Working together: generalist and specialist teaching in primary music

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Who do you think you are?
My story

• Studied at conservatoire
• Postgraduate training for secondary teaching
• 10 years secondary teaching including 6 years ‘advisory’ teacher for primary schools
• 30 years generalist and specialist teacher education (teaching and research)
Context

• Many countries have a class teacher policy for primary schooling
• Teacher training focus
• Increased range of subjects and content to be taught
• Performativity agenda
• Music curriculum (aims and content)
• School level management decisions
• Professional development opportunities
FIVE balls in the air in Class 3 Margaret
English context

- Primary schools organised on the class teacher principle
- Generalists get minimal initial training
- Only 2 or 3 programmes for specialist training
- National Curriculum, testing, inspection and other performance measures have pushed music to the margins
- Many schools now buy in some kind of specialist but unregulated and variable in quality.
Readings

Generalist/Specialist Music teaching


3 views of Music Teaching

1. ‘Democratic’: Music is for all children therefore music is for all teachers = generalist

2. ‘Elitist’: Music requires skills and knowledge beyond the scope of generalist teachers = specialist

3. ‘Anti – professional’: Musical expertise is more important than teaching expertise = instructor
What are you aims?

• To grow talent
• To develop a lifelong love of music
• To educate pupils in musical culture
• To give pupils the skills and knowledge to participate in music making
• To develop pupils’ abilities to create, express and communicate musical ideas.
• To become well-rounded human beings
Generalist teaching

Positives:
- Inclusive
- Diverse models of teaching
- (Democratic)
- (Learner centred)
- Knows their own class
- Knows the whole curriculum
- Diverse repertoire
- Cross curricular
- Flexible with time, space, resources and colleagues

Concerns:
- Ensuring progression
- Quality of music making
- Adequate training for teachers
- Lack of confidence
- Ongoing support for teachers needed
- Time (planning)
Specialist teaching

Positives:
Confident teachers
Good subject knowledge
Understanding of how to achieve musical quality
Understanding of progression
Can address all abilities
Knowledge of other provision

Concerns:
Curriculum isolation
Reinforces elitist view
Expensive
Easier to lose
Narrower range of content/interests
Ideal model

• All teachers teach own class with support from specialist (in school or regular visiting)
• Specialist employed in role as subject leader/coordinator and consultant (coach)
• Music integrated into whole curriculum
• Learning in and through music
• Wide range of teachers and others have active involvement with developing music education for all pupils
• Exemplifies ‘music for all’
A matter of confidence

• Many teachers have musical abilities and interests
• They can bring broader and more diverse musical interests
• Factors affecting confidence: negative experiences in their own schooling; misplaced beliefs about what music teaching must involve; inadequate training and lack of appropriate support.
Pedagogies

• Learner centred
• Constructivist
• Creative
• Inclusive and differentiated
• Learning by doing
The Consultant

Supports colleagues in their music teaching by:

• identifying needs
• planning and teaching in collaboration with colleagues
• demonstrating and modelling
• providing advice and resources
• providing workshops for staff training
Roles and characteristics of the specialist/consultant

- Clear set of values
- Skills of advocacy
- Enthusiasm
- Commitment
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Listening skills
- Ability to stand back
- Communication skills

- Instructor
- Demonstrator
- Model
- Collaborator
- Co teacher
- Advisor
- Observer
- Critical friend
- Resource
Conditions for success

- Consultancy training for specialists
- Supportive senior management
- Time
- Open minded /willing colleagues
- A school culture of lifelong learning
Implications for training specialist/consultant

Specialists should
- Understand that we all have the capacity to think and act musically
- Understand that generalists can teach music with support
- Develop the skills of leadership, advice and support
- Know how to make musical skills and knowledge accessible to generalists (and pupils) through practical and creative activity
- Learn to listen and empathise
- Learn alongside generalists
- Respect the expertise and skills of generalists
- Know how to adapt activities to engage all abilities
- Learn the benefits of collaborating with other professionals
Implications for training generalists

Generalists should

• Understand the idea that we all have the capacity to think and act musically
• Understand that it is possible to learn how to teach music with support
• Develop (rediscover) basic musical skills and understandings through practical engagement
• Learn the processes and different frameworks in creative music making
• Know how to include music in cross curricular planning and teaching
• Experience the benefits of collaborating with other professionals
Thankyou