

## CHAPTER TEN

### FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE CHOOSING ANY TEACHING METHOD

There are four main factors to consider:

1. Objectives set: list all the possible methods which could be used to allow achievement of the objectives.
2. Content: narrow down the list to ensure the content is adequately covered.
3. Learners: consider their needs, capabilities, etc. This will reduce the list further.
4. Resources: this will determine the final selection of methods to be used, since there is no point choosing methods which cannot be implemented.

Examples of teaching methods include:

- Lectures/presentations
- Group discussions/group work
- Brainstorming
- Demonstration
- Reading
- Exercises/problems
- Case study analysis
- Role play/simulations
- Games
- Practicals
- Project work/research
- Field visits
- Attachments

### SELECTING TEACHING – LEARNING STRATEGIES

Teachers need a repertoire of teaching strategies to promote learning and develop understanding. They also require a wide variety of techniques to engage pupils actively. The nature of the learning objective will determine

when it would be appropriate to use each strategy within an episode of the lesson.

Some strategies are most suitable for activities that rely heavily on language and discursive thinking. There are good explanations of these techniques in Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools, and for those times when such thinking is required they will be essential techniques to use in music lessons. They will be particularly useful when developing pupils' learning in appraising, when the use of musical vocabulary and the ability to analyse, evaluate and justify decisions will require careful use of language.

However, music is its own language and has a distinct mode of learning. As a result, teachers need to use a wider range of strategies to enable pupils to learn effectively within the context of a practical, abstract, ephemeral and simultaneously complex subject.

### **Selecting teaching strategies**

Essential strategies for practical lessons include the following:

#### **Involving pupils in challenging, complex activities**

Remember that music operates on several levels: horizontally (passage of time) and vertically (changing textures), listening while performing, simultaneous kinaesthetic and auditory learning, and so on. Make sure that pupils are challenged in this way as much as possible, particularly in engagement or starter activities. For instance, do not just sing but add complex body movements at the same time – without losing the quality of the singing!

#### **Modelling**

It is essential that pupils understand not only what they are to do, but how they are to do it. Musical modelling is essential if they are to make effective progress in practical activities. This technique is explored in depth in Unit 4: Modelling in music.

#### **Chunking**

Pupils need to be taught how to break long and potentially complex tasks into smaller, more manageable activities. This applies equally to performing and composing. For instance, pupils learning to play a new piece on keyboards from notation will need to know how to read the notes,

how to split the learning into phrases, how to recognise which phrases are similar, identical or different, where sequences occur that will aid memory, how to practise difficult passages in isolation and then place them within the context of the whole piece. When composing, pupils need to be guided to consider the resources to be used, the initial ideas, the techniques that will enable those first ideas to be developed into longer structures, how to collaborate with others and combine musical ideas.

Chunking initially enables the teacher to guide pupils towards successful progress. In the long term, it enables pupils to learn how to tackle such problems for themselves in a methodical way. This is because it focuses pupils on 'how to' strategies for small problems rather than on simple completion of an activity. Such emphasis leads to pupils thinking for themselves rather than relying on teacher direction at all times.

### Strategic use of plenary

It is unusual for Key Stage 3 pupils to be able to concentrate and work purposefully alone or in a group much beyond 20 minutes – and in many cases for a much shorter time than this. They therefore need points within the lesson when they are guided collectively to review what progress has been made, identify where they need to go next, and how to move on to next steps. These moments of pause in music lessons should not be used to give individual feedback. They should be used to:

- identify key points of learning that are (or are not) being successfully addressed by the class as a whole;
- demonstrate effective learning as models for others to follow;
- set new challenges for all (e.g. 'Make sure that you can play the A section within the next 2 minutes; if you can do that already, choose which of the Latin American rhythm functions will fit best – and be able to give two reasons why you made that decision').

Sometimes the plenary will be very short. It will be clear that almost everyone is at the same point, and all that is needed is a refocus. Others will take more time, as the differences within the class become apparent. It is also true that composing lessons need fewer plenaries, as pupils need time to explore and experiment with their ideas.

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### Identifying appropriate time slots

Pupils need time to prepare for effective performances of compositions. This means signalling to pupils that the time for exploration or development is over, and that they need to start working on how to perform their piece.

They also need time to put into effect any analysis of their work that has identified weaknesses and determined how it can be improved. This means that traditional reviewing and evaluating activities need to happen not only at the end of composition projects, but also in the middle. The key here is to teach pupils how to analyse their work effectively, and then give them time to work on their improvements. This will not lead to a general sharing of work in progress, with a few comments on each one: it will lead to a focused modelling of how to analyse work, time for pupils to practise the analysis, a sharing of the analysis (rather than of the work in progress), and then more time to put the analysis into practice.

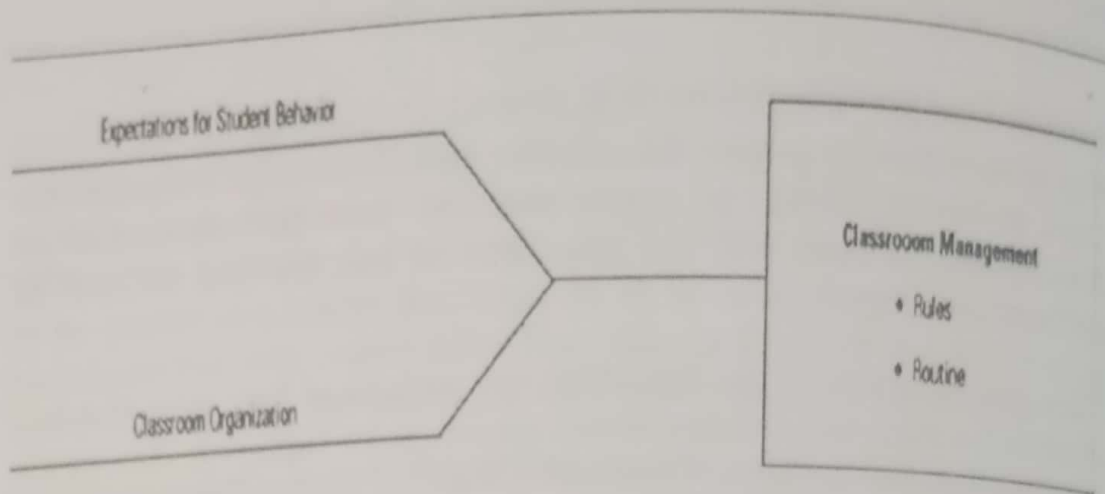
### Group work and group talk

Group work and group talk are essential features of music lessons, but the teaching strategies that can make them effective are rarely used in music lessons.

They are described very effectively in *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 10: Group work (DCSF 0433-2004 G) and in the *Literacy in music materials* (DCSF 0261-2004). There is also further advice in Unit 3: Creative teaching and learning in music.

These sorts of approaches are particularly useful for producing more effective listening and reviewing and evaluating episodes in music

Figure 3.2. Visual Representation of Classroom Management and Organization (Example of Fishbone Mapping)



### Focus on the Teacher

Mandrel has the desire and determination to succeed; he wants to be a good teacher. Others can see his potential, but it has yet to be fully realized, largely because he hasn't learned how to effectively manage his students. This is a hurdle he can overcome. This year, Mandrel was given a choice as to who would be his mentor. He selected a teacher with whom he has good rapport and who is willing to meet regularly with him. The tools presented in this section of the chapter can be used to identify areas of strength and weakness to support growth in the effective implementation of classroom management and organization.

### Classroom Management: Rules

Last year, Mandrel had his classroom rules, along with the consequences for not following the rules, posted for students. However, he found it difficult to get students to follow his rules. Worse yet, he knows that he did not do a very good job enforcing them. Before the new school year started, Mandrel met with his mentor to examine the classroom rules he had created. The mentor suggested organizing the rules into a table (figure 3.3) to make sure they met the criteria for being a good rule. There are four criteria that a rule needs to meet to stay on the list. The rule must be all of the following:

1. Clearly stated so students know what is expected of them.
2. Reasonable so students can realistically follow it.
3. Enforceable such that Mandrel will take the time and effort to address any violations. If he is not willing to invest the effort, then the item may be too trivial or there may be a better solution.
4. General so that the rule addresses several behaviors as opposed to one specific misdeed.