very much on spelling, punctuation and grammar, particularly as we've been playing with using sentences for effect which could make it sound quite negative but basically I'm trying to teach them to write the kind of sentences that gets them higher grades at SATs, not necessarily the kind of sentences that they feel that they're creatively involved in." (AB transcript, p)

As these quotes suggest, in relation to written composition (and they were mirrored in musical work also) the teachers of younger children (aged 4-7 and to an extent with 8-11 year olds) brought a stance on creative learning which valued full child engagement, (both affective and cognitive) curiosity and discovery play and independence. They expected exploration and performance, and encouraged spontaneity and expression in response to the curriculum focus. As children grew older, the teacher's stance and expectations moved gradually from encouraging direct playful involvement with 4-5 year olds in making and doing, toward creating, perceiving, making and doing with the 6-7 year olds and then to perceiving, making and particularly performing in the case of music, in 11-12 year olds. There appeared, in both domains, an increasing tendency as children grew older, for teachers to model children's musical and written composition on adult practice, with increased focus on assessment and judgement of worth using National Curriculum and other assessment criteria, and a reduction in emphasis on pupil agency as time, curriculum

and assessment increasingly constrained possibilities. These changing priorities are unsurprising on one level given the wider policy context, and yet in this teacher group, selected specifically for maintaining a close focus on creative learning despite the performative context, was perhaps unexpected in its pervasiveness.

ii. Stance towards creativity and creative learning

Particularly in FS, KS 1 and 2, and particularly for the music specialist, kinaesthetic and collaborative learning was highlighted as key to creative learning. Teachers of early key stages appeared to expect and value creative learning as part of the formative role of children's development. Across the key stages, progression was viewed by the teachers as grounded in:

- having the time to understand each learner as an individual
- increasing understanding and application of knowledge and (particularly thinking) skills, with the focus increasingly shifting off children's artistic voice
- increasing ability to critique and review, decreasing capacity to engage in an exploratory way, and decreasing agency

A field note made by the teacher of four to five year olds, documented an activity in which the three focus children were using instruments to pick out rhythms and tunes they had learned in their music lesson with the specialist music teacher. They had also, during a wet playtime, been playing with Rory, a large soft tiger. The teacher documented that she had 'suggested making up a birthday song for the tiger to which the children responded enthusiastically. Some words were suggested without teacher intervention using rhyme to make a verse' (JK field note, May 2005, page 1). The teacher noted delightedly that the children had made a literacy link with rhyme which

had been a recent focus in literacy, although this had been a musical composition activity originally. She documented what each child had contributed to the activity and what they had been focused on:

“G: noticed and talked about rhyming words

I: more reluctant to sing so used rhythms to accompany himself and the girls

L: sang an accurate tune using step glockenspiel to pick out the tune.” (JK field note May 2005, page 2).

Her close observation and documentation was essential to informing what she offered next for each child in extending their musical and written composition work.

Building on what has gone before for each child was also important to the Key Stage 1 teacher, D, here talking about the incremental way in which new ideas are introduced to the children:

“with everything, we always spend the first lesson, not on numeracy, not on literacy, first lesson on a Monday morning is, what have we learned so far, what are we going to learn this week, and how does it fit into the context of everything else we’ve done.” (transcript 0724-06, page 2)

In her view children find this reassuring:

“ they’ll go home and you’ll hear them say, oh we’re going to make some carriages tomorrow, straightaway, so it’s sort of a calming thing for them isn’t it really, you’re not going to come to school and have something that you’re not expecting that’s really difficult to do” (transcript 0724-06, pages 2-3).

By KS4, for the teachers increased self-determination and experimentation were much more important. P, music teacher, talks of ‘the hardest transition’ being toward being able to compose independently by the time students are aged 15-16 (transcript 0724-08 page 32). He believes that

“the most difficult thing is not necessarily the process of the composition, but ... having the composition heard.” (transcript 0724-08 page 31).

By KS4, there is also a marked shift in the teachers’ balance between group and individual creativity towards the latter. Again as P says:

“ by the end of Year 10, they’re quite used to standing on their own two feet, and settling into things” (transcript 0724-08 page 34).

And yet, for these older pupils, the pressures of the curriculum and assessment diminished their opportunities for agency.

iii. Stance towards *teaching for creative learning*

Across all age groups, teachers emphasised the balance between structure and freedom. Early on, structure related to exploratory and discovery approaches, with structures/boundaries set in order to encourage exploration of possibilities, and intervention judged so as not to interrupt this exploratory flow. Increasingly structure was related to subject specific knowledge (styles/ conventions/ appropriateness) and skills, but always with teacher taking dominant control of structure/boundary. This was often achieved in the later stages through modelling (in written composition particularly, the teacher perceived teacher modelling and standard setting through feedback as a vital part of the process across KS3 and 4). In musical composition, the teacher perceived adult practice modelling, intervention strategies, and feedback as a central part of the KS3-4 teaching process.

Teachers appeared to take a more assessment- and curriculum- constrained approach to structure at the beginning of KS3 which gave learners less independence, and then allowed more freedom for greater complexity in some ways, (see above) as they shifted to the end of KS4 (with the freedom appearing to be greater in writing than in music) – and yet overall agency constrained by external parameters determining curriculum and assessment. P, the music teacher, described this as ‘building up in several layers’ (transcript -0724-08, page 31). He says,

“in Year 7, I think it’s important that they get fundamentals right, like being able to play in time, listening carefully to what it is that, the music that they’re composing or performing.”

A, the English teacher, described the dilemma as a teacher in wanting to focus at the start of KS3 on preparing students to do well in their exams, and the sense that helping students write “the kind of sentences that they feel that they’re creatively involved in” is in tension with this high achievement pressure (transcript AB 24.05.05, page 1).

In writing particularly, creativity was modelled as an individual process by KS3, documented in our field notes, and from discussions with the teacher and with students. This contrasted with field notes, sound recordings and images from the Foundation Stage classroom which documented children playing imaginatively in the ‘submarine’ and drawing on this collaboration together in their writing, producing a mix of individually and jointly written pieces according to children’s choice.

The pressure of external tests is seen by the teacher as curtailing collaboration from Key Stage 3 onward. And the experience of composing within the exam situation and outside of it is reflected on by T, just before she makes the transition in to Key Stage 4. She says, of writing a story in an exam:

“T: You're pretty much under pressure and you just write what you think really because it gives you the question and then you have to answer it in like a story but it tells you what to do and then when it comes to an exam you just tend to write everything really but if some of it looks wrong and looks good.

Interviewer: And how is that creativity different do you think to when you're not in an exam situation?

T: Because you haven't got a limited time and you can think better because you're not under pressure.” (Transcript 24.04.05, page 7).

In music, then, the teacher stance to composition teaching shifted from creative teaching, from encouraging experiencing direct playful involvement with musical materials/elements through making and doing in FS-KS1, to creating, perceiving, making and doing in KS1-2, then to perceiving, making and particularly performing music in KS3-4. In musical composition, the teacher perceived adult practice modelling, intervention strategies, and feedback as a central part of the KS3-4 teaching process.

In this area of creative composition, time and resources were highlighted as in short supply by all teachers.

The overall milestones or shifts marking progression in teacher stance are documented in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of progression evidenced by teacher stance

Teacher stance towards...	F-KS1	KS1-KS2	KS2-KS3	KS3-KS4
i. creativity/ creative learning	Playful making Playful doing	Making Doing Creating, Perceiving	Making Creating Perceiving	Composing Perceiving Performing
ii. teaching for creativity / creative teaching	Structure then freedom	Structure and form	Structural boundaries	Constraints of assessment i

Overall, then, as children grew older, we saw teachers' values reflected in the nature of task opportunities offered, with a diminishing of agency in embodying, exploring and knowing, and an increase in valuing children's independence in performing, creating and reflecting with reference to the external assessment and curriculum framework. The shifts in teacher stance may reflect the external curriculum and assessment context; it may also reflect the wider identities of, at least, the secondary school teachers: for the music teacher performs in his time outside of school, and the English teacher is a fiction writer. These personal identities as performer and composer respectively are very likely

to permeate the attitudes they each bring to their practice, in that teachers' stance on creative learning may reflect their wider identity. This phenomenon would be worthy of further study, as creative and cultural partnership is increasingly advocated at policy level, at any rate in England (Roberts, 2006).

Overall conclusions and ongoing research questions

From each of the areas of teacher stance we drew the following conclusions.

In terms of ***stance toward learner engagement***, and what this meant for tasks and curriculum opportunities more broadly, we saw shifts from child-centred possibilities to adult-centred options in the later years where assessment constraints in particular were seen as constraining possibilities. As children grew older, children's musical and written composition was increasingly modelled on adult practice.

In terms of ***stance towards creativity and creative learning***, teachers in all key stages valued gaining an understanding of each learner as an individual, increasing over time the child's artistic voice, and the increasing ability of learners to critique and review. We saw an emphasis on collaboration in the early years gradually giving way to a more individualised approach to creativity and creative learning. The oldest students were expected to demonstrate self-determination and to be able to experiment further. It was notable that whilst self-determination increased, agency decreased over time, attributed by teachers to the external assessment constraints.

In terms of ***stance towards teaching for creative learning***, the balance point between structure and freedom was controlled in each age group by the teacher but shifted from the youngest learners to an emphasis on exploratory and discovery approaches, with structure focused on exploration, to a gradually more subject-knowledge based structure. As learners got older, there was a greater emphasis on adult modelling, with encouragement towards greater complexity with the oldest students. Pedagogy reflected in tasks set, emphasised less and less collaboration opportunities and increasing emphasis on independence in creating, performing and reflective as students got older, again seen as driven by external testing.

In addition to these findings, a refined definition of creative learning was produced, reflecting, unsurprisingly, the socio-cultural framing of creative learning in musical and written composition, as follows:

“significant imaginative achievement as evidenced in the creation of new knowledge as determined by the imaginative insight of the person or persons responsible and judged by appropriate observers to be both original and of value as situated in different domain contexts”

(Craft, Burnard, Grainger, Chappell 2006, page 77)

The story told thus far, then, suggested that, with increasing age, teachers shifted from offering children collaborative, personalised exploration to emphasis on individualised refinement determined more by external frames of reference such as curriculum, time and assessment constraints, with choices (or agency) decreasing over time. Several important general points surfaced during the overall analysis.

First, whilst in general teachers felt decreasingly inclined and able to incorporate and encourage children's own interests, the opportunity to collaborate, as well as fostering children's originality and imagination in written and musical composition, was always contextualised in terms of the external statutory curriculum and assessment constraints within which teachers were working.

Second, choice of task, together with attitudes conveyed by teachers, had the potential to open up or constrain what children were able to do. In documenting children's journeys of transition across year-ends, it was clear that choice of task did not always reflect what children had shown themselves capable of in the previous year, and could result in children severely under-performing. The risk here was that children could be judged to have progressed less far than they had, due to inappropriate task-setting, and belied insufficient attention and sensitivity on the part of teachers, to what children could already do. Whilst this can be challenging for teachers where children are transferring to them from a separate school, this occurred even where children were moving on within the same school. Ironically such reduced expectations of children appeared to undermine a core intention of creative learning, in that the culture of the classroom ascribed power and authority to teachers in a way that could be seen as (unintentionally) undermining pupil agency. Exploration of how widespread this issue may be would provide a salient focus for future study, together with attention to how teachers might more successfully address what could be a significant problem in fostering progression in creative learning.

Finally, as an exploratory study, PICL raised multiple pedagogical issues, in highlighting the downward pressure on pedagogy of an assessment system focused in the secondary years around individual performance. This aspect of social-cultural context to

creative learning in English and music in these English schools, has, it seems, a long reach, into the learning experiences of students and the stances adopted by their teachers, in fostering creative learning.

Acknowledgements

This study was undertaken with the generous support of *Creative Partnerships*.

We thank the pupils and school staff who have given their time to contribute their perspectives to this pilot study, with generosity and openness. Our appreciation to co-researcher teachers: Andrea Ball, Angela Bettridge, Paul Blake, Dawn Burns, Vivian Draper, Dominic James and Jean Keene. The interpretation of the data has been vastly enriched by their participation as co-researchers.

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/content/researchAndEvaluationProjects/139847/?version=1>

NOTE: Pupils' and teachers' names have been changed; names of schools have not.

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