

AN EXPLORATION OF MUSICAL PARENTING EDUCATION

by

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
ABSTRACT	8
List of Abbreviations	10
1 Introduction	11
2 Literature Review	15
2.1 Musical parenting	15
2.2 Early Childhood Music Classes	21
2.3 Musical Parenting Education	24
3 Research Design and Methodology	29
3.1 Research questions	29
3.2 Paradigm	29
3.3 Ontological position	31
3.4 Methodology	33
3.5 Positionality	34
3.6 Research Design	34

3.7 Class design and structure	37
3.8 Participants	37
3.9 Data Collection.....	39
3.10 Analysis of data	40
3.11 Triangulation	42
3.12 Ethical Considerations.....	43
4 The Investigation.....	45
4.1 The Class.....	46
4.2 Modifications	50
5. Discussion.....	52
5.2 Discussion of finding 2a	58
5.3 Discussion of finding 2d	60
5.3.1 The nature of empowerment	60
5.3.2 Empowerment through a genuine role in decision making	61
5.3.3 Empowerment through increased consciousness and competence.....	63

5.3.4 Empowerment through recognition of status and a sense of worth	64
5.3.5 Empowerment through self-efficacy and self determination	67
6 Conclusion.....	68
6.1 A new and effective pedagogy.....	68
6.2 Limitations.....	70
6.3 Implications for my own practice	71
6.3 Implications for ECME research community	72
6.4 Implications for practice	73
6.5 Implications for policy.....	74
6.6 Wider implications of this research	74
References	76
Webography of ECMC Websites (figures 2, 3, 4 and 5).....	88
APPENDICES List.....	89

List of Figures

Figure 1 ‘Family musicking framework’ with hypothetical scenarios based on Koops ‘Family Musicking framework’ (2020:175).....	16
Figure 2 Promises about the benefits of attending ECMCs - Text from ECMC websites	19
Figure 3 Information regarding creator/leader expertise - ECMC websites	23
Figure 4 Occasional mentions of parents - ECMC websites	26
Figure 5 The use, misuse and reference to research to promote ECMCs	27
Figure 6 The six guiding principles for the praxeological researcher, (Pascal & Bertram, 2012:486)	30
Figure 7 Transformational leader? No pressure then!	30
Figure 8 Journal notes: Disrupting norms, empowering parents, risking my business.....	32
Figure 9 Gantt chart	35
Figure 10 Original research design – Two interlocking cycles of action research.....	36
Figure 11 research redesign as a result of 2020 Lockdown.....	36
Figure 12 Table showing ages of participating babies.....	38
Figure 13 Screen shot of a section of the labelled recording using the Audacity app	40
Figure 14 Spidergram – Thinking on paper - elements of empowerment	41
Figure 15 Venn diagram – Thinking on paper - my pedagogy: what it is and what it is not ...	42

Figure 16 Resources for babies. Pamphlets and postcards for parents.	45
Figure 17 Class agenda (week 1)	
Figure 18 Class agenda (week 2)	46
Figure 19 Screenshot of YouTube playlist (class 1).....	49
Figure 20 Screenshot of YouTube playlist (class 2).....	50
Figure 21 Storyboard: Finding 1a	54
Figure 22 Storyboard: Finding 1b.....	54
Figure 23 Storyboard: Finding 1c	55
Figure 24 Storyboard: Finding 2a	55
Figure 25 Storyboard: Finding 2b.....	56
Figure 26 Storyboard: Finding 2c	56
Figure 27 Storyboard: Finding 2d.....	57
Figure 28 Visual summary of research findings.....	58
Figure 29 Graph showing answers to Q2q1 - weighted averages of each PMPE element on a Likert scale	59
Figure 30 Aspects/dimensions of empowerment based on Short (1994) and Kim (2012)	61
Figure 31 Categories of MP Empowerment.....	61

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ABSTRACT

The recent and rapid growth in early childhood music classes has brought with it an expanding body of early childhood music education research. This includes studies of musical parenting, a term which refers to everything parents do towards their children's musical environments. Parents are now widely recognised by researchers as children's first music teachers or mentors.

Researchers agree that early childhood music practitioners have much to learn from musical parenting practices, but most parents are unaware of this possibility. Indeed, the current zeitgeist in which parents are viewed through a deficit lens conflicts starkly with the notion that musical parenting is natural and instinctive. Currently, parents learn about early childhood music through précised, and sometimes misleading research soundbites that are used to promote and perpetuate pedagogies that are ultimately disempowering for parents.

This study seeks to redress this situation through the medium of *musical parenting education*. It asks how musical parenting education might be delivered through a new kind of early childhood music class and examines the role such training has in shaping musical parenting practices.

A praxeological action research methodology was adopted and sixteen mothers joined two research classes with their babies. Several modes of delivery were trialled and evaluated including TED-talk style lectures, classes with commentary and explanations, discussions between parents and the mutual sharing of experiences and repertoire. Additional support through emails, a YouTube channel, book loans and information pamphlets further contributed to the parents' experiences.

Through the design, execution and analysis of the classes, the new pedagogy of *Praxeological Musical Parenting Education* emerged. This pedagogy, which was shown to be significantly supportive of musical parenting practices, is characterised by flattened hierarchies and reciprocal learning between practitioner and parents. With a shift of focus from babies to adults, learning through stories, demonstrations, discussions and explanations became possible.

Through the classes, parents became more empowered and four key areas of increased musical parenting empowerment were identified: 1) parents had a direct involvement in the class development and content which is unusual for early childhood music classes, 2) parents reported raised consciousness and competence as they became more confident and increasingly aware of their innate musical skills, 3) parents' status was raised as they recognised the importance of their role in their children's musical development and 4) they demonstrated greater self-efficacy and self-determination.

Further exploration of Praxeological Musical Parenting Education is recommended amongst more diverse parenting groups, with larger samples and over extended time periods. It is clear that parents are interested in learning about musical parenting and supporting their children's musical development. Praxeological musical parenting education is an effective way of facilitating this process, empowering parents and ultimately impacting children's musical lives.

Keywords: Musical parenting, Praxeological musical parenting education, Early Childhood Music Education, Early Childhood Music Classes

List of Abbreviations

ECMEEarly Childhood Music Education

ECMCEarly Childhood Music Class

MPMusical Parenting

MPEMusical Parenting Education

PMPEPraxeological Musical Parenting Education

ARAction Research

Q1Questionnaire 1

Q2Questionnaire 2

1 Introduction

‘Further developmental work is required in the form of action research projects in which practitioners can explore innovative approaches to early years music practice and assess their impact.’

Music One2One final report (Young et al., 2006:7)

This project explores the use of the Early Childhood Music Class (ECMC), commonly known to parents as *baby and toddler music class*, as a forum for musical parenting education (MPE). Since firstly, there is a drive for more connection between Early Childhood Music Education (ECME) research and practice (Ilari, 2018; Young, 2005) and secondly, parents are widely considered to be, or to have the capacity to be a child’s first music teacher (Custodero, 2006; Tafuri, 2008; Abad, 2017; Koops, 2020; Papoušek, 1996; Bond, 2011), I propose that, logically, both ECME practitioners and ECME research communities should be exploring ways to share research and theories with parents.

The motivation for this study grew out of my growing dissatisfaction with the ‘consensual model’ (Young et al., 2006:26) of ECMCs in which the practitioner takes on the role of performer-musician and the focus is on elements of musical learning. In this model, which tends to suit middle-class families, parents are expected to engage playfully with their children during the class. There is little or no explicit recognition of the everyday musical lives of children nor of the adults’ innate musical parenting skills. Neither is there room for the accommodation of different learning styles. Parents are expected to either fit the mould or not attend. Practitioners, under pressure to succeed in a competitive market, dare not risk experimenting with the model (Young, 2018). Ironically, since beginning my studies in ECME in 2017, I have been perpetuating this practice which I knew to be less than ideal. I therefore resolved to use my final year of research to trigger and facilitate a change to this somewhat uncomfortable position and respond to the call of the Music One2One project for the exploration of new, inventive approaches through action research (AR) (Young et al, 2006).

My decision to pursue the subject of MPE was triggered when, on reading ECME research, I found myself wishing I had known more about it when my own children were small. I was shocked to realise that, even with a music degree, experience in ECME and experience in music teaching, I had frequently failed to notice consciously, acknowledge or fully appreciate my own children's musical behaviour. I had also been unaware of research around infants' musical competencies (Trehub, 2006) and wondered whether this knowledge might have changed my musical parenting approach.

The process of writing this dissertation brought up forgotten memories of my own historic reservations about ECMCs. In 2001, as a new parent, I was very reluctant to attend classes with my child. At that point, I was a music graduate who had trained and been working as a generalist primary school teacher. I had not even considered a career in ECME and was highly sceptical about the value of classes. The idea of sitting in a circle singing children's songs with other parents did not appeal and I felt sure that, with my musical knowledge and experience, I could provide for my child's every musical need. Had there been a class on MP, such as the classes I set up for this research project, I might perhaps have attended; but the term 'musical parenting' was not common in my experience as either parent or musician, and perhaps had not yet been considered. Furthermore, ECME research was certainly in its infancy (Young, 2018)

It was only when I moved to Boston, Massachusetts with my 12-month-old son, that, motivated by the desire to find friends, I chose to enrol in an ECMC. I quickly developed a great respect for Marion¹, the teacher, who was a folk musician. She ran welcoming and enjoyable classes that I found musically and educationally interesting. I also found friends. A move to California one year later introduced me to Maria¹, an inspiring actress/singer who led the local Music Together classes. Music Together provided parents with resources to enjoy

¹ Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the teachers

at home and a booklet that shared information on ECME theories (Guilmartin & Levinowitz, 1989) which I found helpful and interesting. As a result of these experiences, I developed an interest in ECME and undertook training with Music Together. On returning to the UK in 2004, I set up my own ECMC business which, in part influenced by my experiences and learning in the USA, broadly fitted the consensual model described in the Music One2One project.

Fifteen years later, whilst formulating research questions for this study, I initiated a discussion in an ECME Facebook group² around the idea of sharing ECME research with parents. Several prominent UK researchers and practitioners joined the busy thread asking questions and sharing their thoughts as parents, researchers and practitioners. A few contributors, Susan Young and Nicola Burke included, challenged me to consider the purpose of sharing research and the basis on which it would be selected. From the thread I learnt that many practitioners shared theories and research on an ad hoc basis in their classes. Many also reported sharing relevant blogs, videos and articles via social media. Nobody, however, had experience of the deliberate and planned sharing of research within classes and it became clear that this was an area that deserved further investigation.

In this research study, I aim to answer the following questions:

1. How might Musical Parenting Education be combined with practical musical activity in a new form of Early Childhood Music Class?
2. How far and in what ways might the deliberate inclusion of Musical Parenting Education in Early Childhood Music Classes support Musical Parenting?

² Since this was a private thread, I do not include a weblink. With permission, I have named some contributors and chose to do so to demonstrate the calibre of those who took part in the discussion.

In chapter 2 I will review literature relating to ECMCs, MP and MPE. Chapter 3 addresses matters relating to the research design and methodology and Chapter 4 describes the investigation itself. My findings are presented and discussed in Chapter 5 and finally, in chapter 6, conclusions are drawn which include implications for future ECME research, policy and practice, together with discussion of how findings from this study together with the wider body of ECME research might be disseminated beyond academia.

2 Literature Review

This literature review examines material drawn from research in ECME, Music Education, Early Childhood Education, psychology and sociology. It reviews research about MP, ECMCs, and MPE. Since parents currently receive their MPE through non-academic books, websites and digital data, this review also includes discussion of a selection of these sources.

Using the term *musical parenting* as a starting point, relevant documents were identified. The search was then extended through the use of these documents' key words and references. Literature is sourced from English language documents, predominantly from the past twenty years.

2.1 Musical parenting

Musical parenting, defined as the 'beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours of parents towards their children's musical experiences' (Ilari & Young, 2016:4) originated from Custodero and Johnson-Green (2003) who explored the association between parental musical experience and MP practices. Custodero and Johnson-Green (2008) view MP through Bornstein's lens of caregiving (2002) divided into four domains: social, didactic, nurturant and material. Any MP act may be motivated by one or, more often, a combination of two or more of these domains. Custodero found that parents instinctively shifted the focus away from the nurturant towards the didactic domain as their babies grew. Gibson (2009) explored the importance of music to parents of young children and identified four categories: enjoyment, social (sense of belonging), the establishment of musical identity and exposure resulting in their child developing musical preferences and having more fulfilling future musical experiences.

In Koops' recently published book (2020), MP is extensively explored and sub-divided into *musical parenting* and *parenting musically*. Koops' justification for such differentiation is

related to the purpose of the musicking³ (Small, 1998); *musical parenting* is done for musical reasons and *parenting musically* is the use of music for non-musical purposes. Koops also considers whether the musicking is for relational or practical reasons and she presents her ideas in an x and y axes framework with each axis being a continuum along which activities can be placed. For the purposes of interrogating this framework I have reproduced it with four hypothetical examples of MP behaviours (figure 1).

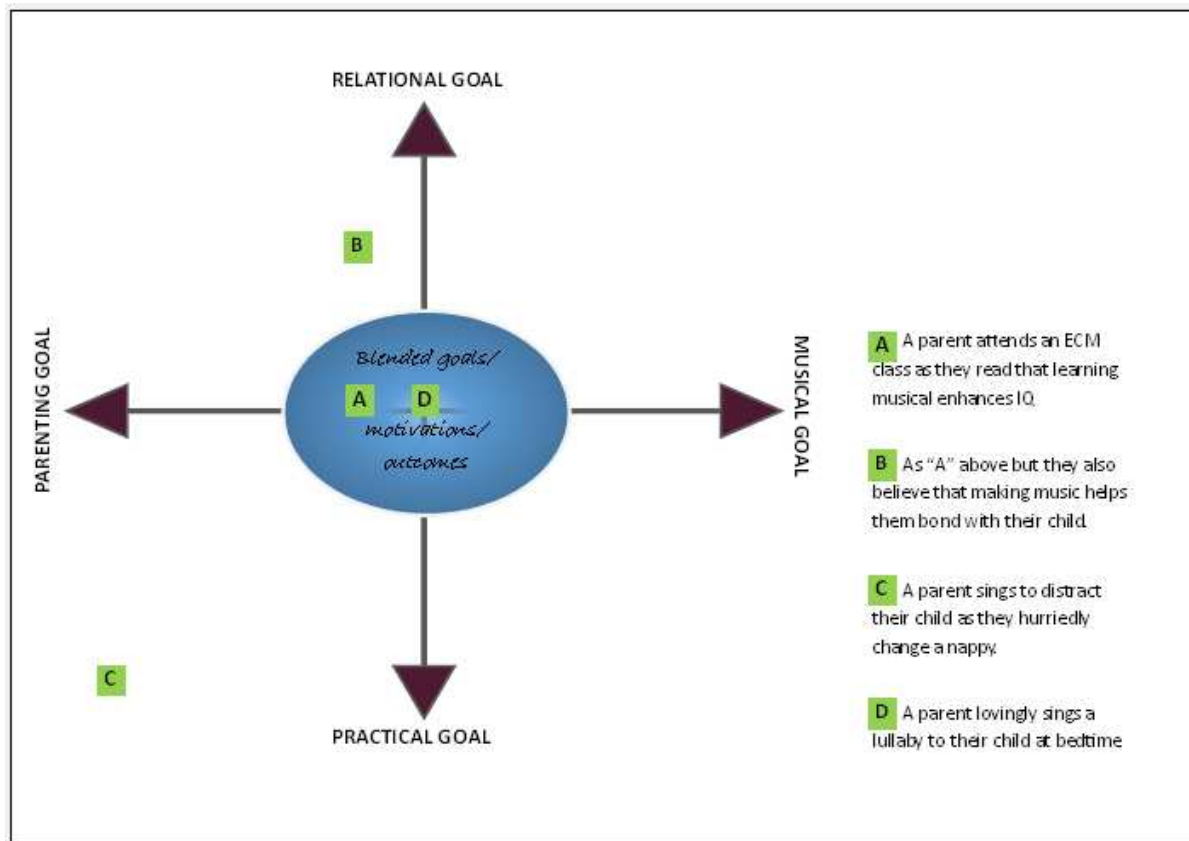


Figure 1 'Family musicking framework' with hypothetical scenarios based on Koops 'Family Musicking framework' (2020:175)

³ The term 'musicking' repositions music as a verb and refers to all musical activities including listening.

In 'A' the parent deliberately attends an ECMC for non-musical motives. If this parent also felt that music strengthened relationships, their class attendance might be better represented by 'B'. 'C' represents the use of music to serve a short-term, practical task and 'D' could be the same parent, engaging musically with their child at bedtime.

Whilst Koops' work provides a useful starting point, I propose that, for detailed analysis of MP practices, Koops' framework has several limitations. Firstly, it does not differentiate deliberate actions from incidental musical moments such as a child hearing a telephone ringtone or their musician parent practising. These examples of musicking would undoubtedly contribute to the child's musical environment but, I would argue their unintentionality differentiates them from deliberate MP acts. This could include other implicit musicking (Ilari & Young, 2016) that parents do instinctively without recognising them as musical. Secondly, the framework does not address *being* and *becoming* (Young, 2018) which distinguish activities motivated by the present from those motivated by future ambitions. Therefore, in Koops' framework, a parent's musicking to calm a child might appear at the same point on the X axis as another parent's use of music to enhance their child's future career opportunities (Savage, 2015). Finally, it provides no mechanism to convey an activity's intensity; the position only reflects proportions of each end of the scale. 'A' sits centrally because of moderate musicking initiated by moderate ambition; it is equally weak in relational and practical terms. The lullaby ('D'), on the other hand, is equally strong practically, relationally, musically and in parenting terms. 'A' and 'D' are close together on the framework yet, in reality, they are worlds apart.

In the light of Koops' (2020) ideas, I should clarify that, for the purpose of this study, the term musical parenting (MP) will be used to cover both *musical parenting* and *parenting musically*. When it is necessary to differentiate the two ideas, italics and appropriate references will be used.

Savage's definition of MP as 'parent-child interactions and engagement around music, parents' aspirations and objectives for their child's musical development and behaviour associated with developing a musical child' (2015:2) focusses on both *being* and *becoming* and is heavily weighted towards *musical parenting* (Koops, 2020). Interestingly, this position conflicts with her study findings which revealed mothers' non-musical reasons for attending

ECMCs. Savage's research, limited by its small sample of white, middle-class mothers, identifies four categories of parental motivation: confidence, appreciation, advantage, and success. Parents believed, by developing confidence and cultural appreciation, their children would be advantaged in future education and employment which would ultimately lead to more successful lives. Issues relating to social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) were also evidenced by parents who joined ECMCs in an effort to control their children's social circle. These parental motivations ultimately focus on what children might one day become (Young, 2018).

The findings uncovered by Savage are symptomatic of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2011) or intensive parenting (Young, 2018; Ilari, 2018) in which predominantly middle-class parents attempt to control their children's lives and interests and thereby gain life advantages. Commercially motivated information, framed as guidance for parents (Kindermusik, 2020; Arangio, 2018), often fuels these parental pressures together with anxieties and feelings of guilt by linking ECMCs to promises of better quality children (Young, 2018). ECMC websites are littered with numerous unsupported claims, described as 'pervasive parenting propaganda' (Adachi & Trehub, 2018) which include improved bonding, higher academic achievements and better communication skills (Young, 2018; Adachi & Trehub, 2018) (figure 2). Despite research demonstrating many transfer benefits of musical learning (Hallam, 2010; Politimou et al., 2019), the implication on websites that it is the ECMC, rather than parent-child interactions, that offer these benefits is misleading.



Figure 2 Promises about the benefits of attending ECMCs - Text from ECMC websites⁴

According to Young (2018), the term MP is sometimes used in the context of another Western trend namely the 'cult of the expert' (Young, 2018) which leads parents to believe that they lack skills and need music leaders to teach them. My decision to distance myself from this trend was influenced by comments in the December 2019 private Facebook thread (see chapter 1). Nicola Burke suggested I 'turn the tables' by learning *from* parents and Jane Parker shared experiences of collaborative learning. Charlotte Arculus asked if I intended 'sharing research [with parents] as a way to start conversation and open-ended thinking about children's musical worlds as a counter to the ways research can be used to manipulate and bamboozle parents.' Her question resonated strongly with me and led me towards adopting

⁴ Links to the ECMC websites in figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 are included in a webography at the end of the reference section. I chose not to anonymise the businesses as the information is publicly available.

something akin to a transformative approach (To et al., 2013). This transformative approach helps learners to revise commonly held assumptions through raising awareness in line with Koops' suggestion that parents should learn to recognise their own innate skills (2020).

Much of what we know about MP is based on research from the past 20 years and includes important studies around intuitive parent-child communication which is believed to be innately musical (Papoušek, 1996; Trevarthen & Malloch, 2002; Creighton, 2011; Dissanayake, 2011) and young children's spontaneous musical behaviours (Knudsen, 2008; Countryman et al., 2016). Whilst, in the latter, the role of the parent is rarely examined (Countryman et al. 2016; Knudsen, 2008; Neilson, 2019), Knudsen acknowledges that parents might gain a deeper understanding of children's musical nature by paying more attention to their vocal play. My own research (Neilson, 2019) revealed that, when Early Years practitioners respond musically to young children's spontaneous musicking, confidence and leadership skills develop. Furthermore, relationships were strengthened, musical activity increased and children were helped to regulate their emotions. I propose that these findings transfer well to the parent-infant dyad, as, according to Papoušek (1996), interactive vocal play is commonly part of intuitive parenting.

Custodero and Johnson-Green's (2008) assertion that parents have the capability to recognize infants' musical behaviours conflicts with Reese's findings (2013) that parents sometimes struggled to identify infants' behaviour as specifically musical. However, I question the validity of Reese's results which came from a laboratory study using videos in which participants were specifically asked to identify either *meaningful* or *intentionally* musical behaviour. The multi-modal nature of children's musicking (Young, 2016; Adachi & Trehub, 2018), which contrasts with school experience of delineated subjects, may have appeared musical to parents but perhaps would not, in their eyes, have been *meaningfully* or *intentionally* so.

Young (2018) argues that much ECME research has limitations because it is conducted amongst so-called WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic) cultures. Indeed, Trevarthen and Malloch's hugely influential work (2002) grew out of a very small laboratory study with middle class mothers. This study, together with many MP studies (Strong, 2006; Gibson, 2009; Savage, 2015), does not reflect the diversity of parenting styles

and cultural variations as explored generally by Lancy (2017) and musically in a study of 7-year-old's home musical experiences around the world (Ilari & Young, 2016).

The act of listening to music which, according to Small (1998) is active, creative and musical, is discussed by Young (2003) who describes young children's responses through movement as well as their interest in and desire to control sounds from electronic devices. Music listening in the car can be an important shared family experience (Young, 2003; Koops, 2020). Indeed, in Koops' (2020) research, listening was the most common MP practice among her research participants and included music from a range of genres. It involved both deliberate *musical parenting* activities as well as the more intuitive *parenting musically* act of having music playing in the background.

It is important to note that a parent's attitude towards music, their perceptions of their own musical ability and their musical skills and knowledge play an important role in their MP (McPherson, 2009; Abad, 2017; Strong, 2006; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003). Custodero and Johnson-Green (2008) also note that a parent's own experience of being musically parented impacts the experience they give their children. A parent's attitude has the potential to be either one of the most limiting or most enabling factors for a young child's musical development (McPherson, 2009) and educators who pay attention to parental beliefs will be better prepared to teach ECMCs (Ilari, 2018).

2.2 Early Childhood Music Classes

'The sector as a whole is a mishmash of unmapped and unregulated provision with a wide variety of outcomes, purpose and quality.'

(Greenhalgh, 2013:28)

Abad (2017) states that high quality ECMCs support parents, however, whilst the sector grows and flourishes (Young, 2018), there seems to be little consensus as to what a 'good class'

actually is (Greenhalgh, 2013). Young's landmark book *Music with the Under-Fours* (2003) dedicates a chapter to ECMCs. Whilst her guidance and recommendations were and continue to be of great use to ECMPs, the scarcity of academic references in the chapter suggests a lack of ECME research prior to the book's publication. Today, nearly 20 years on, my literature searches reveal that there is still a paucity of research in the form of surveys, academically rigorous evaluations, case studies and phenomenological studies which might aid a better understanding of the nature, range and diversity of classes available in the sector. Young (2018) reflects upon the recent broadening of classes to include 0-3-year-olds and the diversity of provision in terms of settings and traditions, both educationally and musically. The market includes public and privately funded classes and the rise of the latter has resulted in business owners engaging in competitive marketing exercises which, in turn, impact practice and parental decision making (Young, 2018). Whilst no qualification is required for ECMPs, many from this predominantly free-lance workforce have either music or early childhood education qualifications (ibid). Young notes that the ECME practice and research sectors are underfunded and under-valued, and she suggests that this results in a cautious workforce that dare not veer from tried and tested, conservative pedagogies.

While several researchers have investigated the purposes of ECMCs, there seems to be no clear consensus. Young (2003) suggests music groups exist primarily to encourage parents to engage in playful musical activity. This idea is supported by Barrett (2009) who, in a small narrative study, found that a Kindermusik programme supported parents and made a significant impact on home musicking. However, another study reveals that parents are most interested in the social and emotional benefits afforded by attending classes (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017) which contrasts with Savage's suggestion that motivations are aspirational and related to cultural capital (2015).

Tafari (2008) recommends that ECMCs should be expert-led and many ECMC websites refer to some element of expertise (figure 3). Those companies without specialist teachers, such as Moo Music, avoid mentioning this fact and focus instead on the skills and expertise of the programme creators. Whilst it may be reassuring to know that ECMC leaders have expertise, the underlying message suggesting that young children need music specialists undermines and detracts from the innate and instinctive MP skills of their parents.

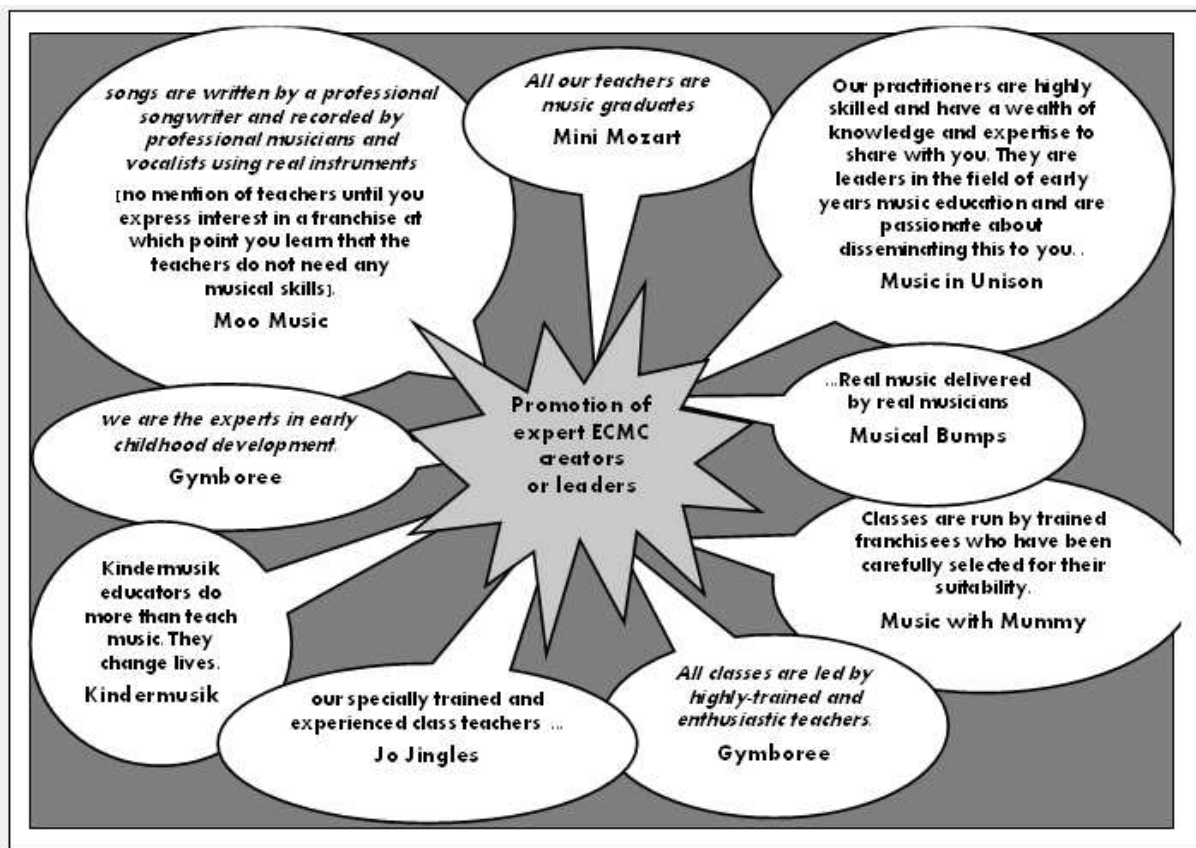


Figure 3 Information regarding creator/leader expertise - ECMC websites

Young (2018) highlights the paradox of having “experts” training parents in something which is supposedly natural and intuitive. However, as explained earlier, there is uncertainty about whether parents attend classes for the purpose of being trained and any learning, evidenced by increased use and importance of music at home (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017), may, to some, be incidental.

Custodero (2006) advocates that ECMPs should be learning from emotive, intimate, and collaborative parent-child musical partnerships. In Abbas and Street’s recent study (2017) parents shared music from their own cultures and childhoods. The study describes how flexible and open-minded practitioners engaging with parents in their children’s learning can achieve more equal power balances and how, through music, practitioner-parent connections were formed. However, such approaches are unusual and, in a case study of parental needs in the Netherlands (Van Nes, 2020), several ECMPs indicated that they had no desire to learn

from parents⁵. Furthermore, the notion that parents might bring skills, knowledge or expertise to a class is not addressed on any of the ECMC websites I reviewed.

2.3 Musical Parenting Education

'Families are children's first and most important teachers, advocates, and nurturers.'

(Lehrl et al., 2020:6).

The position of parents as educators is emphasized by Lehrl et al. (2020) who call for an increase in research and development studies to investigate the most appropriate and effective forms of support and intervention. Amongst ECME researchers the message is the same: parents are hugely influential in their child's musical development (Custodero, 2006; McPherson, 2009; Koops, 2020; Papoušek, 1996; Gibson, 2009).

Reese (2013) found that recognition of infants' behaviours as musical was greater by those with ECME training and suggests ECMPs should educate parents. However, all Reese's ECMPs had received the same training and, as a result, findings may not be transferable. This is true especially since in the UK there is no one training pathway nor, indeed, any requirement for qualifications in the ECME sector. Indeed, some UK ECMPs have little knowledge of ECME research (Greenhalgh, 2013; Young, 2018) and base their pedagogy either on their own

⁵ This information was shared during the process of peer support in which findings were discussed to enable triangulation. Permission to refer to these findings in this dissertation was kindly given by Kendra Van Nes.

experience or on diluted versions of primary school pedagogies (Young, 2003). I would argue that ECMPs such as these, though well-intentioned, are not sufficiently informed to train parents.

Many researchers make the case for raising parents' awareness of young children's musical worlds (Knudsen, 2008; Street et al., 2003; Bond, 2011; Abad, 2015; Barret, 2009) and improved MP practices have been shown to empower parents and improve well-being (Street et al, 2003) as well as increase understanding of children's creative potential and musical nature (Knudsen, 2008). Bond's suggestion of prescriptive training that models 'developmentally appropriate musical behaviours' (2011:85) and creates optimal musical environments does not address parents' innate MP abilities and it is perhaps suggestions such as these that led Papoušek to advise practitioners to leave MP alone and resist the temptations for 'formal educational interventions' (1996:108).

In Strong's study (2006) of the relative impacts of what she termed 'active' and 'passive' MPE, two groups received weekly information by email but only the active group attended ECMCs, which as far as can be understood, were regular classes in which parents learnt by participating and observing. It appears that there was no direct sharing of ECME research during classes. The text of the emails reveals detailed and very accessible explanations of ECME research together with activities for parents to try. Strong's results showed few differences between the active and passive groups; both resulted in building parents' musical confidence and in an increase in musicking in the home.

I now turn to non-academic sources of MPE which are relevant to this study because it is these that most commonly influence parents. Much of this information, whether deliberate education or advertising, is rooted in a deficit model in which innate parenting skills go unacknowledged and the importance of an 'expert' pervades. In a recent interview, Music Together CEO, Darrow demonstrates this by saying, 'The teacher's job ... is to show parents how to engage musically with their child during class, and model how to be a musical parent when class isn't happening' (2020). Similarly, the '*Mommy Jingles Musical Parenting Program*' (Robbins-Wilson, 2015), available for sale as a course of video lessons, is advertised from a 'top-down' approach with only one passing reference to parents' skills. ECOMC websites

further reinforce a deficit-based view of parents through only very occasional reference to parents (figure 4) which rarely acknowledges their innate MP skills and implies parents need the classes in order to be musical with their young children.

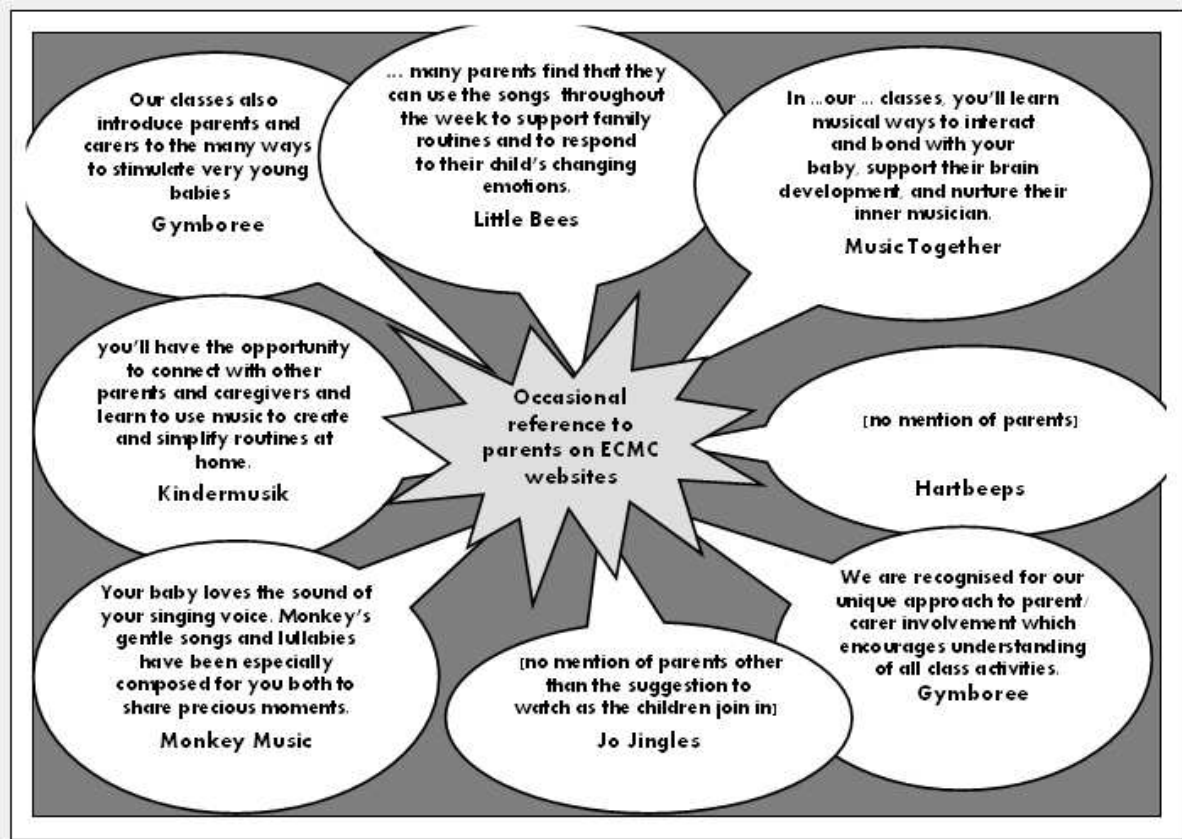


Figure 4 Occasional mentions of parents - ECMC websites

Blog and website use of selective and précised ECME research information in the form of soundbites also contributes to the information that parents receive about ECME (figure 5). These comments invariably omit study limitations (Pitt & Arculus, 2018) and present tentative findings as definitive (Stone, 2018) in order to endorse existing practice which Young (2005) suggests is a misuse of research. Furthermore, the Music Tree's claim to combine music education with the latest research in 'neuromusic', a term I am unfamiliar with, is symptomatic of the misuse of recent neuro-science findings (Odendaal et al., 2018; Young, 2020).



Figure 5 The use, misuse and reference to research to promote ECMCs

A further example of how research can mislead parents can be found on Kindermusik's website entitled 'Independent Studies' (Kindermusik, 2020). Below a rosette, announcing a '32% literacy gain' (with no details of the source) there is a truncated graph showing poorly referenced study results. At first glance the graph, with a Y-axis starting at 58, implies that class attendees' results are more than double those of non-attendees. In fact, it represents a difference of around 9 points in PALS scores which themselves are not explained. The text implies that all preschoolers participating in Kindermusik classes benefit in this way but, on further, time consuming investigation, I discovered that findings were specifically linked to a pre-school classroom language programme and reflected only short-term gains. Furthermore, there is no clear indication of who funded this 'independent' study and there is no mention of peer-review. I suggest that most parents would take the graph at face value and would be unlikely to investigate, as I did, to uncover the truth. The use of research in this way is rarely challenged in the low status and unregulated ECME industry (Young, 2018), however it is worth considering how similar interpretations of research in regulated industries such as construction or pharmaceuticals might be received.

As a one-time customer, I still have an 18-year-old copy of Music Together's parent booklet (Guilmartin & Levinowitz, 1989). In contrast to many ECMC websites, it takes a nurturing, enabling positionality, acknowledges parents' MP skills, avoids research soundbites, and shares research findings in an accessible style. Other classes supply parent guides which I am unable to review as they are only available to class attendees. Additionally, some ECMCs aim to support MP by selling resources for use at home (Barrett, 2009).

Parenting books are a further example of MPE conduits, and there are a several available. *The Music Miracle* (Henriksson-Macaulay, 2014) aims to synthesize ECME research findings and is directed at parents using an accessible narrative style. Henriksson-Macaulay's ideas sit within a deficit model of parenting and, at times, seem to be thinly veiled advertisements for her own Moosicology programme. She claims that her method boosts children's brains and is, paradoxically, both scientific and miraculous. *Music with Babies and Young Children* (Friedberg, 2020), written by a music therapist, focusses on *parenting musically* (Koops, 2020). The research cited is largely from non-musical disciplines. *Good Music Brighter Children* (Habermeyer, 2014) is strongly rooted in Western classical music traditions and repertoire and is mostly concerned with school-aged children. The top-down guidance offers instructions on how to create a musical home. References to market research and academic papers are numerous but the works of important ECME academics such as Young and Custodero are conspicuous by their absence. All three books refer to experimental neuroscience findings which Young (2020) warns should be applied cautiously to real world practice. Furthermore, many of these neuro-science findings, which are often over-simplified and reported out of context (Odendaal, 2018) have, in a recent meta-analysis (Sala & Gobet, 2020), been discredited.

In the past 10 years, a proliferation of online videos has become a major source of information for parents. The ability of Wooten (2012), Tancrul (2017) and Collins (2014) to reach huge online audiences demonstrates the power of this communication mode. However, the lack of gatekeepers (Young, 2020) means that audiences can be mis-lead through the selective use of findings that are often heavily précised, overly simplified and used out of context. The communication of ECME research to non-academic audiences is an important theme when considering MPE which I will return to in my final conclusions.

3 Research Design and Methodology

After setting out my research questions, I go on in this chapter to outline my ontological position and the paradigm in which this study is situated. I outline the research design and include methods for both data collection and analysis. Finally, I identify and reflect on ethical issues.

3.1 Research questions

- 1. How might musical parenting education be combined with practical musical activity in a new form of early childhood music class?**
- 2. How far and in what ways might the deliberate inclusion of musical parenting education in early childhood music classes support musical parenting?**

3.2 Paradigm

To answer these research questions a real world, qualitative, praxeological paradigm was adopted. Praxeology is an emerging paradigm developed by Pascal and Bertram at CREC, Birmingham (2012). It is rooted in praxis with a focus on democracy between researcher and participants and a strong awareness of power and ethical issues. It is recommended that Praxeology is best practiced by those invested in and immersed in the real world, as I have been for the past 15 years.

Six praxeological principles underpin the role of a practitioner researcher (figure 6). Principles 2 and 3 resonate especially strongly since this collaborative research project disrupts the consensual practice described in the Music One2One report (Young et al., 2006).

- Principle 1: PR is ethical, moral and values driven/committed
- Principle 2: PR is democratic, participatory, inclusionary, collaborative, empowering, aiming to redistribute power more equitably
- Principle 3: PR is critical, risky, courageous and political, with a concern for social justice and equity
- Principle 4: PR is subjective, acknowledging of multiple perspectives
- Principle 5: PR is highly systematic and methodologically rigorous
- Principle 6: PR is action based, educational, useful, creative and transformational, generating and sharing learning in a dynamic and continuous cycle of praxis

Figure 6 The six guiding principles for the praxeological researcher, (Pascal & Bertram, 2012:486)

This redistribution of power is seen by Pascal and Bertram as profoundly political since it gives participants more control and allows them to make informed choices. As an ECMC business owner, I acknowledge that, as a result of my research, parents may conclude they no longer need classes in order to be musical with their children. As such, I am, as suggested by Young (2018), putting my own livelihood at risk. However, I am willing to take this risk as I believe this research represents a more honest and ethical pathway than continuing, unquestioningly, to run only traditional classes. Furthermore, I trust that this research will lead to new and interesting ways of working musically with families. Through this research, I believe I might experience something of the ‘profound rebirth’ (Freire, 1970:35) which Freire argues is necessary for educators practising democratic participatory learning.

Pascal & Bertram (2012) emphasize that praxeological researchers’ desire to redistribute power must be authentic and state that this takes commitment, in terms of time and emotion, from a transformational leader. My own hand-written response in the text (figure 7) testifies to how daunting this has, at times, felt!

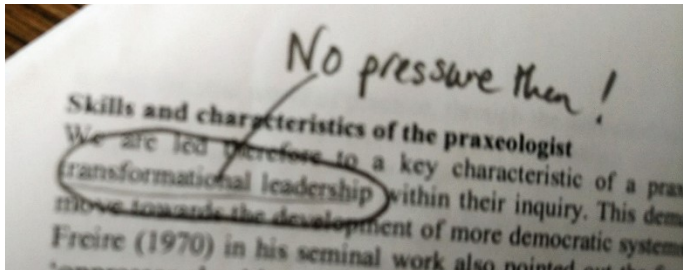


Figure 7 Transformational leader? No pressure then!

3.3 Ontological position

I propose that there are many truths and perspectives to be uncovered and that, in Early Childhood Education, we learn best by interpreting real world situations rather than by measuring in laboratory experiments. In the context of this MP study, it is also important to acknowledge pervasive Western beliefs around music in which the commonly accepted practice of judging people's musical abilities (Young, 2003) includes ridiculing those who do not compare favourably to professional musicians (Brandt et al., 2002; Partington, 2017). In contrast, those who do reach professional standards are labelled 'gifted' and this extends to music teachers who are commonly seen as 'experts' (Mills, 1994). I propose that the low musical self-esteem identified amongst generalist primary teachers (Mills, 1994; Partington, 2017) is common amongst the general population where the inability to play an instrument, read music or sing to professional standards often leads to self-imposed labels of 'unmusical' or 'tone-deaf'. I do not subscribe to these views and propose that, from birth, we are all musical and have the potential to succeed. I agree with Trevarthen and Malloch's view that parents' communication with their babies is innately musical and that parents have instinctive musical abilities (2002). However, the current 'cult of the expert' (Young, 2018) in which specialists advise or instruct parents has led to parental instincts being seen as untrustworthy (Lancy, 2017). I suggest that expert-led ECMCs reinforce parents' perceived musical inadequacies as well as the culture of believing in the musically gifted few. Many researchers see parents as a child's first music teacher or mentor (Custodero, 2006; Trehub, 2006; Gibson, 2009; Creech, 2010) and it is my hope that, as a result of this study, parents might be repositioned as fellow music practitioners working alongside those of us with careers in ECME.

In order to work democratically with the research participants, I had to make my views explicit and challenge commonly-held beliefs directly. I wanted the parents to recognise *themselves* as musical and to feel empowered to engage critically with the research. While reading *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970) and simultaneously trying to clarify my rationale, I found myself wondering whether parents could be framed as oppressed by the top-down approach of expert-led ECMCs (figure 8) and whether I, unwittingly have been one of the oppressors. By challenging the 'them and us' notion of music experts I was, again, disrupting

the commonly accepted conventions of ECMCs which further justified my choice of a praxeological paradigm.

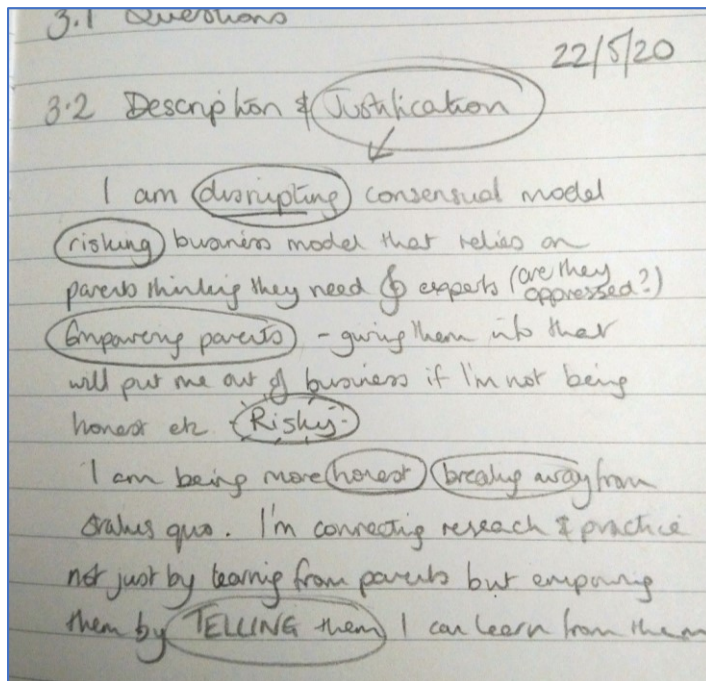


Figure 8 Journal notes: Disrupting norms, empowering parents, risking my business

With reference to the notion of *being* and *becoming* (Huhtinen-Hilden & Pitt, 2019; Young, 2019) it seems that ECME is often understood in terms of what kind of musician the baby might one day *become* or what cognitive benefit music might offer for future academic achievement: the musicking infant seen as a work in progress. Music teachers, on the other hand, are commonly understood as 'being'; an expert with all the knowledge (Partington, 2017). Through this research project I seek to reverse this position. I want to encourage parents to engage musically with their young children in the present and to enjoy them *being* musical as endorsed by Knudsen who says that children's musical play is an important part of their 'being in the world' (2008:287). At the same time, I propose that practitioners should focus on 'becoming'; open their minds to learning from their families and *becoming* better musicians *and* teachers (Huhtinen-Hilden & Pitt, 2019). I propose to do this myself by reflecting more critically on my own practice, by learning with and from others, and by engaging with the growing body of ECME research.

3.4 Methodology

'[Action research] transcends mere knowledge generation to include personal and professional growth and organisational and community empowerment.'

Herr & Anderson, 2005:1

I chose action research (AR) as the most suitable methodology for this praxeological study. Interaction with others (McNiff, 2016) and a transformational aim are common to praxeology and AR which grows from the researcher's desire to improve or change practice (Robson & McCarten, 2016). Both praxeology and AR are values-based and rooted in praxis (McNiff, 2016; Bertram and Pascal, 2012) which refers to the practical embodiment of theories (McNiff, 2016). AR suits my own tendency to reflect upon, analyse and adapt my practice to improve it for me and those I collaborate with. This is something that I have exercised informally for many years in primary schools. However, this study marks my first serious attempt to re-think my ECMC business. The notion of AR as a means of a researcher-practitioner addressing quandaries and puzzles (Herr & Anderson, 2005) connects with 'the felt need to do something' (McNiff, 2016:26) which is true of my desire to use my research to develop my practice.

Robson and McCarten (2016) suggest three levels of change in AR: the practice itself, the practitioners' understanding of the practice and the situation in which the practice happens. This study involves all three. Firstly, curiosity about how ECMCs might include deliberate and planned MPE led me to develop and evaluate a new kind of practice. Secondly, I propose that, through this research, the parents and I might develop our understanding, and finally, I disrupted ECMC assumptions, conventions, and structures in order to create a new situation for learning and discussions.

The weakness of AR for this study is connected primarily to the time constraints. Effective change takes two or more years (Robson & McCarten, 2016), and extended timeframes are needed before participants feel empowered to participate as equals in the research process

(Pascal & Bertram, 2012). I was advised to keep data collection to a maximum of six weeks and the six planned classes were further reduced to two due to the COVID19 lockdown. Clearly, the time-frame available was insufficient and ultimately limited the potential of this study.

3.5 Positionality

As a practitioner-researcher, my positionality is that of an 'insider in collaboration with other insiders' (Herr & Anderson 2005:36). My challenge was to convey this to the participants in such a way that they not only heard or read it but also *believed* it. Many had been accustomed to traditional ECMCs with a teacher in a position of power. From the outset, my initial information for the recruitment of participants (Appendix 3) emphasized my belief in parent's MP abilities and conveyed an ethos of mutual sharing of experiences and knowledge. During classes and in emails, I reminded them of the importance of their opinions, reinforced the democratic ethos, encouraged constructive criticism and allowed space and time for feedback. I listened carefully to feedback, checked my understanding with them and sought ways to include their ideas. In this way, I aimed to exercise the facilitative skills that Pascal and Bertram outline as important for a praxeological researcher (2012).

3.6 Research Design

This study was carried out over a 9-month period as set out in the Gantt chart (figure 9).

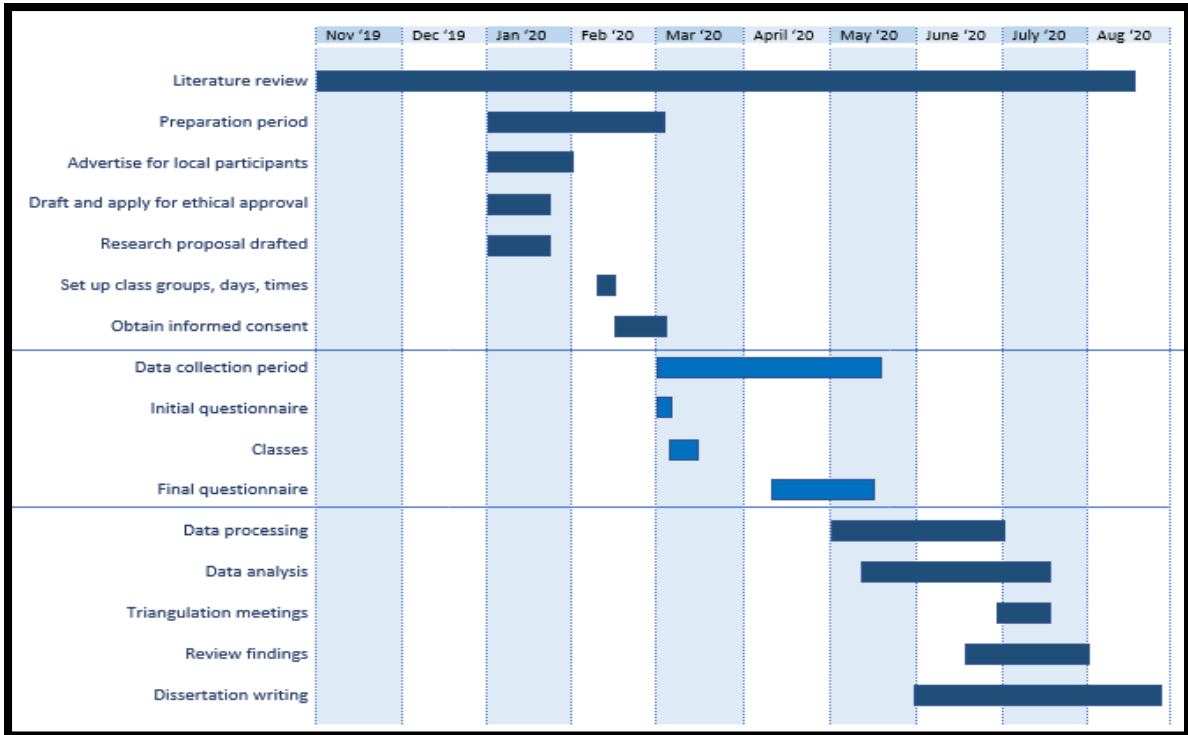


Figure 9 Gantt chart

My original intention was to adopt a flexible AR design strategy of repeated cycles of action and review (Lewin, 1946). I envisaged two interlocking cycles of AR and include a visual representation of this in figure 10. Two participant groups (town and urban FC) would have each participated in a cycle of three lessons. Their journeys are indicated by green and yellow arrows, set out in two overlapping triangles, each culminating in a final questionnaire. The dotted blue lines show my intended journeys and how each class would have informed my thinking and planning for future classes and questionnaires. I include no further explanation as the purpose of displaying figure 10 is principally to highlight the difference between this original design and the far simpler final design, revised due to the COVID19 lockdown (figure 11). In retrospect, in the light of the large amount of data I gathered, I recognise that the revised design was far more appropriate for a study of this size.

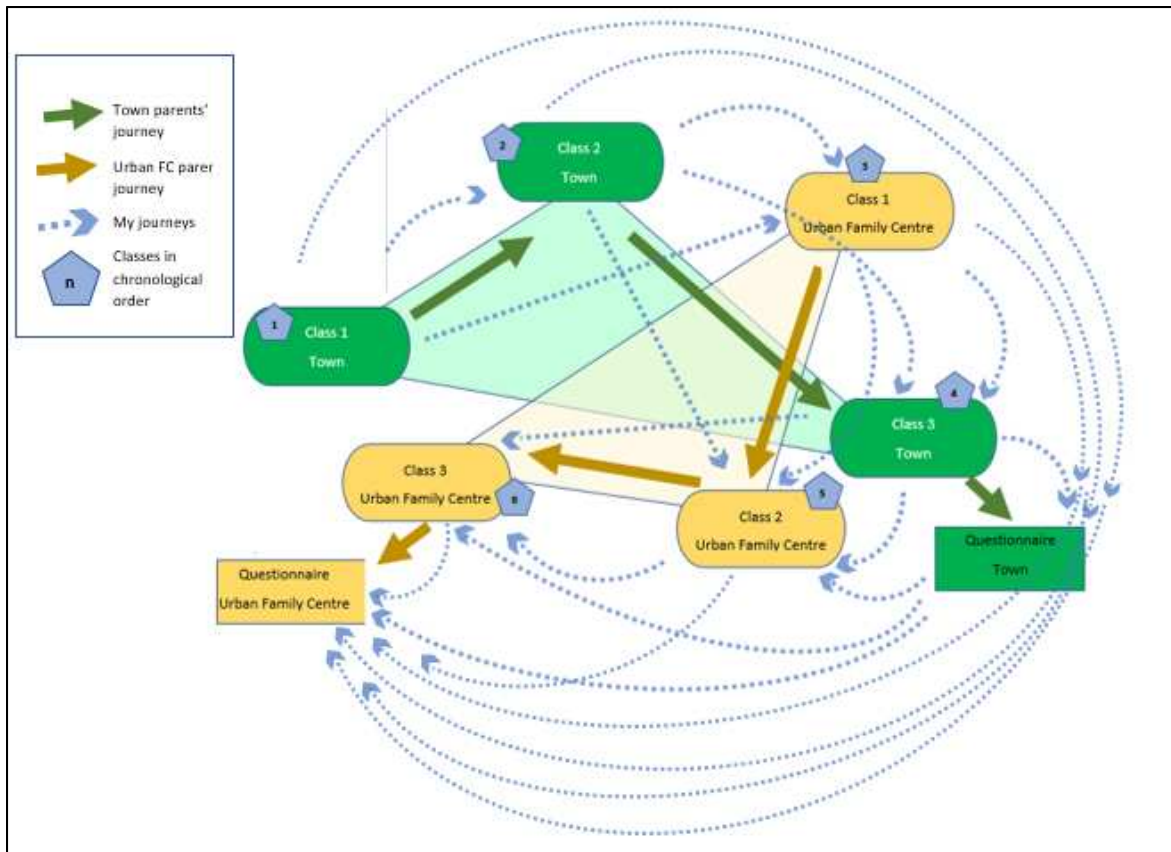


Figure 10 Original research design – Two interlocking cycles of action research

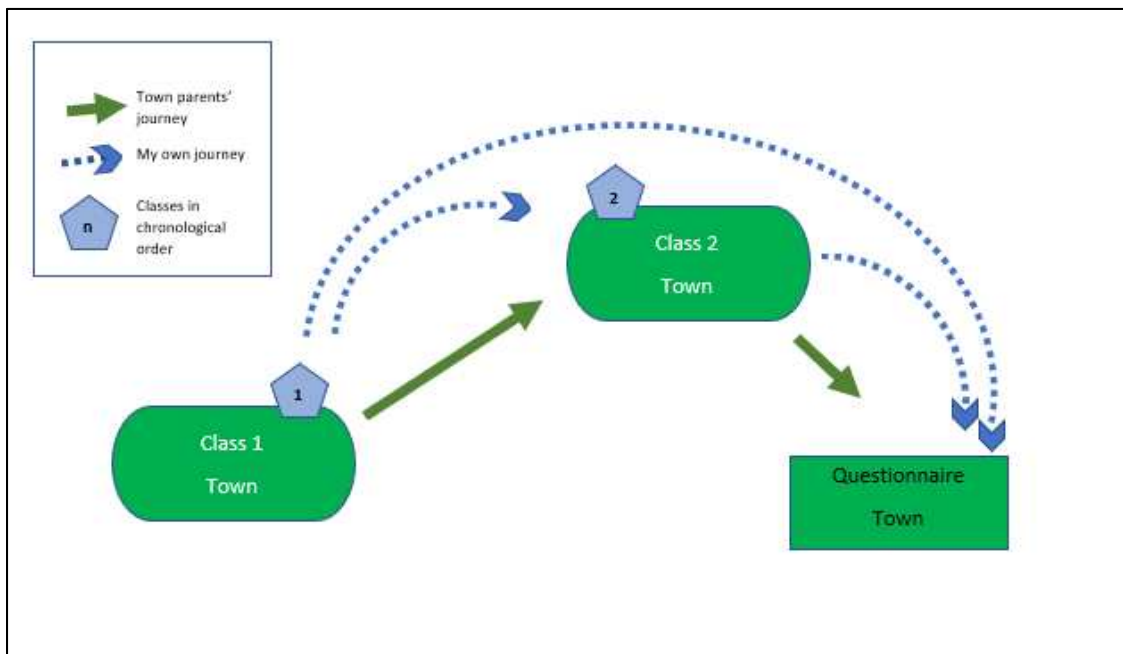


Figure 11 research redesign as a result of 2020 Lockdown

Each class incorporated various modes of delivery and included time for parents to reflect on the relative success of different class components. Parents were asked to make suggestions for changes that could be trialled in future classes. I also reflected privately on the strengths and weaknesses of the classes and kept notes in my journal. Between classes, parents were supported through a YouTube channel of the music that was discussed and shared in the classes and through email messages (Appendices 10 and 13) reinforcing and extending the learning. Parents were encouraged to reflect between classes and invited to share ideas via email or on postcards which I made available during classes. The postcards made anonymous feedback possible and participants were reminded that this was an option. In addition, parents were asked to complete a final questionnaire (Appendix 14).

3.7 Class design and structure

At 90 minutes, classes were double the usual length. They also differed from the norm in location, focus and content. In order to create an atmosphere conducive to adult learning, I shifted the focus from babies to the parents. Hardacre and Kinhead-Clark's work on authentic family learning (2019) stresses the importance of parents feeling comfortable in their environment so I was pleased to find a newly-refurbished training venue with an adult feel. Whilst completely safe for babies, the space was primarily intended for adult yoga classes and business meetings. It had a calm and comfortable atmosphere and set an appropriate adult tone. Each class was divided into different sections (see chapter 4) which enabled me to test different styles of delivery.

3.8 Participants

Since this project was self-funded, I sought to keep expenses to a minimum and therefore recruited participants from areas close to my home. The first was in a small, affluent, predominantly white, middle-class market town close to London, where I currently run my ECMCs. I set up the classes independently of any established Early Childhood setting. Classes were offered free of charge to all participants who were recruited via social media adverts (Appendix 2) on my business Facebook page and via the thriving local mums Facebook page. In addition, local colleagues, including two who run post-natal parenting groups, shared the

posts to their social media pages. For the second set of classes, which were ultimately cancelled, I worked with a nearby urban Family Centre to recruit families from their less affluent and more diverse demographic.

My choice to work exclusively with parents of 0-12 month olds was pragmatic; I imagined that young babies might listen, sleep, feed or be cuddled during discussions and I hoped that parents would be relatively undistracted. Uninterrupted adult discussions in a class of active 2-yr olds might require the employment of additional supportive adults for which I had no budget.

Families were invited to contact me with expressions of interest and availability. A set of three classes was organised at a time to suit the majority. All families were contacted with official information and consent forms and they were all invited to complete a brief questionnaire (Appendix 7).

Sixteen families took part. All were mothers with babies 12 months or younger and the cohort of babies included two sets of twins. The babies (n=18) included seven girls and eleven boys. The distribution of ages is shown in the table below (figure 12).

Age of participating babies	Number of babies
1-3 months	7
4-6 months	6
7-9 months	3
10-12 months	2

Figure 12 Table showing ages of participating babies

The reason that no fathers attended the group is perhaps because mothers are more likely than fathers to be caring for their infants during weekday mornings (TUC, 2019) when the classes took place. It is also possible that, by advertising on the local mum's Facebook page I inadvertently implied that I was seeking only mothers.

Limitations: The study used a small sample of self-selecting, female participants. Their volunteering suggests a bias in favour of the ECMC which might result in overly positive data. I attempted to mitigate this limitation by repeatedly encouraging constructive criticism. The demographics of the town in which the classes were held is predominantly middle-class, white and affluent. Those who volunteered may have felt comfortable to participate because they identified with me as a white middle-class woman (Savage, 2015). My attempt to widen the reach to a more socially and racially diverse group of parents in a nearby urban setting were rendered impossible by the pandemic. As a result, the transferability of my findings to this and other groups will need to be tested in future research which I hope to undertake in the coming months.

3.9 Data Collection

I drew on a variety of methods to gather information. Both classes were recorded using a small MP3 sound recorder (Tascam DR40) and these recordings proved invaluable as a document of the class content and timings, of individual comments, and of the level of participant engagement. The recordings allowed me to listen to and reflect upon my own words and the emphasises I used. The classes were extremely busy for me and the recordings proved to be good aide memoires that enabled me to retrospectively clarify whether I said and did what I had planned and intended.

In addition, I made notes during and in between classes and kept a reflective journal of thoughts and reflections. Parents were invited to share their reflections either on postcards which I provided or via emails or Facebook messages.

Data was also gathered via two questionnaires: twelve participants completed the first questionnaire and thirteen completed the second. Questionnaire 1 (Appendix 7) gave parents the opportunity to provide demographic data and information about music in their babies' daily lives. Questionnaire 2 (Appendix 14) was an evaluation and sought both qualitative and quantitative data about the success and impact of the classes. Parents were invited to rate various research and class elements comparatively which allowed me to determine the most and least popular or useful parts of the class and to identify trends and patterns. I took the

decision not to make responses anonymous because I wanted to be able to follow up with participants. However, in the light of their answers showing a very positive skew, I believe an anonymous questionnaire would have been preferable as participants may have been more willing to share negative responses.

3.10 Analysis of data

An Excel spreadsheet was used to collate qualitative data from postcards, emails, my reflective journal and from my class notes. The MP3 recordings of both classes were uploaded to an audio editing app (Audacity) and the addition of several label-tracks allowed class sections to be tagged on different levels. This made it quicker and easier to revisit, navigate and reference (figure 13).

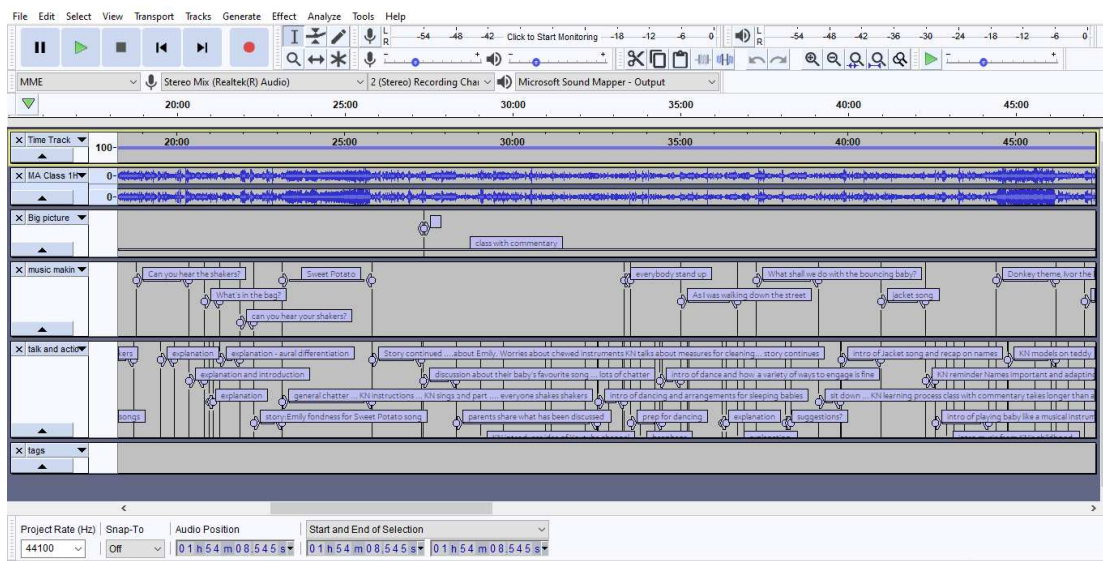


Figure 13 Screen shot of a section of the labelled recording using the Audacity app

With the original research questions in mind, the data was tagged by key words and ideas and broad themes were allowed to emerge. The data was then revisited to identify any previously unnoticed information relating to these themes.

Following this, tentative answers to the original question were drafted and reasons assembled in storyboards (Booth et al, 2016). Evidence was then drawn from the data to further support these reasons. Seven knowledge claims were generated from the storyboards and two of these have been selected for detailed discussion in chapter 4.

The process of thinking, and the journey towards my final conclusions was hugely aided first through the process of drafting this dissertation but also by the use of pen and paper to create spidergrams, flow charts and Venn diagrams. I include examples of these to enable anyone wishing to carry out a similar study to see my thought process (see examples in figures 14 and 15).

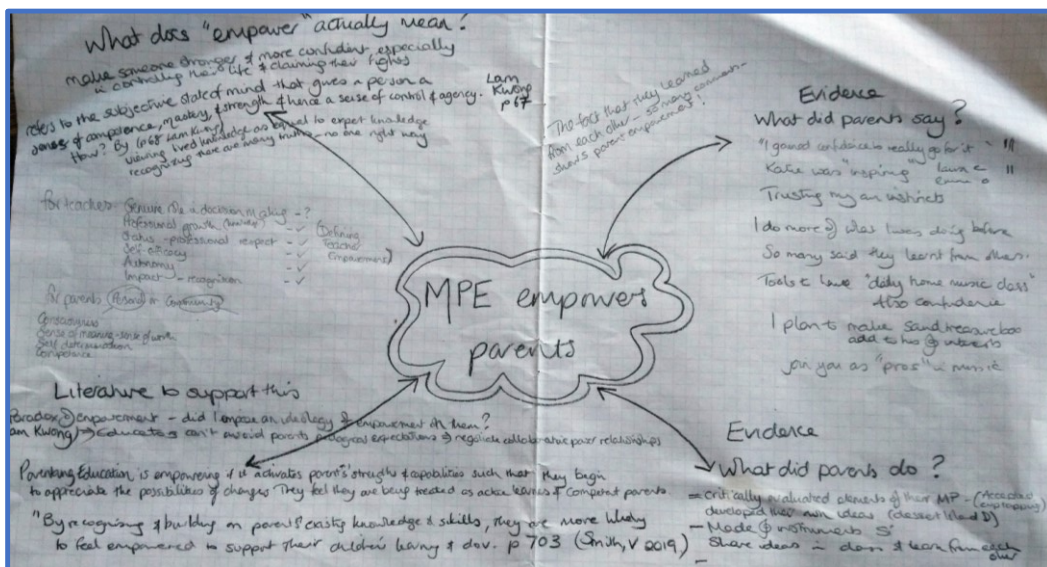


Figure 14 Spidergram – Thinking on paper - elements of empowerment

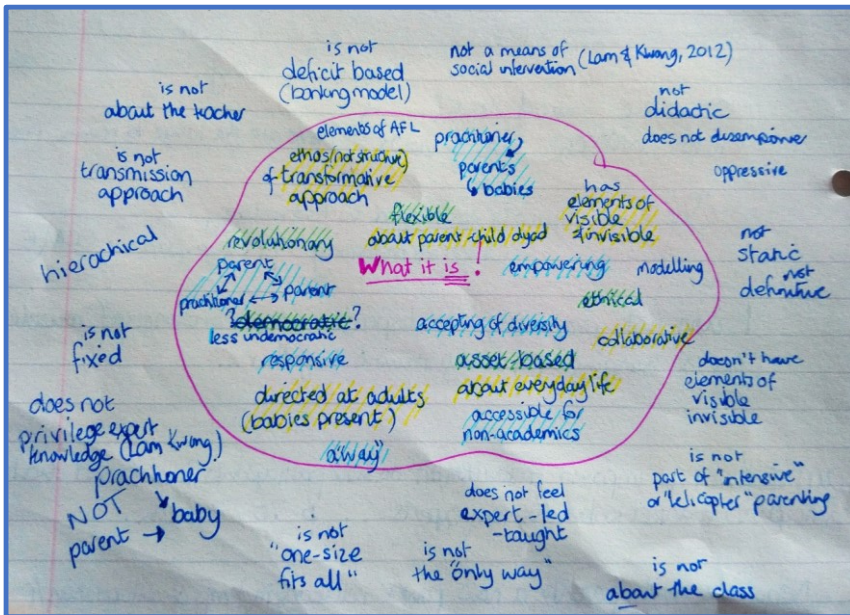


Figure 15 Venn diagram – Thinking on paper - my pedagogy: what it is and what it is not

Finally, I sent a follow-up email (Appendix 16) to research participants in which chapters 1, 4 and 5 were shared and comments were invited. This not only enabled me to member check (Meriam, 1998) my understanding of the data but also honoured my intention to work collaboratively with participants. This, together with data from conversations with student colleagues, was then used to further support or call into question the evidence.

3.11 Triangulation

My attempts to triangulate data in this study by repeating the research in a demographically different location were thwarted by the national lockdown. However, triangulation became possible during the data analysis process through online video conferencing (ZOOM) meetings with fellow students. We shared ideas around relevant literature, the structure of our dissertations and discussed findings with one another. This community of practice (Wenger, 1998) also became an emotional and therapeutic support (Robson & McCarten, 2016) for each one of us as we completed our studies amidst the COVID19 pandemic. Within this group Kendra Van Nes, who was also looking at aspects of MP in relation to ECMCs, agreed to engage in a mutually beneficial exercise in which we viewed each other's data, questioned and challenged one another's interpretations and discussed each other's emerging findings. Her

fresh perspective was invaluable, helping me to identify assumptions I had made and ultimately serving to make this study's findings more robust.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

I continually strived to achieve an ethic of respect in all eight areas set out in EECERA Ethical Code for Early Years Researchers (Bertram et al., 2015). Parents and babies were treated with respect regardless of their cultural identity. The research took place within a democratic ethos in which all participants voices were heard and respected as one might expect from a praxeological study.

Parent participants all gave their consent to take part in the study (Appendix 6). Both parents of each child were asked to give their consent for their babies' participation (Appendix 5) since, at 12 months-old or younger, the babies were too young to do this for themselves. Information about the research project was given to all participating families (Appendix 4) and at this point, it was made clear that they could withdraw from the research at any point for any reason. At the start of each class I reminded parents of their right to withdraw from the study and that, if their babies seemed unhappy about participating, they should use their judgement and intuition as to how to best to respond.

The group bonded quickly and families seemed comfortable and able to trust me from the start. This trust may have resulted from my prior relationship with four families and the fact that several other families had been referred to the classes by their post-natal class teacher. It is also possible that the parents unquestioningly trusted me because of my position and good reputation as teacher of ECMCs in the town. During the study and in all written communications with participants I did my best to redress any perceived hierarchies or power imbalances. I frequently encouraged them to question and challenge me and my ideas and provided opportunities for them to speak their minds to one another and to me. My research sought to help the parents recognise and appreciate their own musical parenting abilities and to empower them, by sharing some of what I have learnt in my MA studies. By this very process I hoped to level out any power imbalances that might have originated from the pervasive view of music as a gift or from my status as a teacher and researcher.

The confidentiality of all participants has been ensured by the following measures:

- all data collected were stored in a locked cupboard
- any electronic data was password protected and stored on BCU cloud storage
- participant names have been substituted with codes

I abided by the EECERA research practice guideline (Bertram et al., 2015) that states that no harm should come to participants as a result of their participation. On the contrary, I suggest that the parents will have benefitted positively since, through exploring and developing their MP skills they are likely to have increased their own musical self-confidence and heightened their own awareness of their babies' musical world. I propose that the benefits of their participation extend beyond their relationship with their participating babies to siblings and to babies they may care for in the future. Furthermore, since the MP we receive as babies influences how we musically parent our children (Custodero, 2008), I propose that this project will, one day, positively impact how the babies themselves musically parent their own children.

On the basis of the above information, ethical approval was granted (Appendix 1).

4 The Investigation

The room, set out in advance with café style tables and chairs in two corners and colourful floor mats in the centre, evoked a trendy, modern space as one might find in a London warehouse conversion. Along one wall was a kitchen area with a coffee machine, an adjacent wall had shelves with plants and artwork and, opposite the kitchen was a wide window looking out across the carpark towards the river and the marshes. Intriguing items were set out for the babies including balls, musical instruments, colourful beanbags, and wooden and soft toys (figure 16).



Figure 16 Resources for babies. Pamphlets and postcards for parents.

Two tables, out of reach of the babies, were laid out with more instruments, musical books, pens and postcards (figure 16). A white board with a hand-written agenda stood in one corner (figures 17 and 18).

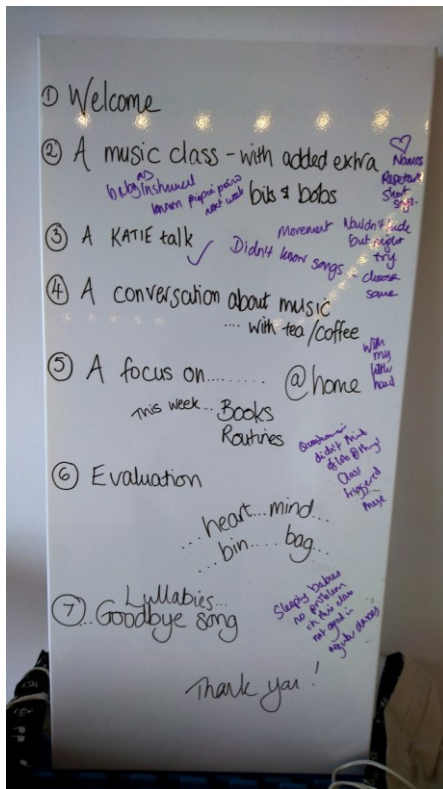


Figure 17 Class agenda (week 1)

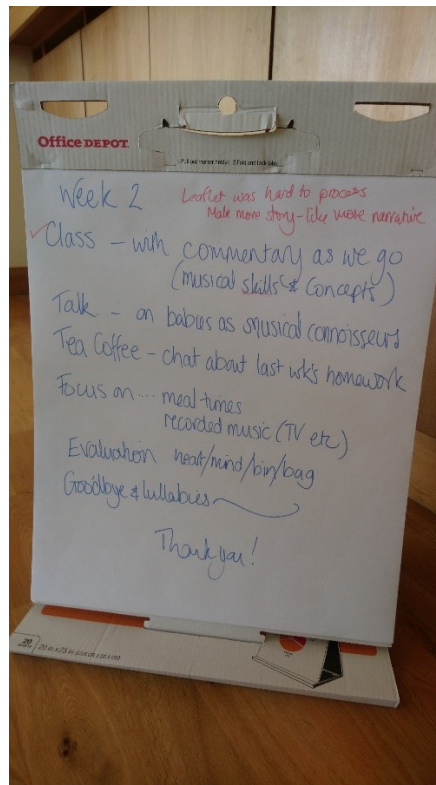


Figure 18 Class agenda (week 2)

As participants arrived, the parents chatted to one another, connecting with those they knew and befriending those they had not previously met. Some of the babies began exploring the space and objects, some watched the proceedings and others slept gently. I welcomed each family and began the process of learning their names. Once everyone was assembled, we arranged ourselves into a large circle and the class began.

4.1 The Class

After a welcome, I talked through the agenda which was clearly displayed (figure 17 black writing and figure 18 blue writing) This was done to help achieve a shared understanding, and to engage participants in the process. I revisited the agendas at the end of each class as we evaluated each section and additional notes were made (figure 17 purple writing and figure 18 red writing).

Following reminders about consent and the right to withdraw, I shared a little about my ontological position emphasising my desire to learn from the participants and stressing my intention to work democratically. We then started with a short 'class' that, to some extent, mirrored tradition models beginning with a hello song followed by a variety of songs and activities. However, it differed from normal classes in that it incorporated interludes of information about music and musical concepts as well as questions and moments for paired discussions around ECME and MP including the sharing of adults' and babies' musical preferences and experiences.

Next, in each class, I gave a five-minute presentation about ECME research. These presentations were, in reality, like mini lectures but the title 'lecture' is far too formal for this purpose and potentially off-putting to participants. I therefore chose to term them 'mini TED talks' as this accessible format of on-line talks is familiar to most people and conveys the informal but educational tone I wished to adopt. The first week's talk was about my own research (Neilson, 2019) which looked at Early Years Practitioners' musical responses to young children's spontaneous musical behaviours. The second week I talked about Trehub's document, *Infants as Musical Connoisseurs* (2006). Pamphlets that I had created to support these two talks were available for parents to take home (Appendices 8 and 11).

Tea, coffee, and biscuits accompanied conversations between groups of parents. The use of refreshments to create a sense of equality (Partington, 2017) was important to me but in order to ensure the safety of the babies from potential spills and the safety of parents from the COVID19 virus, I asked parents to bring their own to-go-cups. During the coffee break in the first class I asked parents to discuss their own music self-concept and to consider the prevalent practice of judging peoples' musical abilities. The following week they discussed their 'homework' from week one which encouraged them to look for and pay attention to musical elements of their baby's everyday behaviour and experiment with musical responses. In each class we took a little time for participants to share parts of their conversations with the whole group.

After refreshments we focussed on aspects of music at home and covered two topics per week. This was very interactive and provided parents with the opportunity to share their and

their child's musical experiences. In the first class we shared ideas about how music helps with daily routines. We also discussed and worked with musical picture books (Raffi, 1988; Cabrera, 1999; Billet, 2019) which were then available for loan. In week 2 we discussed musical activity during meal-times and also about how TV theme tunes contribute to adults' and children's musical environments.

Both weeks I allowed time, close to the end of the class, for verbal evaluation of the different class sections. In the first week, parents talked it through with each other before sharing with the whole group. I reminded them of each section of the class and, in order to frame the evaluation, I suggested an informal 4-point evaluation tool *heart/ mind/ bin-bag* whereby ideas were categorised into *loved, thought-provoking, unhelpful* and those they wanted to *keep and use* (Gill, 2014). In practice however, the evaluations quickly evolved into less-structured conversations. Whilst a slightly more formal approach using a written version of this evaluation might have been helpful, the conversations did yield valuable data and allow for in-depth discussion of some issues. The division of the class into sections made it easier to evaluate the relative success of each approach. Each class ended with conversations about, and demonstrations of, lullabies and a goodbye song.

On listening back to the sound recordings, I hear a pleasing melee of mothers chatting between, and sometimes during, activities; the babies babbling musically, playing instruments, crying or stopping to listen; my speaking voice cutting gently through the background sounds as I tell stories, give instructions, make a joke or explain something; participants' verbal responses in the form of comments, sighs and laughter; and lots of musicking including many of the mothers joining with me in songs and rhymes.

The classes were planned but unscripted. I played the multifarious roles of host, administrator, pedagogue, organiser, note-taker, tea-maker, and researcher. Within a broad class plan, I exercised what might be described as a 'sensitive, improvisatory practice' (Huhtinen-Hilden & Pitt, 2018:43) which responded in the moment to the participants.

Throughout, and beyond, the two week period, I encouraged parents to send me emails or keep notes on the postcards I had provided. Following each class, I emailed parents with

information and created resources in the form of a YouTube channel of songs, rhymes and recorded music. The channel included activities from the class as well as songs that the participants had mentioned in our various discussions (figures 19 and 20). As part of this, I produced simple 'videos' of sound recordings combined with PowerPoint slides of lyrics. Additionally, I loaned children's musical picture books (Cabrera,1999; Raffi, 1988), suggested 'homework' and provided written pamphlets and information.

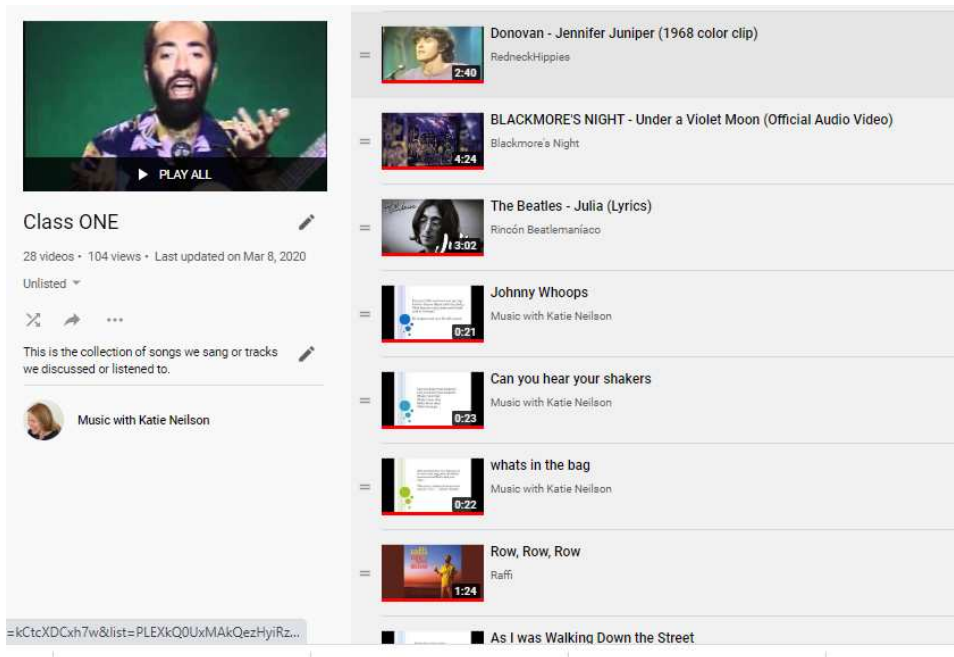


Figure 19 Screenshot of YouTube playlist (class 1)

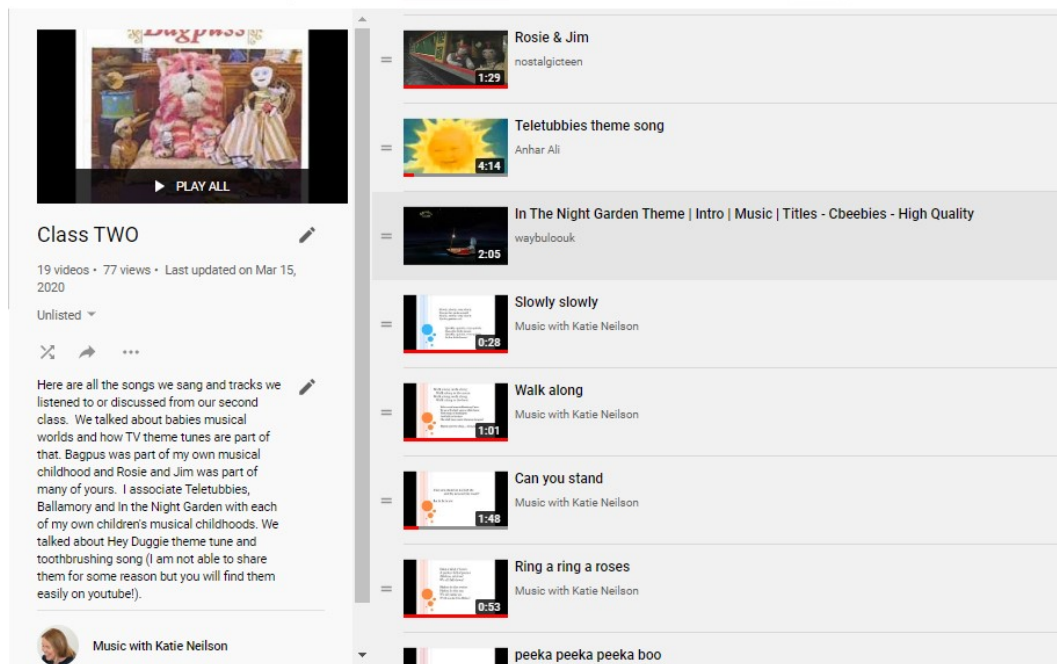


Figure 20 Screenshot of YouTube playlist (class 2)

During the classes I both anticipated and sensed participants' reluctance to give negative feedback or constructive criticism. In response to this, I made considerable efforts to coax them into expressing their opinions and suggesting improvements. When constructive criticism was offered, I thanked them, expanded on their ideas and, through questioning, encouraged others to join in. I took any comments seriously, included songs they suggested, wrote down their comments and offered to try their ideas in future sessions. At the very start of the first class, I shared with participants that several of them had written saying they loved music and joked that I might have learnt more had I been working with a group of parents who hated ECMCs. In this way, using a friendly and approachable manner, I hoped to leave them in no doubt that their constructive criticism was welcome and useful.

4.2 Modifications

In the light of my own reflections from class 1, I modified the timings of the second class having realised that first section (class with commentary) had taken too long and the break had been negatively affected. I had sensed that the participants enjoyed their coffee break together and that it had been too short for in-depth conversations.

Participants asked if I could include more well-known rhymes and music which I did in the second class. Also, in class 2, two parents asked for a handout with lyrics to help them to learn the songs and rhymes and make it easier for them to use the songs at home. I retrospectively created this for the week 2 activities and emailed it to parents (Appendix 12).

Following participant feedback, I also attempted to change the tone and content of the pamphlet (Appendix 8) that I had provided to support the week 1 mini-TED talk. Changes involved a narrative description of my 2019 research and a rather amateur attempt at mirroring the musicality of a story-teller by changing font styles and sizes. Unfortunately, as a result of the cancelled third class, participants did not get the opportunity to use a lyric pamphlet in class or evaluate the revised information pamphlet to support my talk (Appendix 9).

Despite the unexpected curtailment of the project, there was a large amount of data gathered from sound recordings, emails, postcards, questionnaire results and notes from my reflective journal. It is a combination of data from all these sources that forms the basis for the following discussion.

5. Discussion

This praxeological action research project explores MPE; how it might be delivered and its role in shaping parents' MP practices. Before presenting the findings, it is important to clarify that this study explored a variety of MPE delivery formats *within* a praxeological approach. During data analysis, it became obvious that the praxeological research framework, necessitated by my choice of paradigm, also provided an effective approach for MPE. I have, therefore, chosen to name this pedagogical approach *Praxeological Musical Parenting Education* (PMPE) and to use this term in the following discussion and conclusions.

5.1 Summary of key findings

Despite the significant impact of the Covid19 pandemic on data gathering (see section 3.8), a surprisingly large and rich amount of data was collected, which, I propose, make the seven findings listed below, all the more significant.

1. How might MPE be combined with practical musical activity in a new form of ECMC?

Findings:

- 1a) Sharing ECME information through stories is engaging and effective and learning is retained
- 1b) A variety of delivery styles and content is effective, appeals to parents and meets a range of needs and interests
- 1c) A shift of focus from babies to parents facilitates MPE, suits practitioners and parents, and is effective.

2. How far and in what ways might the deliberate inclusion of MPE in ECMCs support MP?

Findings:

2a) PMPE significantly supports and shapes MP practices.

2b) PMPE raises awareness of ECM behaviours and results in parents noticing those behaviours and appreciating them more

2c) PMPE results in more musicking at home

2d) PMPE empowers parents

The scope of this dissertation is such that I am unable to discuss all knowledge claims in detail, however, all seven findings are important and of significance to those wishing to explore PMPE further. In order to provide an overview for those who are interested, reasons and evidence for each claim are represented in seven story boards (figures 21-27 below). For clarity, those knowledge claims relating to question 1 are coloured blue and those relating to question 2 are in red.

In this discussion participants will be referred to by numbers P1-16, questionnaires will be referenced as Q1 and Q2 and, within each questionnaire, individual questions are labelled q1, q2 and so on.

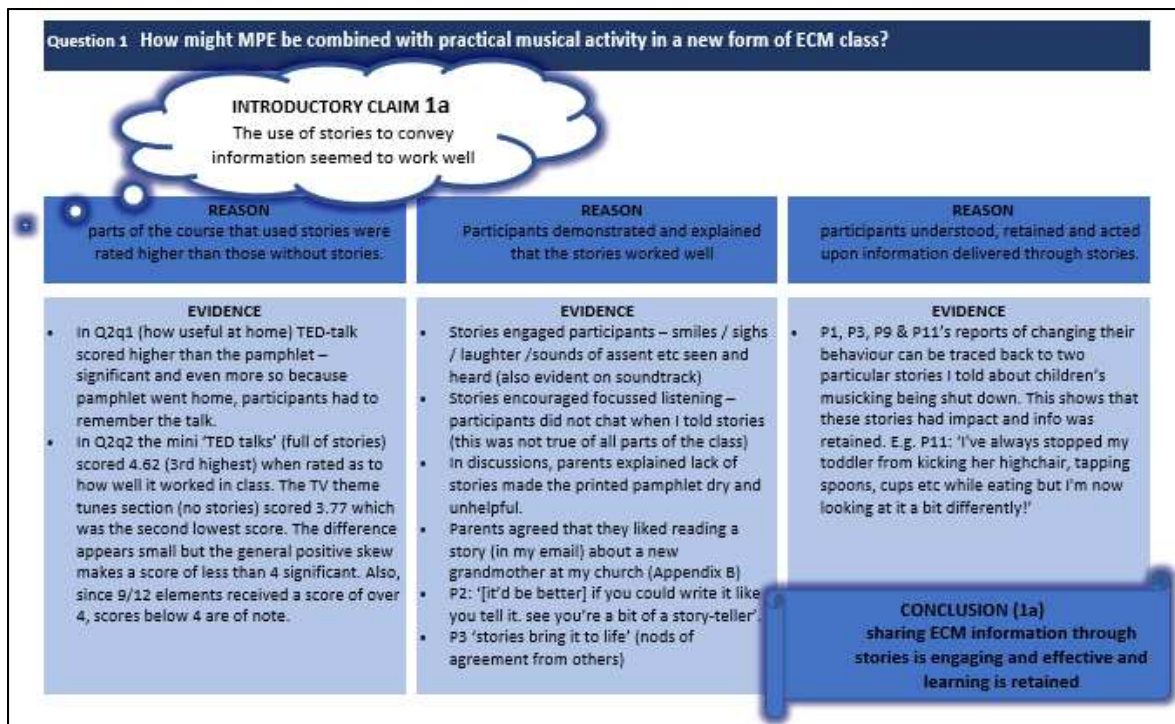


Figure 21 Storyboard: Finding 1a

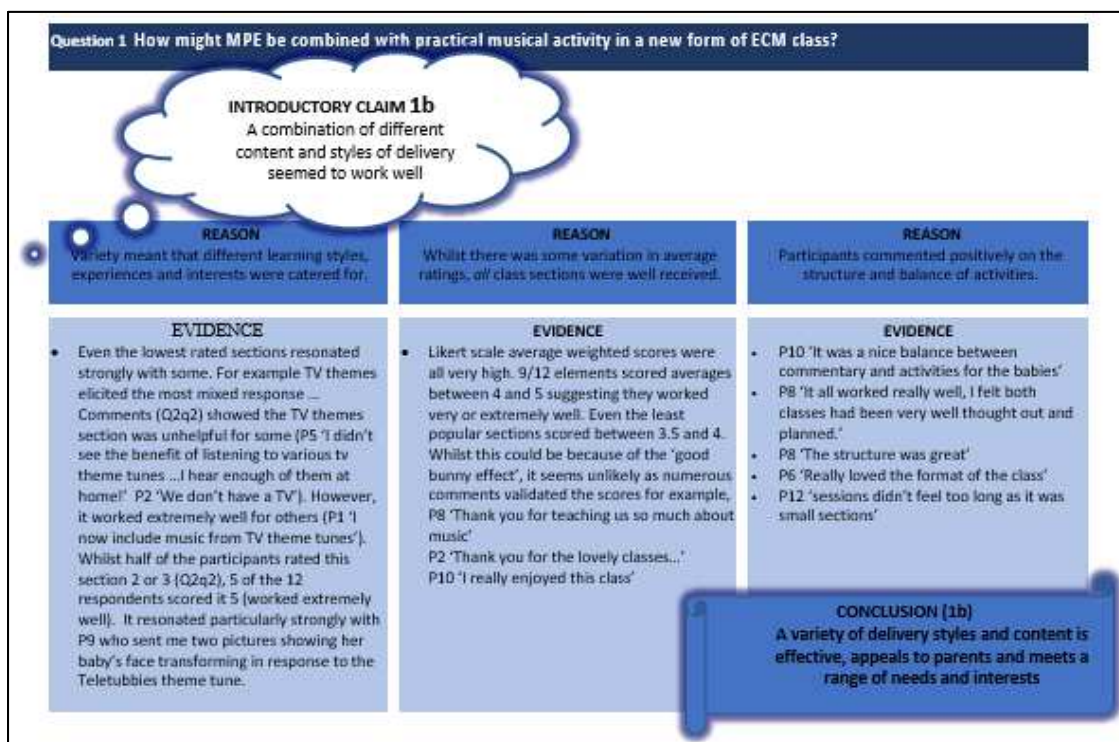


Figure 22 Storyboard: Finding 1b

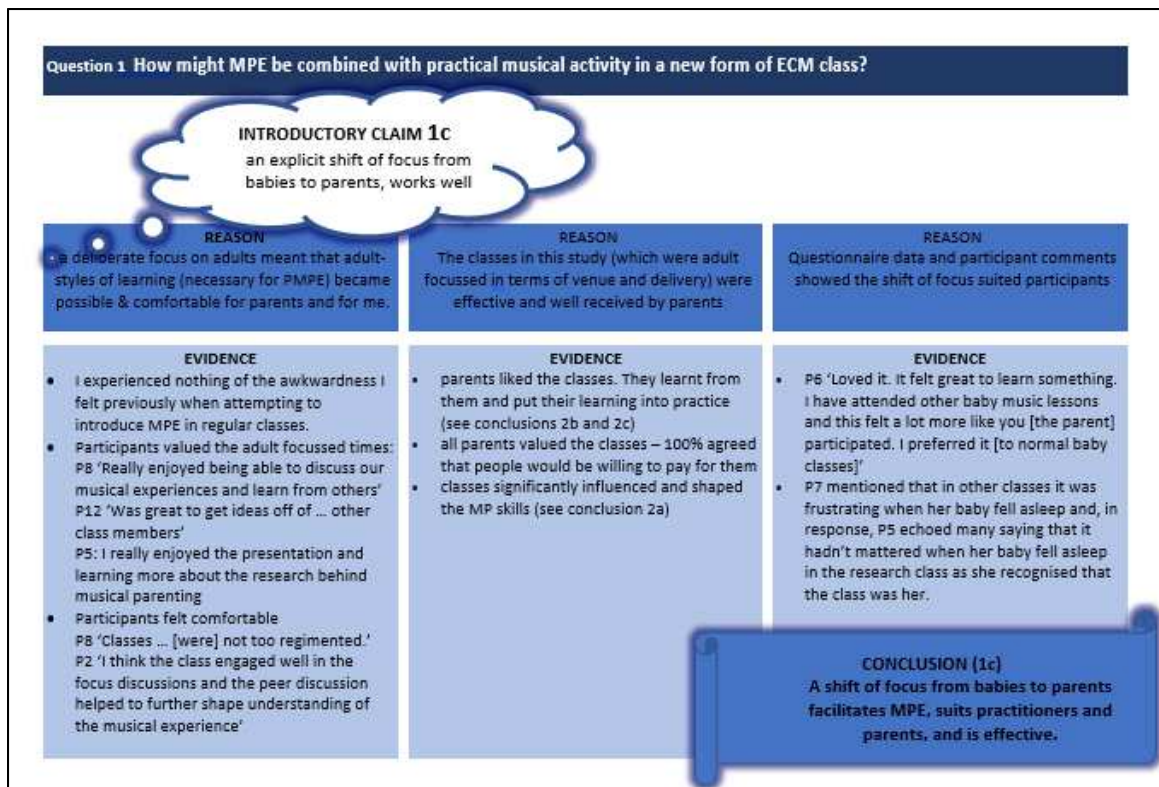


Figure 23 Storyboard: Finding 1c

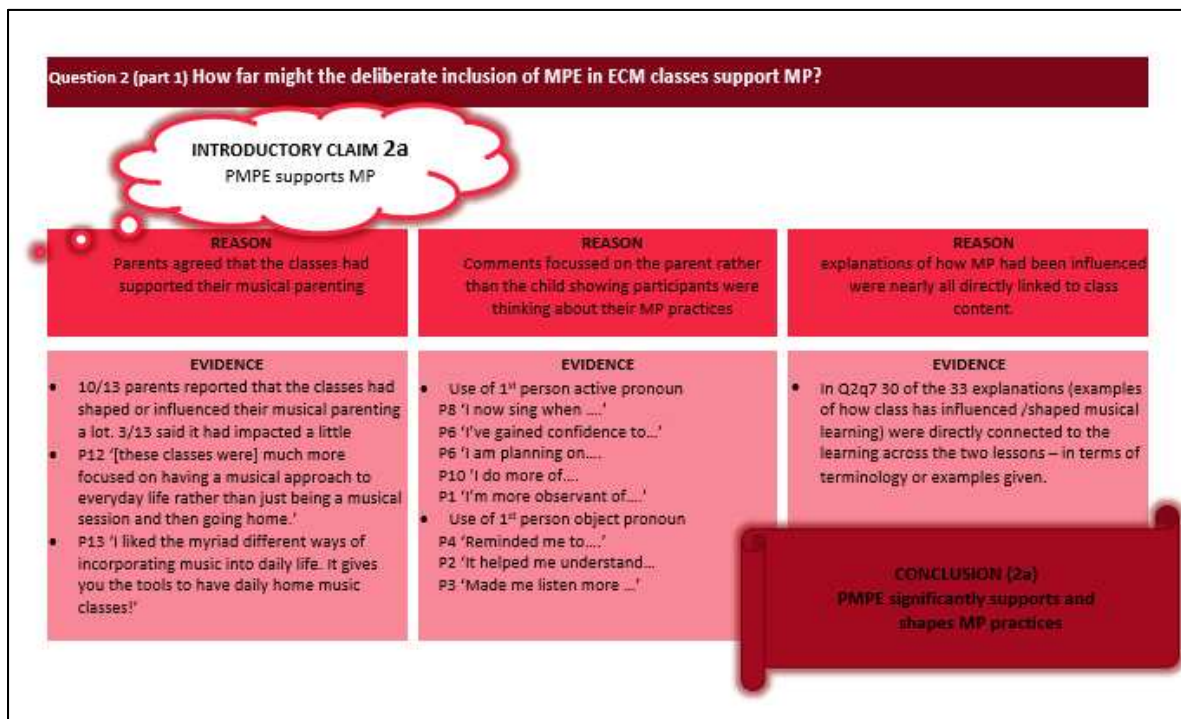


Figure 24 Storyboard: Finding 2a

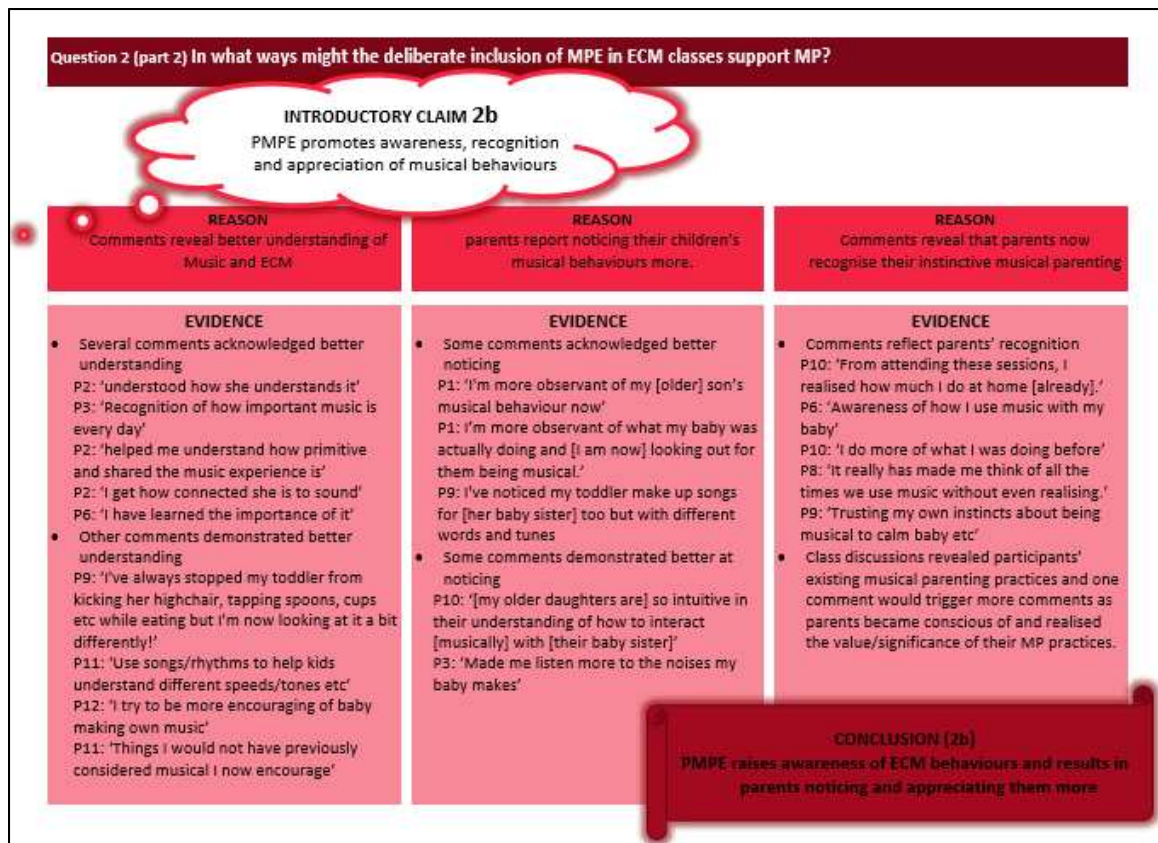


Figure 25 Storyboard: Finding 2b

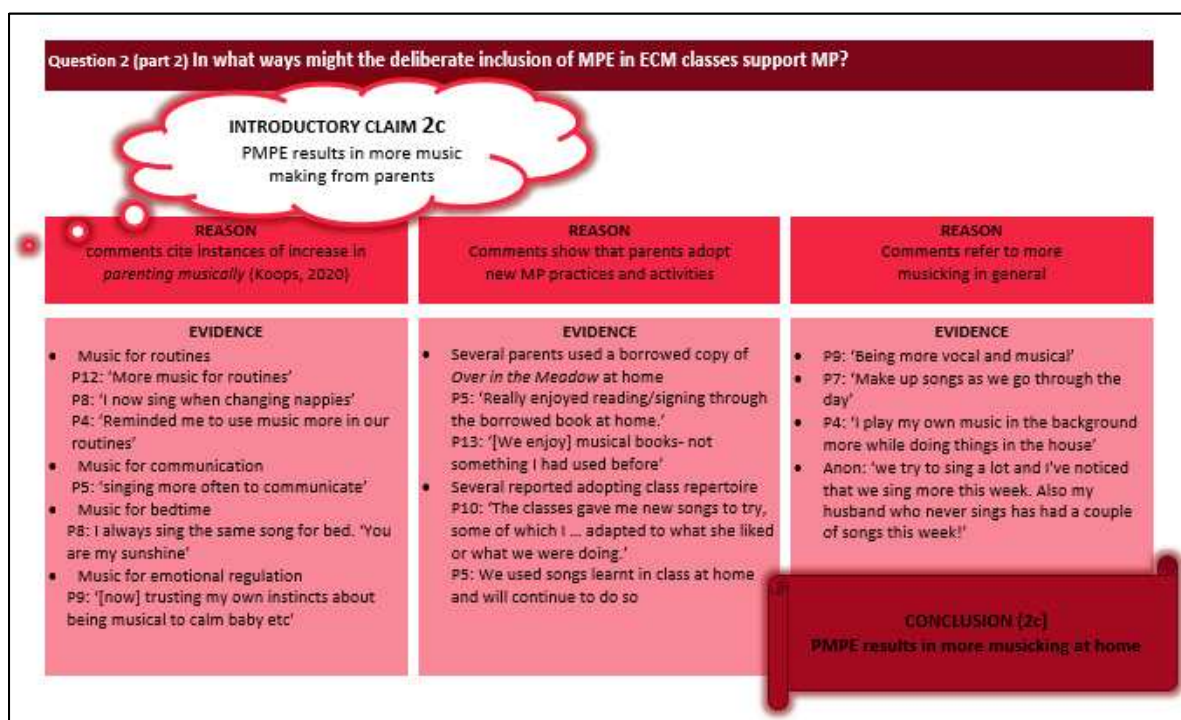


Figure 26 Storyboard: Finding 2c

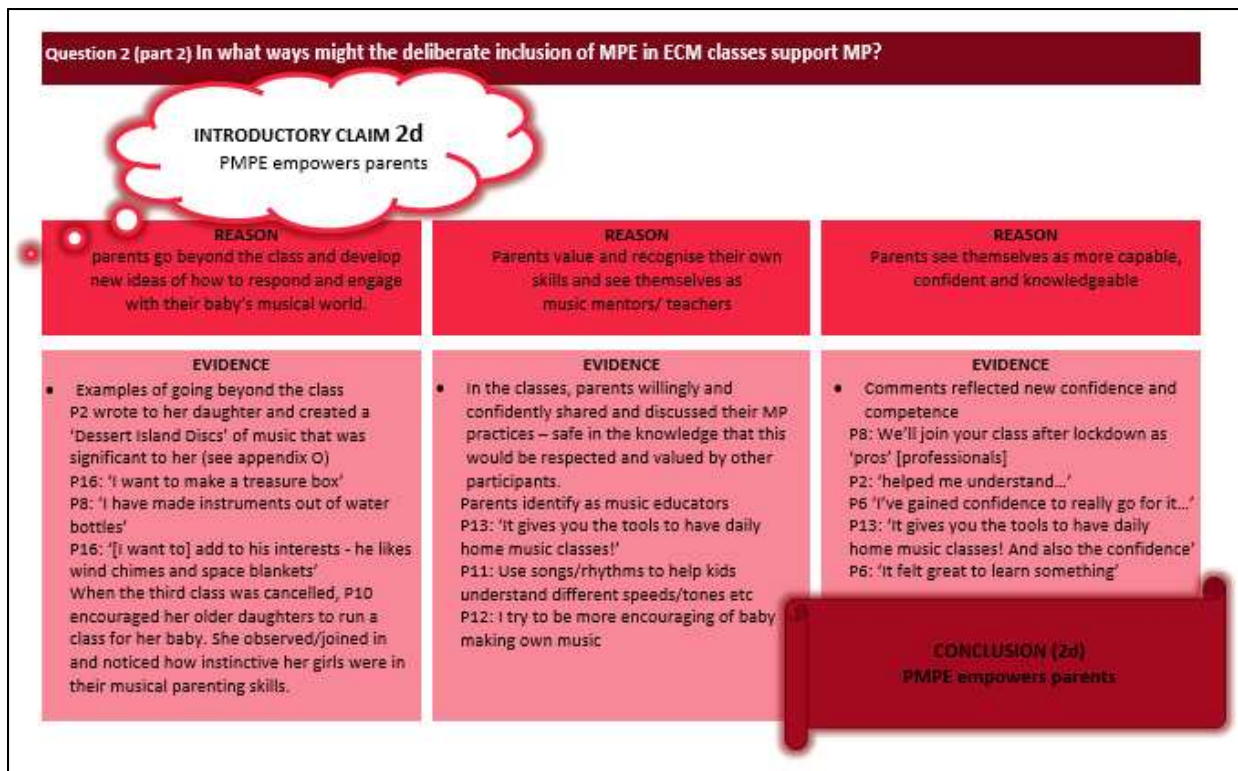


Figure 27 Storyboard: Finding 2d

Figure 28 summarizes the findings and highlights 2a and 2d which have been selected for more detailed discussion and analysis below.

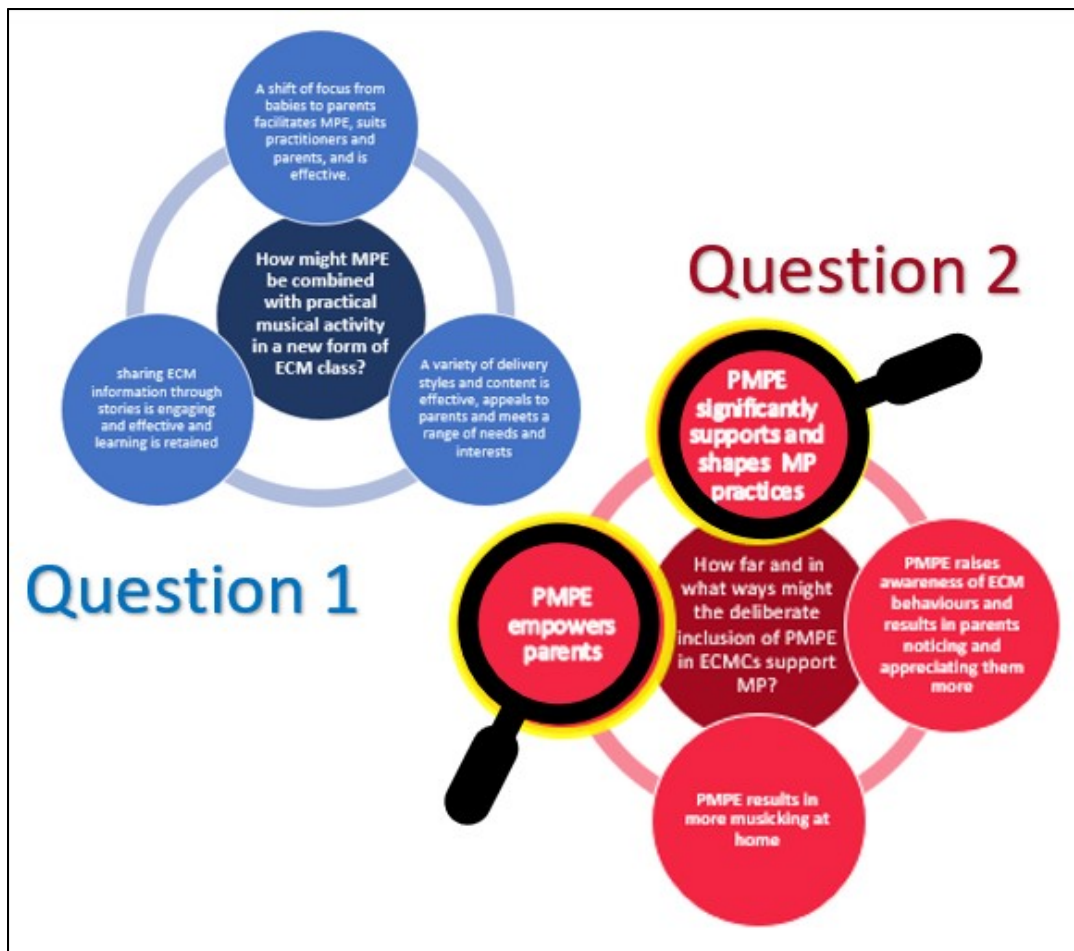


Figure 28 Visual summary of research findings

5.2 Discussion of finding 2a

Of all the findings, perhaps the most noteworthy is 2a which states that PMPE significantly supports and shapes MP practices. In Q2q6, 100% of respondents acknowledged that the classes had influenced or shaped their MP practices and ten out of thirteen stated that the effect had been significant. This finding is further supported by finding 2c ‘PMPE results in more musicking at home’ which is consistent with results from Strong’s thesis (2006). Indeed, half of the comments in answer to Q2q7 related to increases in musical activity at home. Participants listed more frequent instances of existing practice and instances of new practices, such as the use of musical picture books, that had been discussed and modelled in the classes. In terms of the infants’ musical behaviours, participants reported heightened awareness and recognition (as musical), increased tolerance, more thoughtful responses and a deeper

understanding (see storyboard 2b in figure 25). Participants valued their infants', and their own, musicking more and several participants stated that this extended to the musical behaviours of their older children. This further reinforces the finding that PMPE significantly impacts MP skills.

Data from Q2q1 reveals very positive findings regarding the usefulness of the various PMPE elements (figure 29). Likert scale weighted averages were all between 3 and 5 (5 = extremely useful 1 = not at all useful).

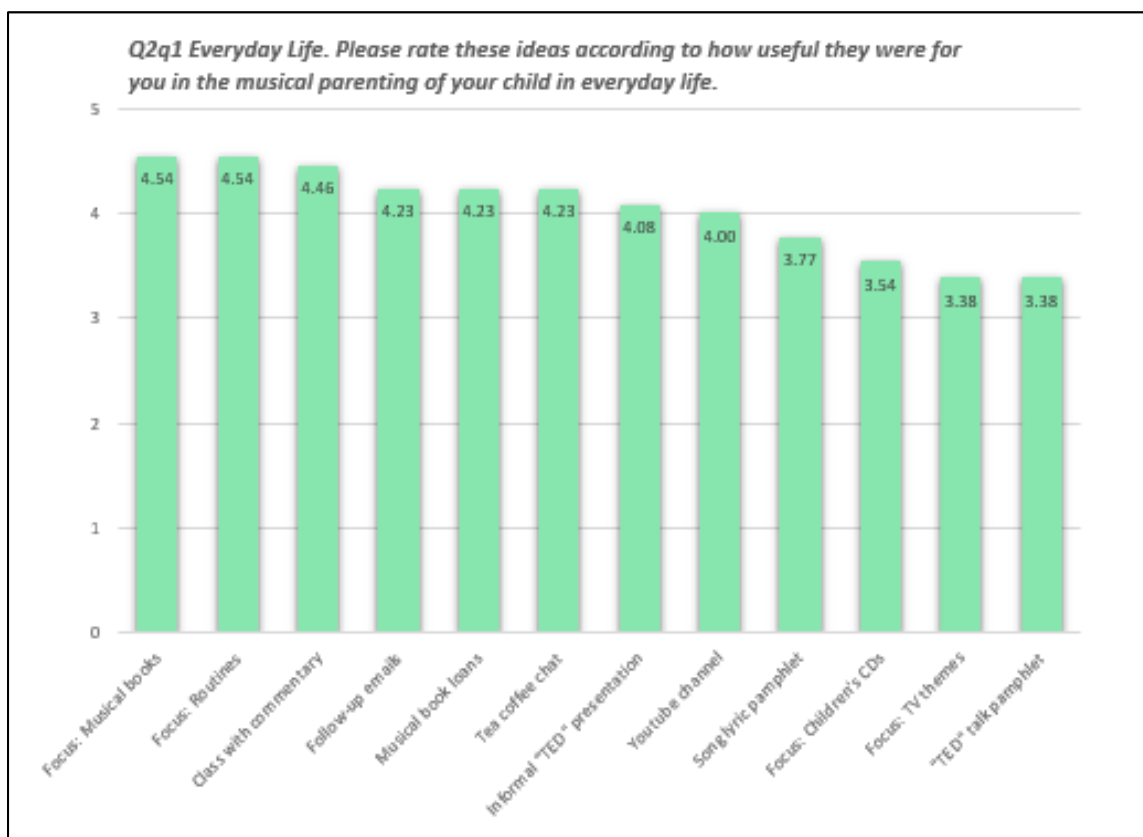


Figure 29 Graph showing answers to Q2q1 - weighted averages of each PMPE element on a Likert scale

It is possible that the 'good bunny' effect (Robson, cited in Tryfonos, 2014:79), in which participants answers reflect their desire to please the researcher, may have been responsible for the positive skew seen in figure 29 and evident in much of the data from Q2. One class element in the graph above 'focus on Children's CDs' was related to the third cancelled class and was left in the questionnaire in error. Interestingly, no participants commented on this error. Whilst it is possible that they imagined the question referred to the many mentions of

children's music throughout both classes, it is also possible that their answering is symptomatic of the 'good bunny' effect.

Since the reasons why three participants opted out of Q2 are unknown, the possibility has to be considered that their MP skills were not supported by the classes. However, if this were true, the results would remain significant with just over 80% of participants having found the classes supportive of their MP skills.

5.3 Discussion of finding 2d

Of the remaining findings, I believe the notion that PMPE empowers parents is the most interesting. Further reading on the nature of empowerment (Short, 1994; Kim, 2012; Lam & Kwong, 2012), reveals that aspects of all seven findings are encompassed by this term. For these reasons I have chosen this theme for a more detailed discussion below.

5.3.1 The nature of empowerment

Empowerment is a commonly used term in political circles and relates to how people become stronger, more confident and in greater control of their own lives. However, in the context of this study, a more detailed understanding of the concept is needed. Short (1994) and Kim (2012) each explore empowerment in terms of education and parenting and their frameworks are set out in figure 30.

Teacher Empowerment and Parent Empowerment	
Six aspects of teacher empowerment (Short, 1994:488)	Four dimensions of parent empowerment (Kim, 2012:56)
involvement in decision making	consciousness
teacher impact	sense of meaning,
teacher status	competence
autonomy	self-determination
opportunities for professional development	
teacher self-efficacy	

Figure 30 Aspects/dimensions of empowerment based on Short (1994) and Kim (2012)

Since this study positions *parents* as children’s first music *teachers*, I have considered elements of both teacher *and* parent empowerment and set out four areas for discussion in the context of MP (figure 31).

Musical Parenting Empowerment
Four Categories of MP empowerment
Involvement in decision making
Consciousness and competence
Recognition of status
Self-efficacy and self determination

Figure 31 Categories of MP Empowerment

In the following discussion, each aspect of MP empowerment will be discussed in relation to the data. Evidence includes participants’ actions and comments together with the steps I took that either enabled or impaired participants’ empowerment.

5.3.2 Empowerment through a genuine role in decision making

The praxeological nature of this research study resulted in a climate that allowed participants to shape the curriculum. As previously stated, an ethos of working together and learning

together was emphasized. I also told the participants that I hoped to learn a lot from them during the study. With encouragement, participants made suggestions for repertoire, expressed opinions and suggested some changes. I listened carefully, made notes and put several of their ideas into action. The lyric pamphlet (Appendix 12), for example, was initiated as a result of a conversation between P6 and P15 who both had English as their second language. They agreed that such a pamphlet would help them to learn songs and make their use at home more likely.

However, despite the above, it would be dishonest to suggest that the classes were truly democratic. I planned and led the classes and my practitioner-researcher voice dominated the participants' experience. Praxeology is deeply rooted in democracy (Pascal & Bertram, 2012) but I can only claim that these classes were significantly *less undemocratic* than the traditional music classes described by Young (2003) and Greenhalgh (2013) or the parent education studied by Smith (2019) in which parents had no power and the role of an 'expert' leader was emphasized. Lam and Kwong reflect on the 'inherent power imbalance between professionals and parents' (2012:72) and explore the paradox of an ultimately disempowering practice which, in the name of empowerment, imposes democracy on parents who actually wish to learn from an expert. I followed their advice and aimed to achieve some level of democracy through a series of measures including the avoidance of traditional 'truth-telling teacherly positions' (Lam & Kwong, 2012:72), the sharing and debating of knowledge and the validation of the parents' lived experiences (ibid.). Furthermore, in the writing of this document I have included participants' voices through the use of direct quotes from their written and spoken comments.

Further to this question of democracy, opportunities for participants to lead songs or activities were missed in both classes. For example, P14 volunteered the information that she had once auditioned for the X-Factor. I, together with other participants, immediately expressed delight and respect but I did not explore this further or find out whether she would enjoy performing or leading some singing, which according to Van Nes, might have been her 'undiscovered/unnamed musical need' (2020:6). On a postcard, P9 volunteered information about instruments she had played as a child and, again, I did nothing with this information.

Although I received no feedback on this subject, it is possible that P14 and P9 might have felt disempowered as a result.

5.3.3 Empowerment through increased consciousness and competence

Increased competence and consciousness emerged as a strong theme and is summed up eloquently in an email message from P8 who, after expressing regret about the premature curtailment of classes, wrote, *'we look forward to attending a class (as pros in music) once this has all blown over'*⁶. What may seem to have been a humorous comment, demonstrates, through her identification of herself as a *professional*, her increased sense of competence.

Indeed, ten out of the thirteen Q2 respondents included comments that demonstrated their raised consciousness or competence. Most reflected directly on this and P11's comment, *'things I would not have previously considered musical I now encourage and understand'* was echoed by several others.

A few participants demonstrated raised consciousness through a high level of reflection. For example, P10 was fascinated by her older daughters' MP skills: *'My older two children[set up] a music class for their baby sister as they were sad her classes were cancelled! They are so intuitive in their understanding of how to talk/interact [musically] with her.'* P9 first reflected on how her own made-up song could *'buy me time while I prepare [my baby's] milk'*. She then reflected on her three-year-old daughter who had created a song called *'The Mamma Song'* which she performed whilst strumming a ukulele. P9 explained, with a smile, that her daughter used the song frequently to *'guilt-trip'* her mummy and seemed impressed that her daughter intuitively understood the power of music.

⁶ Participant comments will be made distinct through the use of italic text

The possibility that parenting classes might induce feelings of inadequacy or incompetence is discussed in an interview with Zeedyk (2020). Indeed, through MPE some parents, myself included, experience feelings of guilt or regret in relation to things they inadvertently once did. P11 revealed that two stories I told had triggered such feelings of guilt. She confessed that she had not realized her toddler's sound-making might be musical and had sometimes put a stop to it. I immediately apologized and, in order to mitigate any harm, I addressed the issue directly by talking about unintended consequences of parent education (Zeedyk, 2020; Lancy, 2017) and about my own experiences of maternal guilt. I made it clear that inducing guilt had not been my intention and reinforced my belief that parents are very competent. I also reminded everyone that sometimes, parents are completely justified in shutting down their children's sound making and gave the example of a child banging a glass with a spoon. It is possible that those who opted out of Q2 chose to do so because they also felt some level of guilt or inadequacy or possibly because they had not been given the opportunity to *demonstrate* their musical competence.

5.3.4 Empowerment through recognition of status and a sense of worth

As I listened to the sound recordings and reflected on the study, I considered the strategies I had used to elevate and acknowledge the status of parents as a children's first music teachers whilst, at the same time reducing any perceived status I held as a musician, teacher or researcher. Six hierarchy-flattening strategies emerged as detailed below.

1. I told them overtly, through written and spoken means, that I saw them as equals

In my introduction I stated my ontological position in terms of both musical talent and parents' instinctive MP skills. Furthermore, I found opportunities throughout the class and in written communications to reaffirm my position.

2. I responded professionally to participant comments and questions

I listened carefully to participants' comments and stories, made notes and endorsed their lived experiences by relating them to my own experience or to academic research. For example, P3 told everyone that she often sings to her children in order to reduce her own

stress levels. In response, I talked briefly about how breathing for singing mirrors anxiety-reducing breathing exercises. I also shared information from Shenfield et al. (2003) in which the measurement of infants' cortisol levels showed that maternal singing helped modulate infants' arousal.

3. I shared personal information

The power of the story is identified in finding 1a. As I listened to the recordings, I realised that these stories, used with the intention of illustrating information about and attitudes towards musicking, also helped parents identify with me on a more equal footing. The stories positioned me not only in my practitioner/researcher role but also as a one-time child, a mother, a sister, a wife, a sewing enthusiast, a one-time inexperienced aunt, and as a recent victim of musical teasing. Effectively, my stories helped to distance me from the often-perceived elevated status of a researcher, teacher and musician and reposition me on a level with the participants as 'one of them'.

4. I positioned myself at the same physical level as them

For the most part, I sat myself in the circle with the participants and their babies. The consequences of not doing this are highlighted by Smith (2019) who observed Children's Centre parenting classes that employed a classroom formation with the expert leader at the front. She described how this room arrangement dictated, and fueled, unequal power relationships and reinforced a deficit-based pedagogy.

5. I used only musical activities that were within parents' capabilities

Although I am a relatively accomplished cellist and pianist, I elected not to use these instruments in the classes. I imagined that my own primary school experiences of singing, playing percussion and learning the recorder might, to some extent mirror those of my participants. By sharing achievable musical activities, I hoped to minimize my status as a 'music specialist'.

6. By taking their advice and trying out their suggestions

As previously noted, Q2 elicited very few negative comments. However, during the classes, with encouragement, participants were persuaded to give constructive criticism. The most memorable example of this involves the pamphlet (Appendix 8) which I had originally created for Early Years practitioners in 2019. My intention was to provide supporting information following the first mini-TED talk. In the second class, P2 mentioned that the talk had inspired her and, in an effort to convey the information to her husband, she had referred to the pamphlet. Disappointingly it had proved very dry and unhelpful and, on further discussion, it was evident that others shared this view. We discussed this and jointly concluded that my narrative style in the class and in my emails, helped to make information engaging and that, crucially, this was missing from the pamphlet. In response to this feedback, I redrafted the pamphlet (as described in section 4.2) and emailed it to participants (Appendix 9). Due to the cancellation of the third class we did not get the opportunity to discuss the new version.

Whilst my prime motivation for obtaining and acting upon participants' advice was linked to the requirements of an AR project, I propose that the process became part of PMPE pedagogy as it served to flatten hierarchies.

In addition, participants frequently demonstrated that they valued one another's contributions. Whilst this does not directly evidence their own raised status, it does show that they acknowledge the raised status of parents in general. These instances included comments, affirmative vocal utterances and smiles in class and unprompted comments in Q2 from P2 P5 P8 P10 and P12 that recognised how peer discussions had strongly contributed to their MPE.

Data that overtly reflects participants' own raised status include P8's reference to being a 'professional' and P13's comment: '*[the classes give you] the tools to have daily home music classes! And also the confidence*'. The notion of raised confidence and competence was echoed by several others and indicates participants' developing sense of themselves as their child's first music teacher or mentor.

5.3.5 Empowerment through self-efficacy and self determination

Self-efficacy, or one's belief in one's own ability, is evident in several of the examples above. The many mentions of raised confidence allude to this but perhaps the clearest example of self-efficacy came from P13 who wrote: '*[I am now] trusting my own instincts ...*'.

Self-determination refers to the process of controlling one's own life. In this context, I propose that it is best demonstrated through instances of participants developing their own MP ideas. Many parents shared examples of their existing creative practices including numerous invented songs for routines, but, perhaps more significantly, P2 and P16 shared new ideas which had emerged as a result of the classes. I am fortunate to have been given permission by P2 to reference and reproduce an anonymized version of a letter she drafted to her baby. The letter (Appendix 15) refers to a playlist of music she created which tells, '*the patchwork of our experiences*' and details the musical journey from before her baby was conceived. This idea was P2's own and grew out of her new MP awareness. It was inspired by the BBC Radio 4 programme *Desert Island Discs* and, perhaps, in part by my own creation of class YouTube playlists. When, towards the end of the writing process, as part of the member checking process, I shared the first draft of this chapter with participants, P2 wrote back to tell me how emotional she had found it and that, because I had included her letter, her '*journey with MP would be immortalised*'. My acknowledgment, and her realization, of its importance, once again, speaks of parental empowerment.

I move on now to the conclusion in which I will sum up the study and attend to any outstanding issues raised.

6 Conclusion

This study set out to explore MPE, how it might be delivered within an ECMC context and how it supported participants' MP practices. The literature review, together with informal questioning of ECME colleagues, revealed that deliberate, planned and advertised MPE within ECMCs has not previously been explored or studied.

6.1 A new and effective pedagogy

Through the process of designing, executing and analyzing this research, a distinct pedagogy has emerged that I call Praxeological Musical Parenting Education (PMPE). This study has shown PMPE to be an effective forum for developing and supporting musical parenting skills.

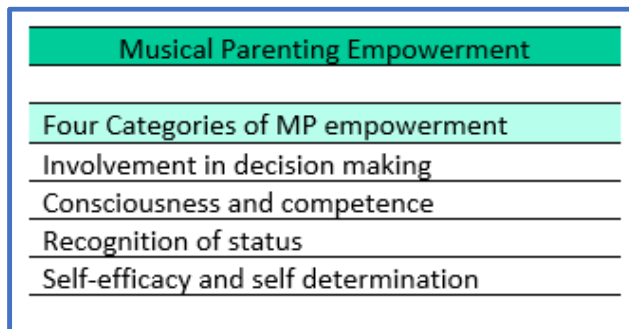
The pedagogy includes:

- the promotion of meaningful interactions and learning between parents,
- reciprocal learning between practitioners and parents,
- the use of everyday stories to challenge assumptions and illustrate academic learning,
- the creation of a more democratic ethos,
- enhanced parent empowerment,
- a focus on parents and
- delivery through a variety of different adult learning styles.

Whilst many of these features are closely aligned to *transformative parent education* (To et al. 2013) and *invisible pedagogy* (Bernstein as cited by Smith, 2019), the change of focus from babies to parents, which worked extremely well in PMPE, conflicts with Smith's conclusion that child-focused classes are preferable. I would argue however, that the fact that the babies were present in the classes, and that the parents interacted with them throughout, distances my findings from the visible 'paradoxical pedagogies' in her study (2019:693).

The notion that PMPE promotes parent empowerment was a significant finding. However, in the use of the word *empowerment*, care needs to be taken to avoid the presumption that parents start from a position of disempowerment. If this were the case, it would contradict my ontological position that music is for everyone and that parent-infant interactions are

innately musical. I propose that the identification of four elements of MP empowerment (figure 31) which I am reprinting here for ease of reading makes it possible to understand the potential for empowerment of all manner of people, including individuals who might already be, in some way, empowered.



Repetition of figure 31 Musical Parenting Empowerment

For example, it might be hard to imagine how a parent like me, with musical and educational qualifications, might be in need of empowerment. Indeed, when my children were young, I was empowered in many ways as a decision maker and as someone with status who believed in her own abilities. However, in recent years, my growing awareness and understanding of ECME research findings has led to me becoming more empowered. Similarly, the participants in this study may have already had a range of innate MP skills but, by their own admission, they were not consciously aware of many of these. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 2, a combination of, firstly, prevalent cultural beliefs around the myth of musical talent, secondly, strong media messages promoting the 'cult of the expert' and, thirdly, positioning of music as a tool for improving children, result in parents who see themselves through a deficit-based musical lens in need of expert intervention. Through discussions, narrative illustrations and the modelling of musical activities, commonly held beliefs were challenged, confidence, awareness and status were raised and an environment was created in which parents became more empowered.

It also should be noted that, by empowering parents, I do not intend or imply that children's musical empowerment should be overlooked. Since young children have little agency over their own education, they rely on their parents to make good musical choices on their behalf.

I propose that, through PMPE, parents are better placed, to make the musical choices that lay foundations for their children's life-long musical empowerment and, as a result, it is the children who are the prime beneficiaries of PMPE. Whatsmore, the fact that our parenting practices are a reflection of how we ourselves were once parented (Custodero and Johnson-Green, 2008) means that PMPE could be said to be igniting a virtuous cycle which will, one day, influence the way these babies parent their own children.

MPE is not a new idea. It is widely practiced through advertising materials and delivered through literature such as *The Music Miracle* (2014) or media sources such as Wooten's YouTube video (2012). In the world of academia, Melissa Strong dedicated her PhD thesis (2006) to MPE and several other researchers have recommended its exploration (Bond, 2011; Abad, 2015; Barret, 2009). Furthermore, many ECMPs deliver MPE informally on an ad hoc basis and ECMC organisations such as Music Together and Kindermusik have, in part, built their approach on work with parents. The innovation, therefore, in this study is the deliberate, advertised and planned delivery of a praxeological MPE approach within ECMCs. Since only a praxeological approach was tested, the findings from this study cannot and should not be assumed to be transferable to other pedagogical approaches, especially those that employ a didactic, deficit approach. It is primarily for this reason that I propose that, in discussions of this pedagogy and this study's findings, the specific and descriptive title of Praxeological Musical Parenting Education is necessary.

6.2 Limitations

In addition to the limitations created by the very short timeframe which is not conducive to an AR study within a praxeological paradigm (Robson & McCarten, 2016; Pascal & Bertram, 2012), the study worked with only a small number of mothers from an affluent, white, middle-class background and only those with babies between 0 and 12 months of age. As such the transferability of the findings were not tested.

The data gathered from Q2 showed a very positive skew which is not uncommon in ECME research (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017). As discussed earlier, the 'good bunny' effect (Robson, cited in Tryfonos, 2014:79) may have been a factor as several participants sent emails wishing

me success and it is possible that, as non-academics, they believed that positive ratings may result in a 'successful' project. However, since firstly, I worked hard to create a safe space in which constructive criticism was welcome and, secondly, I was very accepting of their suggestions and advice, I am reluctant to suggest that the 'good bunny' phenomena is completely responsible for such positive results. Furthermore, data was triangulated with information from the class sound recordings and my own reflective notes. Instead of the 'good bunny' phenomena, I suggest that the findings reflect the true opinions of this group of participants who, as evidenced from information provided in Q1, came from a position of already valuing ECM. In many cases, participants volunteered to participate because they valued music and wished to learn more. As a result, it is likely that they were naturally biased towards what they perceived as the 'success' of this research.

6.3 Implications for my own practice

I intend to introduce PMPE baby classes as part of my expanding ECME practice. I plan to continue regular mixed-age classes as I believe they are still wanted by many. However, these classes will now reflect a greater respect for parents' innate skills and will be more connected with every-day musicking. I will seek opportunities to share ECME information with the parents in all my classes, review and revise my advertising materials and strive to become a more reflective and collaborative practitioner.

At the same time, I hope to explore PMPE further afield and to seek a partner organisation with which I can apply for funding. Whilst acknowledging potentially sensitive ethical issues, I hope to redress some of the tensions in this study by testing PMPE with a range of different participants including fathers, less affluent parents, more culturally diverse groups, those who are reluctant to attend ECMCs, and parents with older preschool children. Furthermore, I would be interested in working with a team of practitioners who are willing to explore PMPE in other locations and thereby reach much larger numbers of parents. This could include online classes which, as a result of the 2020 lockdown, have now become commonplace. Several participants in my study expressed regret at the curtailment of the classes and wished we could have continued meeting. Like them, I believe there could be a place for much longer courses of classes. To test this idea, it would be interesting to run 3-week, 6-week and ten-

week courses and assess their relative impacts. The social distancing UK government guidance, as a result of the pandemic, will force me to work with much smaller class sizes which I propose may be more effective.

Should longer courses be held, I believe it would be of interest to parents and practitioners to learn about MP in the context of a modified Koops' framework that allows differentiation between deliberate and accidental musicking and gives consideration to the strength of MP actions. This would work well as a mini-TED talk, as would discussions around neuromyths, the cult of the expert and numerous other topics which I would enjoy selecting in collaboration with like-minded ECME colleagues.

6.3 Implications for ECME research community

Whilst it is common for dissertation conclusions to suggest further research into the field, I propose, in line with Odendaal et al.'s findings (2018) that it is currently more pressing for researchers to seek ways to counter powerful media messages and challenge commonly held beliefs by disseminating existing original ECME research findings in such a way that practitioners and parents listen and understand.

According to Stone (2018), the academic world does not reward (financially or in career terms) those academics who reach out to the wider population and, unfortunately, those high level ECME researchers who succeed in communicating with wider audiences via online interviews and blogs (Custodero, 2012; Hana, 2017; Ilari, 2020) reach only small audiences. Furthermore, they fail, in my view, to have the charisma evident in popular video essays (Tantacrul, 2017) or TED-ed videos (Collins, 2014; Wooten, 2012) which enable information and ideas, whether academically rigorous or not, to reach and influence audiences measured in the hundreds of thousands.

Despite numerous promotional services for academics and University website guidance, I found very little scholarly writing on the dissemination of research beyond academia and none in the field of ECME. I propose, therefore, that findings in the field of Information Systems (Alwzinani, 2017) are transferable to my own study. Alwzinani's identification of the

message which refers to the structure and language of communications, and the channel, which is the means of dissemination are both of particular relevance to this study. Those of us wishing to communicate ECME research beyond academia would benefit from understanding how and where our potential audiences seek and find information. If ECME academics could find ways to disseminate their findings using those methods employed by Tantaerul (2017), Collins (2014) and Wooten (2012), their authentic, rigorous work could potentially reach much wider audiences and have more impact on more children's lives.

6.4 Implications for practice

I believe that, in much the same way that Odendaal et al. (2018) urges researchers to ensure that their work is accurately represented in popular texts, I have a responsibility to ensure that my findings are not misrepresented or misinterpreted in practice. To this end, I caution ECMPs and ECME organisations to avoid jumping on the bandwagon, transforming my findings into generalized, selective soundbites and setting up MPE classes that perpetuate the myth of musical talent or view parents through a deficit lens. Instead, I hope that, as suggested by Young (2020), my ECMP colleagues will familiarize themselves with research in their field and embrace the notion that they are on a never-ending journey of becoming. As a first PMPE step, I suggest they rethink the role of the parents that attend their classes and seek to work more collaboratively with them. Importantly, I advise them to amend the text in their advertising literature which may inadvertently be reinforcing messages that are not conducive to the empowerment of parents who are their customers. Whilst acknowledging that it is unrealistic for many, Young (2020) urges ECMPs to engage in 'in-depth, theoretical reading' of original research findings (2020:21). This task is made harder because access to original research from leaders in the field of ECME research is available only to those willing to pay or who belong to a library that subscribes to the relevant academic journal. For this reason, I prefer Young's alternative suggestion that ECMPs be 'inoculated against false information'(2020:21) through education that cultivates a healthy skepticism and ensures that academic research findings are not misunderstood as absolute truths and that they come with limitations that are rarely reported in soundbites. Furthermore, I propose that such inoculations should also be extended to parents through PMPE.

6.5 Implications for policy

I echo calls for some form of regulation in the ECMC industry (Greenhalgh, 2013) together with more government funding (Pitt & Arculus, 2018). I suggest that this, together with the development of a professional body for those working in this sector, could result in a new climate in which educated, experimental and risk-taking ECMPs are allowed to flourish.

6.6 Wider implications of this research

This study shows that the ECMC works well as a channel and the developing pedagogy of PMPE provides a framework for the message. As explained above, I certainly intend to explore this concept further. However, even with funding and a team of colleagues, the potential audience is inevitably very small. So, in order to reach a wider audience, I would ideally like to work with a team to write books, create videos, organise an ECME festival and set up a YouTube channel. A group of fundraisers, educators, designers, artists, researchers, musicians and celebrities working together could facilitate meaningful change through some or all these channels and I intend to at least explore the possibility of making this happen.

I propose that, even without modification, Koops' framework serves to remind us that there is no one way to musically parenting a child (Koops, 2020; Ilari & Young, 2016; Ilari, 2018) as so many factors determine parents' musical actions. Ilari and Young state that there are 'as many musical childhoods as there are children in the world' (2016:162) and I suggest this is also true of MP practices. Many in the ECME research community agree that there is much to be learnt from parents' innate MP skills (Ilari, 2018) and I suggest that, through PMPE, practitioners should share this fact with parents and so begin the process of empowerment. The COVID19 epidemic of 2020, during which the vast majority of parents became solely responsible for their children's education has, for many, highlighted their role in their

children's learning. If ever there was a time to promote and develop the notion of musical parenting, it is now.

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APPENDICES List

Appendix 1 Ethical Approval	91
Appendix 2 Social Media Advert	92
Appendix 3 Initial information for recruitment of participants.....	93
Appendix 4 Official information sheet	94
Appendix 5 Consent form - baby	97
Appendix 6 Consent form – parent.....	99
Appendix 7 Questionnaire 1 – list of questions.....	101
Appendix 8 Pamphlet – week 1 original	102
Appendix 9 Pamphlet – week 1 redrafted	103
Appendix 10 Email to parents following class 1	104
Appendix 11 Pamphlet – week 2	106
Appendix 12 Lyric pamphlet	107
Appendix 13 Email to parents following class 2	108
Appendix 14 Final questionnaire	110
Appendix 15 Patchwork of our lives	113
Appendix 16 Appendix 16 Member check email to parents (Aug 2020).....	115

Appendix 1 Ethical Approval



The Centre for Research in Early Childhood

St Thomas Children's Centre

Bell Barn Road

Birmingham

B15 2AF

DATE: 12.02.20

Dear Kathryn Neilson

ETHICAL APPROVAL: DISSERTATION 2019/20

Your ethical application has been reviewed for the above module in relation to the approval acquired from BCU FAEC (Birmingham City University Faculty Academic Ethics Committee).

You have approval to carry out the research under the conditions which were outlined on the application.

This approval is conditional on:

- ensuring all letters of access and consent are personal to your project, populated with your supervisors contact details and carry both BCU and CREC logos,
- guidance should be sought from supervisory team should there be any significant change to the research design as the project commences,

Keep a copy of this letter as evidence of your authorisation.

We wish you every success with your research,

Yours sincerely

Helen Lyndon

Chris Pascal

Tony Bertram

Appendix 2 Social Media Advert

(slide show video with musical backing)

 Message from Katie at Little Bees...

Do you have a
baby between 0 and 12 months?

 Message from Katie at Little Bees...

Want to learn more about your
baby's musical skills?

 Message from Katie at Little Bees...

Want to talk about how music
impacts your baby's everyday life?

 Message from Katie at Little Bees...

Would you like to help shape the
future of baby music classes?

 Message from Katie at Little Bees...

If you have answered yes to these
questions then you may be
interested in taking part in free
music classes as part my MA
research project!

 Message from Katie at Little Bees...

Please click on "contact us" to
find out more!

Appendix 3 Initial information for recruitment of participants

I am now in the third year of an MA in Early Childhood Music at CREC which is part of Birmingham City University (this is distance learning as I am based near xxxx!). Each year I have the pleasure and challenge of designing and carrying out a research project. In Year 1 I did a case study of the everyday musical life of a 16-month-old boy. In Year 2, I worked with a nursery to look at adults' responses to children's musical behaviours during a daily walk. It has been a fascinating and illuminating journey so far and now I am looking for volunteers to help me with my 3rd year research project.

This year I want to find out more about musical parenting... you see, I, along with many others, believe that parents are a baby's first music teacher. I love teaching my parent and baby classes, but I am the first to admit that these classes are only a small part of a child's musical life. I know that parents sing and interact in musical ways with their babies throughout the day... that babies enjoy music from the radio and from the television... and that they love playing with musical toys and books!

At the same time, I want to share some of the things I have learnt from my MA (what I have read and what I have researched myself). Babies are incredibly musical – they are born musical and many of the playful instinctive things that they do and that parents do with them are innately musical! Many of the things I have read and learnt have been fascinating and I found myself wishing that I had had that knowledge when my own children were little.

So, I am running a series of three parent and baby music classes that allow me (the teacher and researcher) and you (the parents) to share our experiences and knowledge. There will still be singing, instruments, peekaboos and lullabies but there will also be time for us to talk and share.

I am running two sets of three classes in xxxx and in xxxx.

Xxxx classes are at xxxx Studio. Wednesday mornings starting on March 4th 9.45 – 11.15am
Xxxx classes are at xxxx xxxx Family Centre. Tuesday afternoons starting 17th March 1.30 – 3pm

Classes include a break with tea/coffee and biscuits. There is no charge for the classes (because they are part of my research project) but part of the deal is that you agree to fill out two questionnaires and that you will be able to attend all three weeks. I also have to get your informed consent that confirms your willingness for both you and your baby to participate. I have all the forms ready and will email them to you if you decide you want to participate.

The classes should be really enjoyable and I hope that, together, we will learn lots about babies' musical lives and capabilities! One of the things I want to learn is how our classes shape musical parenting skills, so it will be really interesting to hear your views and experiences. I am really hoping that these classes will be beneficial to you and your baby!

Please email me at xxx.xxxx.mail.bcu.ac.uk if you would like more information (put MA Research as the email title).

Appendix 4 Official information sheet



Centre for Research in Early Childhood,
St Thomas Children's Centre,
Bell Barn Road, Birmingham B15 2AF

Phone 0121 464 0020

Participant Information Form

An Exploration of Musical Parenting Education

- **How might musical parenting education be combined with practical musical activity in a new form of baby music class?**
- **How far and in what ways might the deliberate inclusion of musical parenting education in baby music classes support musical parenting?**

I am a student at the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in conjunction with Birmingham City University. This research is part of a written assignment to be submitted for the third and final year of my master's programme in Early Childhood Music Education.

Before you decide whether you want you and your child to take part in this study it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. I can be contacted if there is anything that is not clear or if more information is needed. Please can you let me know whether you are willing for you and your child to participate in this research project by xx/xx/xxxx

Purpose of the study

Over the course of my MA studies, I have been fascinated to learn more about Early Childhood Music research and about the musical capabilities and experiences of babies. I have found myself wishing that I had had this knowledge when my children were very young.

I am interested to find out whether such knowledge supports and develops parents' existing instinctive musical parenting skills. The term "musical parenting" refers to all the things parents do for, with and in response to their child's musical experiences and environment. This might include singing, melodious speech, dance/movement, play with objects or with musical instruments and listening to live and recorded music. I am also keen to develop a new model of music class that allows time for learning and sharing of experiences alongside all the usual music making that is typical of a parent and baby music class.

Why have I chosen to invite involvement from families in this area?

I have approached families in your area because it is conveniently very close to my home. I know many

families in this area because I run parent and child classes locally. Many parents that I work with have expressed an interest in my studies so I felt confident I would be able to find volunteers in this area.

Why have you and your child been invited?

You expressed an interest in this research project which includes three free music classes and you are available to attend these classes on Wednesday mornings in March.

Do you and your child have to take part?

By giving your permission, you are agreeing to take part in this research with your child. The project includes you and your baby's involvement in three music classes with your child. Withdrawal from the project for any reason will involve no penalty or loss to you or your child, now or in the future. Should your child appear uncomfortable about their involvement in the research, any data collection involving your child will be stopped and you are free to either temporarily withdraw them from the group until you think they seem willing to return or, if you wish, to withdraw from the group permanently. Your decision will be respected.

What will happen in this study?

This action research project will run from xx – xx March and will involve you attending three 90 minute classes with your baby on xxx mornings at xx.xxam. You will also be asked to complete a questionnaire at the start and end of the project and invited to tell me or email me with ideas, questions or information in between sessions. I will keep notes from the discussions in the class, together with any documents you send. I will make audio recordings of some of our discussions using a small hand-held MP3 recording device. The recordings will be used to support my notes and will enable me to clarify important points and check for accuracy.

I want to know your thoughts on the format and content of the classes. Your ideas will be valued and will influence the future direction of the classes. I also want to know whether and how the classes impact your musical experiences with your child at home.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Participation in this project involves three free music classes. Parents are often said to be a child's first music teacher so, whilst not part of this research project's remit, you could potentially, through participation, be giving your child a head start in their musical education. Musical learning has been shown to have benefits in many areas of learning and development, so the benefits could possibly be very far reaching.

Will my child's and my participation in this project be kept confidential?

Neither your child nor you will be named or identified in the research report. All data collected will remain confidential and be stored on password protected documents on password protected devices. Any paper records will be stored in a locked cupboard. Your Family Centre will not be named. Names of participants will be replaced with a code system. Data will be destroyed no later than two years after the research submission date at the start of September 2020.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research will be written up in the form of a dissertation which has to be submitted to the university in September 2020 as the final part of my master's degree. A summary of the research will be distributed for all participants and a copy of the full dissertation will be available on request. *Results may subsequently be presented at conferences or written up in academic journals.*

Contact for further information

If any aspect of this research is unclear or if you have any questions, please contact me:

Katie Neilson kathryn.neilson@mail.bcu.ac.uk phone: xxxxx xxxxxx

Tutor: Dr J Partington juliasuzannepartington@gmail.com

Centre for Research in Early Childhood,

St Thomas Children's Centre, Bell Barn Road, Birmingham B15 2AF Phone 0121 464 0020

Appendix 5 Consent form - baby



Centre for Research in Early Childhood,
St Thomas Children's Centre,
Bell Barn Road, Birmingham B15 2AF

Phone 0121 464 0020

Kathryn (aka Katie) Neilson tel: 07962 232535
kathryn.neilson@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Tutor: Dr J Partington juliasuzannepartington@gmail.com

Consent Form - Babies

An Exploration of Musical Parenting Education

How might musical parenting education be combined with practical musical activity

in a new form of baby music class?

How far and in what ways might the deliberate inclusion of musical parenting education

in baby music classes support musical parenting?

.....

.....

Name of participating adult

Name of baby

I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and had them answered

I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure that my child cannot be identified (except as might be required by law)

I agree that data gathered in this study, including audio data, may be stored anonymously and securely, and may be used for future research or future academic dissemination such as academic conference presentations.

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my child at any time without giving a reason.

I agree for my child to take part in this study (**both parents should sign this document**)

.....

Signature

.....

Signature

.....

Print name

.....

Print name

.....

Date

.....

Date

I am the child's:

Parent / Legal Guardian (delete as needed)

I am the child's:

Parent / Legal Guardian (delete as needed)

Appendix 6 Consent form – parent



Centre for Research in Early
Childhood,
St Thomas Children’s Centre,
Bell Barn Road, Birmingham B15
2AF

Phone 0121 464 0020

Kathryn (aka Katie) Neilson tel: xxxxx xxxxxx
kathryn.neilson@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Tutor: Dr J Partington juliasuzannepartington@gmail.com

Consent Form - Parents

An Exploration of Musical Parenting Education

How might musical parenting education be combined with practical musical activity

in a new form of baby music class?

How far and in what ways might the deliberate inclusion of musical parenting education

in baby music classes support musical parenting?

.....
Name of participating adult

.....
Name of participating baby

I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and had them answered

I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified (except as might be required by law)

I agree that data gathered in this study, including audio data, may be stored anonymously and securely, and may be used for future research or future academic dissemination such as academic conference presentations.

I understand that my child’s participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

I agree to take part in this study

(only the participating parent(s) need sign)

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

Print name

Appendix 7 Questionnaire 1 – list of questions

A New Kind of Music Class

What is your baby's date of birth?

Please describe your baby's race / ethnicity

How many other children currently live in your household? Please give their ages.

Please describe your baby's experiences of music:

Daytime

Evening time

At meal-times

Please share any other experiences of music

Which experiences do you think are best for your child?

Which musical experiences does your child enjoy the most?

Does anything or anyone help you to "musically parent" your child? "Musical Parenting" refers to various parental behaviours, that contribute to a child's musical environment. This includes the way parents speak or sing to their children, the use of musical instruments, toys and books, the musical use of non-musical items (eg pots and pans), listening to recorded or live music, dance and movement.

Appendix 8 Pamphlet – week 1 original

Double sided tri-fold pamphlet

HOW MIGHT WE RESPOND?

Start by noticing when musical behavior happens! Take time to watch and listen for it. It takes practice as we are so used to thinking of music as adult-led. Children's musical behavior in everyday life often goes unnoticed or is interpreted as poor behaviour.

You might try to interpret the reason for their musical behavior. This will influence your response.

If your child is creating music on their own to soothe or entertain themselves then you may decide not to engage with them. You might simply notice and make a note of what they did. You may create future opportunities to repeat and develop the experiences.

If your child is using music to communicate, you could engage in a kind of musical conversation. You might repeat their ideas or respond by introducing new ideas (similar or contrasting). This will give your child the opportunity to be the leader and this may help them to grow in confidence.

We could join in with the musical behavior by doing the same thing or by creating a contrasting idea that works alongside your child's idea.

You can acknowledge musical behavior by describing it or discussing it with the child.

We could find ways to show appreciation of what they have done.


Allow our own "inner musicians" to explore musical sounds, songs and movement as we work with the children. This may inspire or encourage them to experiment even more!

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KATIE NELLSON
April 2019
Revised March 2020

MUSICAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF YOUNG



This pamphlet aims to provide a very brief summary of ideas and research around this subject

6
1

Musical Behaviour in the everyday lives of young children

We all have our own ideas about what music is. I like the definition that music is 'creative play with sound' and I believe that babies' everyday behaviours, movements, and vocal sounds are innately musical. Music, together with movement is a child's first mode of communication.

Just as children's own visual art doesn't look like adult art, children's musical behaviour will not sound like what we might think of as "music" (including both music that adults enjoy AND music that adults perform to children).

WHAT DO ACADEMICS CALL IT?

Communicative musicality¹

Spontaneous, multi-modal concoctions of sound, movement and gesture²

Temporally organized communicative exchanges³

It is part of ...

*Musicking*⁴



It includes ...

*Movement singing*⁵

*Musical utterances*⁷

*Musical Doodling*⁸

*Musical Babbling*⁹

*Vocal scribbles and meanders*⁶

*Expressive vocal soundings*⁷

WHAT IS IT LIKE?

Musical behavior is part of an expressive, multi-modal process that incorporates sound play, gesture, musical speech, gaze, movement and role-play.

Listen and look out for ...

Free-flow vocalizations

Musical speech (melodic or rhythmic)

Playful exploration of sounds and words

Chanting and intoning

Rewriting of new songs

Movement vocalizing - sound effects for movement

Vocalizing to imitate sounds (eg animal sounds)

Patterning

Repetition

Exaggeration (slower, louder, higher etc)

Elaboration

Manipulation of expectations

Rhythmic movement

Use of objects (eg sticks, toys, cups) to create and explore patterns/sounds

Musical activity may be a personal solitary activity or may be deliberately social.

IS IT INTENTIONAL?

Do the children intend it to be "musical"?

Maybe ... Maybe not!

But whether intentional or not, it is musical!



WHAT IS IT FOR?

Attracting attention

Social connection

Aesthetic delight

Mood regulation

Social mediation

Self exploration

Thinking out loud

Making ordinary things extraordinary

Conveying non-linguistic meaning

Coordinating and expressing mutual emotional states between carers and infants

Entertainment

Mood contagion (catching/spreading mood)

Creating or expressing emotional meaning

As paralinguage

Accompanying movement

Story telling

To regulate experiences (heighten or calm)

To aid concentration

HOW CAN YOU RESPOND?

Start by noticing when musical behavior happens! Take time to watch and listen for it. It takes practice. Children's musical behavior in everyday life often goes unnoticed or is interpreted as poor behaviour.

Try to interpret the reason for the behavior; this will influence your response.

If your child is creating music on their own to soothe or entertain themselves then you may decide not to engage with them. You might simply notice and make a mental note of what they did. You may be able to repeat and develop the experience later.

If your child is using music to communicate you could engage in a musical conversation. You might repeat what they do or you could respond by introducing new ideas (similar or contrasting).

You could join in with the musical behavior by doing the same thing or by creating a contrasting idea that works alongside your child's idea.

You can acknowledge musical behavior by describing it or discussing it with your child.

You can show appreciation of what they have done and show that you value their ideas.

Allow your own "inner musicians" to explore musical sounds, songs and movement when you are with your child. This may inspire or encourage them to experiment even more!

5

REFERENCES

- * Countryman, J et al. (2016) Children's Spontaneous Vocalisations during play: aesthetic dimensions. *Music Education Research* 18(1) p1-19
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KATIE NEILSON
March 2020

6

SPONTANEOUS

CONCOCTIONS

OF

FOUND,

MOVEMENT

AND

GESTURE



A brief summary of
IDEAS AND RESEARCH
around this subject

Spontaneous concoctions of sound, movement and gesture

I believe that babies' everyday behaviours, movements, and vocalisations are naturally musical. I might go so far as to say that music is a child's first mode of communication.

Much as children's visual art doesn't look like adult art, children's musical behaviour will not sound like what we might think of as "music". Countryman described these musical behaviours as "spontaneous, multi-modal concoctions of sound, movement and gesture".

KATIE'S RESEARCH 2019

In 2019 I ran a small research project in a childcare setting. I worked with the teachers to explore what might happen when adults respond musically to young children's spontaneous musical behaviours.

Which behaviours are musical?

The first step involved helping the teachers recognize whoops, clicks, stick tapping, humming, movement, etc as musical. Kartomi¹ described some of these things as "Musical Doodlings" and this analogy with art seemed to be quite useful.

Responding musically

We did our best to respond musically by copying the children's sounds and movements. We had to resist the temptation to halt the behaviour ("too noisy!") or to encourage speech ("Use your words!").

What happened?

When we responded musically, the children often interpreted this as the start of a musical conversation and enjoyed taking turns. In many cases children exercised leadership skills. Our musical responses engaged the children and helped regulate their emotions and behaviour. The teachers felt that it helped some children to grow in confidence too.

2

WHAT IS IT LIKE?

Musical behavior is part of an expressive process that incorporates sound play, gesture, musical speech, gaze, movement and role-play.

Listen and look out for ...

Free-flow vocalizations

Musical speech (melodic or rhythmic)

Playful exploration of sounds and words

Chanting and intoning

Reworking of new songs

Movement vocalizing - sound effects for movement

Vocalizing to imitate sounds (eg animal sounds)

Patterning and repetition

Exaggeration (slower, louder, higher etc)

Elaboration

Manipulation of expectations

Rhythmic movement

Use of objects (eg sticks, toys, cups) to create and explore patterns / sounds

It might be a personal, solitary activity or very social.

BUT IS IT INTENTIONAL?

Do the children intend it to be "musical"?

Maybe ... Maybe not!

Sometimes yes! ... Sometimes no!

But whether intentional or not, it does have musical features and we can choose to interpret it as such!

3



WHY MIGHT A CHILD DO THIS?

Attracting attention

Social connection

Aesthetic delight

Mood regulation

Social mediation

Self exploration

Thinking out loud

Making ordinary things extraordinary

Conveying non-linguistic meaning

Coordinating and expressing mutual emotional states between carers and infants

Entertainment

Mood contagion (catching/spreading mood)

Creating or expressing emotional meaning

As paralanguage (non-speech elements of speech)

Accompanying movement

Story telling

To regulate experiences (heighten or calm)

To aid concentration

4

Appendix 10 Email to parents following class 1

Thanks so much for your participation in Wednesday's class. You were all lovely and the babies too! I think I learnt a lot and I am looking forward to reflecting more on your ideas and to planning next week's class. I have put together the playlist on a youtube channel ... it took longer than I expected (will be quicker next week, now that I know what I am doing!). The recordings of me singing are pretty low tech and not brilliant! Please just use them as a reminder of how the song goes – that is what they are for really! Here is the link [link supplied] and you can only access it via this link.

Youtube does not allow all tracks to be saved into a playlist so here is a link to two other songs: Sweet Potato that we used for playing shakers (the one that soothed my daughter when she was little). The happy birthday from Madagascar ... that one of your babies loves! [link supplied]

As far as I know, I have added everything we sang (except Twinkle Twinkle Little Star – as I think you know that one!) and everything that was mentioned. Please let me know if I missed anything! Sometimes I have been unable to put (what I think is) the best recordings or videos in the playlist because they are not available for sharing... so it is worth taking a look at other recordings if you think you want to use the songs with your little ones.

Someone mentioned that it was hard not knowing all the songs ... so I think I will use the same hello/goodbye songs so that you begin to get familiar with them and include a few more songs that I think will be familiar to you ... but FYI, researchers have found that parents often use music classes as a way of learning new repertoire ... so I will continue to introduce some new songs and listening tracks. Hopefully, having the youtube channel will help you get to know some of the songs.

I am going to shorten the first part of the session (and there will be less time getting comfortable with the venue and introducing the project) which should mean more time for coffee/tea!

I hope you are all having a go at responding musically to your babies' sounds and movements that can be interpreted as musical. I was talking to a lovely Granny at my church today. she is in her 70s and is a brand new, first-time granny! She said she was worried she might have forgotten how to be with a baby but that it just sort of kicked in! I talked to her about how she will instinctively raise the pitch, slow the speed and make her speech more melodious and exaggerated. She was delighted to know this and surprised that she hadn't thought about this before (given she has sung in a choir all her life and loves music). Even children change how they speak when they engage with babies, listen out for this, if you get the chance. Research has also done with hearing impaired parents. When communicating with their babies, their signs are slower, more flowing and exaggerated suggesting that even baby-directed sign language has "musical" qualities! The way we talk to babies is variously called parentese, motherese or infant-directed speech and it is of great interest to researchers from

a wide range of disciplines. From my point of view, it reminds me that babies love and connect to others through music and that parents instinctively know this and are very good at it!

I know that some will be worried and others quite relaxed about the virus. Just to reassure you... all resources will be cleaned thoroughly before the class and I will have hospital grade wipes available (as recommended by a colleague who, among other things, works as a Clown Doctor in hospitals!)

Have a good few days in the meantime – and please use the post cards to make any notes Could be two words ... could be whole paragraphs! Any thoughts or ideas would be most welcome!

Best wishes

Appendix 11 Pamphlet – week 2

Double sided bi-fold pamphlet

What is needed to support our musical connoisseurs?

- ♪ Parents can be musical playmates and mentors (hot house training is not what is needed).
- ♪ We need to respect what our babies have to offer musically and see it as music in its own right rather than preparation towards being musical in the future.
- ♪ Recognise that parents instinctively communicate in musical ways with their children ... through speech (infant directed speech) and songs. Music educators have a lot to learn from parents!

McPherson* looked at the role of parents in children's musical development. He notes the general point that parents enable their children to positively approach achievement by fulfilling their innate need to feel competent, autonomous, related and purposeful.

Through **shared** musical activity you can help your child to feel all of these things by **respecting** and **taking an interest** in their **musical play** and by **following their musical lead!**

*McPherson(2012) The role of parents in children's musical development. *Psychology of Music* 2009

How musical are our babies?



Empty vessels?



Born musical?

Katie Neilson March 2020

In 2012, Sandra E Trehub (University of Toronto) published an article entitled *Infants as Musical Connoisseurs*.

Trehub begins by justifying this seemingly bold claim by stating that the word "connoisseur" (in musical terms) refers to:

- A. discerning and perceptive listening
- B. musical taste backed up by knowledge and experience

Clearly our babies can have neither the knowledge nor the experience that we have, but they most definitely are discerning and perceptive listeners!



In various experiments babies have shown that they are capable of ...

- ♪ recognising known melodies when they are played in a different key
- ♪ spotting pitch changes in melodies
- ♪ having a sense of phrase
- ♪ noticing changes within complex metres
- ♪ having musical preferences
- ♪ detecting tempo (speed) changes
- ♪ recognising known rhythms when they are played at a different tempo

In some of these competencies babies are more able than adults!

Appendix 12 Lyric pamphlet

Double sided tri-fold pamphlet

Can you stand on two feet, on two feet, on two feet?
Can you stand on two feet and walk around the room...
La la la la etc

Can you stand on ten toes, on ten toes, on ten toes?
Can you stand on ten toes and tip toe round the room...
La la la la

Can you stand on no feet, on no feet, on no feet?
Can you stand on no feet and fly around the room...
La la la la

Can you stand on two feet, on two feet, on two feet?
Can you stand on two feet and march around the room...
The grand old duke of York. He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill
and he marched them down again.
And when he was up he was up
And when he was down he was down.
And when he was only half way up
he was neither up nor down!

As we sang "la la la" and Katie played her recorder we moved to the beat. The tip toe "la la la" was staccato (short and detached) and the flying "la la la" was legato (smooth).

Katie, Katie, it's a lovely day!
Jane, Jane, let's go out to play.
Jack put your jacket on,
Tell your mama you won't be long!
Tom, I will meet you at the corner!

As we sang we patted our knees to the beat.

Slowly, slowly, very slowly, creeps the garden snail.
Slowly, slowly, very slowly, up the garden rail.
Quickly, quickly, very quickly runs the little mouse
Quickly, quickly, very quickly in his little house!

This rhyme works on tempo (speed) so remember to make the first half really slow and the second half really quick! (You could change to a squeaky voice too.)

Musical skills and concepts

These are not something to TEACH our babies — formal music training is definitely not recommended. In fact you and your baby will already have a grasp of lots of these concepts (for you this may be conscious or subconscious).

However, when I teach a class I am aware of these skills. So, since you are being musical with your babies 24/7, it might be interesting for you to be aware of them too!

Beat (aka pulse) — the heart beat of the music ... you might bounce, swing or rock your baby. Before they were born they experienced your heartbeat/breathing/walking.

Rhythm — this is the pattern of the syllables (we often say a baby has a good sense of rhythm when we mean beat or pulse).

Phrase — this is a line of music. Often what we sing in one breath. Often phrases end with a longer note and babies understand this.

Tempo — this is speed and babies enjoy songs repeated at different speeds.

Pitch — this is how high or low a note is. We often use movement to mirror pitch changes.

Pitch matching — this is when one person listens to a sound and matches the pitch of it with their own sound.

Articulation — includes staccato (short and detached) and legato (smooth and flowing)

Thinking voice — this is when we sing a melody in our head. I sometimes mouth the words as this helps others to understand what I am doing!

Dynamics — this is how loud or quiet we are

Week 2—Songs and Rhymes Musical Skills and Lyrics



Katie Neilson
March 2020

Ring a ring o' roses, a pocket full of posies
Atishoo, atishoo we all fall down!

Cows are in the meadow eating buttercups
Atishoo, atishoo we all jump up!

Ring a ring o' roses, a pocket full of posies
Atishoo, atishoo we all fall down!

Fishes in the water, fishes in the sea
We all jump up with a one, two, three!

Ring a ring o' roses, a pocket full of posies
Atishoo, atishoo we all fall down!

And we all jump up! And we all fall down!
And we all jump up and we turn ourselves around!

This song is very sing-able even for little children. The melodic shape of the final verse connects the concept of higher and lower pitch with the words up and down and with movement.

Can you hear your shaker? (x x x x x x)
Can you hear your shaker? (x x x x x x)
Shake it fast (xxxxxx)
Shake it slow (x x x x)
Make it stop ()
Make it go (xxxxxxxxxx)

Can you hear your bells ring?
(adapt for other instruments)

The space between sung phrases allow us to play the rhythm on the instrument. Rhythm is the pattern of the words. Many of us will be singing the phrase in our heads too (thinking voice).

Peekaboo, Where are you? With your smiley face (boo)
Peekaboo, Where are you? Hiding in your place (boo)

The babies know just when to expect the "boo". Babies have a feeling for phrase. Perhaps that's one reason why they anticipate the "boo" at the end of the "smiley face" and the "hiding in your place" phrases.

Walk along, walk along, walk along to the music!
Walk along, walk along, walk along to the beat!

Ride a cock horse to Bambury Cross
To see a fine lady upon a white horse
With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes
She shall have music wherever she goes!

Trot along etc
Gallop along etc

We are working with pulse in this (and in most lap bouncing songs and rhymes). Speed up the tempo when/if you change to trot / gallop.

Oh the more we get together, together, together.
Oh the more we get together the happier we'll be
Cause your friends are my friends and my friends are your friends.
Oh, the more we get together the happier we'll be

Oh the more we sing together, together, together.
Oh the more we sing together the happier we'll be!
With Katie and Anna and Julia and Jimmy
Oh the more we sing together the happier we'll be!

Oh the more we [silly sound] together, together, together,
Oh the more we [silly sound] together, the sillier we'll be!
With a [silly sound] and a [silly sound] and a [silly sound] and a [silly sound]
Oh the more we [silly sound] together, the sillier we'll be!

As we sang we clapped out a pattern of three beats (knee clap clap) which helps us to feel the metre of the music (a metre of three beats—strong weak weak).

Peeka, peeka, peekaboo, peekaboo, peekaboo,
Peeka, peeka, peekaboo, you see me and I see you!

Try singing the boo in your thinking voice and see if the babies vocalise it in the silence! Again, each "boo" comes at the end of the phrases in this songs

"Mm mm," said the little green frog one day!
"Mm mm," said the little green frog!
"Mm mm," said the little green frog one day!
And the frog said, "mm mm mm"

But we know frogs go, [clap] "la la la la la"
[clap] "la la la la la" [clap] "la la la la la"
We know frogs go, [clap] "la la la la la"
They don't go "mm mm mm"

(In verse 2 substitute la la la la for "Scooby dooby doo")

Stick your tongue out in "mm mm" and watch as babies respond by copying you.

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are grey
You'll never know, dear, how much I love you.
Please don't take my sunshine away.

When we sing lullabies, we instinctively rock our babies to the beat (aka pulse).

Oo a lay lay (oo a lay lay)
Oo a lay lay (oo a lay lay)
Mala tikka tumba (mala tikka tumba)
Mala tikka tumba (mala tikka tumba)
Oo alay malou ah malou ay (Oo alay malou ah malou ay)

This echo song involves pitch matching—the echo in brackets matches the pitch of the first singer. Try pitch matching your babies' sounds... and see if they sometimes match your sounds too.

Appendix 13 Email to parents following class 2

I really enjoyed the class on Wednesday and thanks so much for your ideas ... please keep them coming.

The idea of Action Research is that **we work together** to change something ... and I suppose I am trying to change a few things ...

- To move away from a class where only the teacher shares his/her knowledge ... towards a class where the teacher listens to the parents' ideas too.
- To move away from a class that is only about the music in the class towards a class that reflects the music that goes on in a baby's everyday life.
- To empower parents by helping them to recognise, value and build upon the amazing skills they have and are enjoying with their babies already.
- To move away from the idea that baby music classes are just about the babies and to focus on the parents more.

As you know, so far, we have tried the following ideas

- class with commentary
- a talk (an informal TED talk) with a written leaflet (I'm going to try make this more chatty and use a more narrative style)
- discussions in pairs and small groups ... over a cup of tea (it wasn't long enough in class 1 – class 2 was better)
- a focus on aspects of home music (musical books / routines / TV theme show music so far)
- YouTube playlists of the music we sang / listened to / discussed
- word sheets (thanks to you for this idea!)
- a weekly email (this is it!!)
- the opportunity to borrow some musical books

You may have some other ideas and if you do PLEASE tell me!

Your homework this week is to please make a list of the songs you enjoy singing with your baby and the music they like listening to (TV/radio/apps/CDs).

We talked a lot about listening in the last two weeks, so I wanted to signpost you to an award winning online resource created by my colleague Nicola Burke (who did the same MA as I am doing). It is all about listening to music with young children <https://macbirmingham.co.uk/mac-makes-music/teachers/music-in-the-early-years/tune-into-listening> Whilst it is aimed at Early Years Practitioners, I think it will still be interesting for you to take a look.

The word sheet that you suggested is attached to this email and also the “Babies as Musical Connoisseurs” flyer for those of you who didn’t take a copy. Here is a link to the class 2 YouTube playlist [link supplied] and please accept my apologies for not getting all of this to you sooner!

Given the current situation, I think it would be wise for you to check your emails on Wed morning before setting off for the class. I fully intend to be there but, if schools close for example, things may change!!

All being well, see you on Wednesday!

Appendix 14 Final questionnaire

A New Kind of Music Class - evaluation

Evaluation

My research questions are, firstly

How can musical parenting education be incorporated into a baby music class?

and, secondly,

How far and in what ways does participation in these classes shape musical parenting?

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN THE LIGHT OF THESE TWO QUESTIONS

In this project we tried various strategies for "Musical Parenting Education" As a quick reminder ... we tried the following ideas

Class with commentary (about 10 songs with commentary and discussions)

Printed pamphlet (also emailed) with song lyrics

Informal presentation: wk1-Katie's research wk2-Babies as musical connoisseurs

Printed pamphlet of information relating to the informal presentation

Guided conversations over a drink and a snack

Focus on ... musical books / routines / TV theme tunes / children's CDs and apps

Follow-up emails after the classes

Youtube channel of songs and listening tracks

Book loans - some of you opted to borrow a musical book for a week

* 1. **Everyday Life**

please rate these ideas according to how useful they were for you in the musical parenting of your child in everyday life.

	1 not at all useful	2	3	4	5 extremely useful
A class with commentary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Song lyric pamphlet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pamphlet relating to informal presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tea/Coffee and chat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: musical books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: routines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: TV theme tunes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: Children's CDs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube channel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Follow-up emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Musical book loan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please add any additional positive or negative comments about the structure/timings/organisation/content of the class

* 2. The Music Class

please rate these ideas according to how well they worked as part of the class/course

	1 it didn't really work	2	3	4	5 it worked extremely well
A class with commentary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Song lyric pamphlet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pamphlet relating to informal presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tea/Coffee and chat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: musical books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: routines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: TV theme tunes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus: Children's CDs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube channel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Follow-up emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Musical book loan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please add any additional positive or negative comments about the structure/timings/organisation/content of the class

3. Can you think of any other ways musical parenting education could be delivered?

4. This project has experimented with a new form of baby music class. How does your experience of this class compare with your experiences of other baby music classes? (if you have never attended baby music classes before this then please answer N/A)

5. Do you think parents might be willing to pay to attend a course of classes like this?

- Yes
- Don't know
- No
- additional comments

6. Have these classes shaped or influenced your musical parenting?

- Yes - a lot
- Yes - a little
- Not sure
- No

7. If you answered "yes" to Q6 please list up to three ways in which these classes have influenced or shaped your musical parenting skills?

- 1
- 2
- 3

8. If you have any other thoughts please share them in the box below

9. Would you be willing to have a follow-up phone conversation with Katie should she need any information or clarification?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please provide your telephone number below

Appendix 15 Patchwork of our lives

P2's letter to her daughter

My darling, my beautiful beautiful girl

We have about two months left before I go back to work, I think it's been the best year of my life, full of good problems. never perfect but full of you and R (older brother). L (father) and I have a sense of completeness, watching the two of you together, all four of us just hanging, there is a feeling that is bone-deep.

We are doing an early years music group research thing together at the moment and it has helped me think about how musical our journey has been to date. As a baby you are quite musical, I wonder what you'll be like when you're older. But for now, I'm going to tell you the story of us to date by song. Our desert island discs

Your huge life came after two losses. We lost Ziggy Friday 13th October - while I was pregnant, Grizzly Bear released a viral single and I obsessively listened to it, Mourning Sound became a song it would take me years to be able to hear again, so much more than words haunted me.

Grizzly Bear – Mourning Sound [[link to YouTube playlist](#)]

I found solace and a way of saying goodbye with this cat power song 'sea of love'

Sea of Love – Cat Power [[link to YouTube playlist](#)]

We lost another, again Friday 13th, the standout song is the beautiful Rachmaninov vesper- chilling, soulful, I don't want to persevere on this but I think context is important.

Rachmaninov Vespers - Now Lettest Thou Depart [[link to YouTube playlist](#)]

I was part of the miscarriage clinic when I fell pregnant with you. I felt very fearful a lot of the time that I would lose you. I thought I had lost once when I had a bleed - we came back from France, had a scan and you were there every two weeks I had a scan until 12 weeks and you were there, hope rising - heart fiercely beating on the screen. I had to carry you with courage and bit shut down. I worried when something happened that I would lose you - I would plead for you to stay, another cat power song called to stay, mostly sung to you about my love.

Cat Power – Stay [[link to YouTube playlist](#)]

I bought the vinyl for you when you are older. I can't quite read your reaction when I play this song now, it makes me curious.

When pregnant with you I was blown away by this re-released Radiohead song that was more tender and loving than I have ever known in the - 'I promise'

Radiohead - I Promise [[link to YouTube playlist](#)]

This and a song R loved 'I follow rivers' by Lykke Li were often played to you, my dear.

I Follow Rivers - Lykke Li [[link to YouTube playlist](#)]

Then there was you - We had a few names on the spreadsheet for you but alas Xxxx was a name I had long loved, the sound was divine to me and when I read it means kinswoman in Nordic languages, I was sold! But it was not until I was trying to push you out on little more than paracetamol and back rub that your name was born. The relief, you were here, safe and well. Unbeknownst to me, I lost a lot of blood, I was holding you and they were trying to take control of the situation. I was telling them I was fine, please go and they were trying to get me to see that this was not good. I handed you to dad and then felt resentful I was going to die. However, I saw you in your dad's arms and knew you would be ok, you guys would be fine. As it turned out, I made an unbelievable recovery and was able to leave the hospital for the last time with you. We nearly ran - now we had you - this was it

So here you are my darling - We have been playing 'xxxx yy zzzz' (xxxx is the Irish spelling of [your name]). It's the only song that I am aware of with your name, but it is gorgeous. I try to learn the words but have struggled, it's lyrics are a more complex Irish than my basic Gaeilge. This version is my favourite by Liam and I think you like it.

xxxx yy zzzz - Liam O Maonlai

We have been listening to 6 music and picking up a few beauties, but what are you most like to do is to dance with me to bangers. We've been going to mum and baby dance group, and shaking down to whatever theme they have every Friday with other mums and babies. A weird little tribe I like very much, I love having space to playfully dance, enjoy the music with you. I think if there were an artist to remind me of this class, it would have to be Beyoncé, a bit fierce, a bit empowering and something you can dance to.

I know that you love dancing to a Nick Cave song called there she goes my beautiful world

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds - There She Goes my Beautiful World

and also some Lizzo

Lizzo – Good as Hell

Please note, you're not old enough for me to be concerned about explicit lyrics! We like to dance around the family room and kitchen - me getting strident, you moving your hips and kicking your legs, and R insisting on being swung in between my legs!

You do love music when you press the button on some random toy and music comes out of it, you start grooving . Funnily enough, we watched the trolls last night, a film full of music and you kept randomly clapping. I think you dig it.

You do love row row row your boat, and I've been trying to introduce you joys of Rafi.

Since I started writing this email, things have changed. I go back to work earlier than planned next week. The country is on the cusp of a meltdown from coronavirus and I don't think I'd ever forgive myself if I didn't go to work. I love the NHS and I have a strong belief in service, but I absolutely hate the idea of being apart from you. There have been moments where that dread has woke me up from my sleep. You need to get from more annoying for me to comfortably resume work! The fortunate/unfortunate thing is that we chose not to go with childcare during this corona period so you'll likely be at home with your dad for a few months. Knowing how much you adore him, how much he adores you and his capabilities as a father is quite a relief to me. Even when this is over, your childminders are awesome and we've arranged it so you only going to childcare three days a week.

Darling, as I said in the beginning, I've had the best year of my life, you and your brother have made me so proud and full. This song by Bombay Bicycle Club is my song for this time. You are my second wind (your brother was my first). Slightly cliched but after all the darkness before you have been an absolute light.

Bombay Bicycle Club - Everything Else Has Gone Wrong

You are at a really exciting stage now, very mobile, exploring everything and just such a funny character. I don't want to perseverate other than to say we love you so much. I hope you read this when you're older and this comes across. I will really miss spending so much time with you but wow, we have had a blast and I look forward to spending my life with you my girl*.

Maybe when you have kids. Anyway you've just woken up and I think you'll get annoyed with me if I spend any longer yabbering on

Love always

Mum

* 'Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

Appendix 16 Member check email to parents

I hope you are all keeping well!

I have been working my socks off analysing and drawing conclusions from all the data linked to the work we did together in March. It is pretty much taking up my every waking hour at the moment as I hand in on 1st September. I am loving it all so much and already thinking about where it might take me (have more ideas than I know what to do with... so exciting!)

As part of a process called member checking I would appreciate it if some of you could cast your eye over the attached "investigation" and "discussion" sections of my dissertation. I am interested to know whether I have represented you all accurately so please shout if you feel I have said something that isn't quite right! And if you have any (brief) thoughts to add or to reinforce what is already there, let me know as I may still be able to include or consider them. I will also send you the introduction just for interest! I haven't completed the conclusion yet ... it is a work in progress!

I should warn you that it is written in quite an academic style so there are words in there that, quite honestly, I didn't know the meaning of until very recently.... here is a quick list of abbreviations (used in an effort to save words) and terms so that you can make sense of the documents...

Praxeology is a kind of world view that underpins the research - collaborative, democratic, participatory

MP stands for Musical parenting

MPE for Musical parenting education

pedagogy is the *art* of teaching - the *style* of teaching

PMPE is what I have named my pedagogy (which I think we have sort of invented between us all) Praxeological Musical Parenting Education

ECM is early childhood music

ECMC is Early Childhood Music Class (ie your typical Baby, Toddler and parent class)

Ontological position is my *world view* which I set out in an earlier section of the dissertation.... Basically, it is that I believe we are all musical, that parents are a child's first music teacher, music is not a gift, there are many ways to look at the world etc

Musicking comes from a brilliant academic called Christopher small who argues that music isn't a thing but instead, something we do ... so anything we do relating to music including listening and making music. (he even argues that the person who takes the tickets at a concert is musicking ... not sure whether I agree with or not ...but it is an interesting idea!)

Action Research (AR) I think I explained this in one of the classes but as a reminder... is the methodology I used and links to the collaborative, participatory idea in praxeology - the idea is we do things evaluate them and then adapt them and then try them... because the third class didn't happen we only really had two cycles... what I learnt from week 1 was fed into week 2 my original plan involved another three classes in a nearby Children's Centre in which I planned to use all that I had learnt from you to make the classes there even better... alas COVID put a stop to that!

'**good bunny**' effect is something I considered (in the interest of being reflective and scholarly) but have actually rejected. It sort of implies that participants answer questionnaires positively to please the researcher!! I have concluded actually that your answers showed a positive skew because you all genuinely liked the classes!

Q1 and **Q2** refer to the two questionnaires and within those the questions are labelled **q1** **q2** etc.

I have one more tutorial on Friday before putting the final touches on my work and until then I am leaving a few of my tutor's comments in the intro and the investigation (she hasn't see the findings yet so there are questions addressed to her and notes to myself in that doc) ... they are not private so feel free to read them if you are interested! FYO I have anonymised you all and labelled you P1-16 which is something I promised you all that I would do at the start of all of this.

If you do get a chance to read any of the attached and anything strikes you as important then do let me know by email. Equally if any of the comments make you feel uncomfortable, now is your chance to let me know. If you prefer to talk on the phone my number is at the bottom of this email and I am happy for you to call (daytime or evening is fine).

Huge thanks to you all for participating in the first place and thanks in advance to anyone willing to cast their eye over the documents!

Best wishes

Katie