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# The Creative Music Teacher

## To Dare or Not to Dare?

In this chapter we will discuss the term “creative teacher” in music teaching and learning contexts. We will first set up the profile of the creative and innovative music teacher, his/her personal qualities, pedagogical practices, and communication skills. In the second part of the chapter we will report on a research study conducted in Cyprus investigating secondary school music teachers’ perceptions on what makes a “creative music teacher”, the use of innovative practices in various areas of their teaching and their attitudes towards trying out new things. By building on the findings, we will make recommendations for music teacher education and teacher effectiveness in regards to teaching music creatively, as these are framed through the literature and music teachers’ eyes and practices.

### Introduction

Over a long period of time, directly or indirectly, a great deal has been written and said by practitioners and researchers about “creative music teaching” in schools, from the earliest works of Lowell Mason, the father of public school music education in the United States, to the latest publications in the field. The Tanglewood Symposium, the Ann Arbor Symposium III and the Suncoast Music Education Forum in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s respectively in the US, are examples of professional meetings that have dealt extensively with this topic. Interest in the subject has remained consistent since then and has peaked in the last decades in many European countries, influencing the forming of philosophies, the writing of goals and objectives and the design of countless lesson plans and creative strategies as a central focus of curriculum design not only in the US but worldwide (Cox 1999; Hickey

2002; Burnard 2007; Craft & Jeffrey 2008; Kaufman & Sternberg 2010; Mills & Paynter 2008; Webster 1990, 2009; Odena & Welch 2012).

The real value and meaning of the phrase “teaching music creatively” though, was left quite vague in the past (Gray 1960) and this continues to the present day. Despite the continued call in current curricula and educational reports for creative thinking, the music teaching profession as a whole continues to falter in its attempt to make creative thinking come alive in the minds of the teachers (Odena & Welch 2012).

This paper is composed of two main sections. The first sketches the personal traits and beliefs, the teaching practices, the environment of the classroom and the communication skills of a “creative music teacher” through a literature review. The second section is a report on a research study conducted in Cyprus investigating secondary school music teachers’ perception on what makes a “creative music teacher”, the use of innovative practices in various areas of their teaching, their attitudes towards trying out new things and the possible barriers they may face in practice.

## Defining the “Creative Music Teacher”

Fifty years ago, in 1967, one of the most important events in the twentieth century for music education, the Tanglewood Symposium took place, sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Its purpose was to plan MENC’s future directions by defining the role of music education in an evolving American society that was dealing with the new realities of rapid social, economic, and cultural change making recommendations to improve the effectiveness of music instruction. The symposium brought together music educators and representatives of business, industry and government. From a Documentary Report of the Tanglewood Symposium, educators agreed on accepting the responsibility for developing opportunities which meet man’s individual needs and the needs of a society plagued by the consequences of changing values, alienation, hostility between generations, and racial and international tensions. One interesting point that materialised out of this symposium was a fifteen-point checklist of the characteristics of a “creative music teacher”. According to this list, the “creative music teacher” is a flexible, enthusiastic person with a strong personality, always prepared, thus confident and secure. The “creative music teacher” has knowledge of both the material and instructional procedures, respects children as individuals and establishes an emotional bond with them, adapting the lesson according to their needs. He/she likes to lead children to experiences through personal discovery. Moreover, a “creative music teacher” is described as someone who fosters children’s creative thinking and arouses curiosity about music, and persists until the creative urge is satisfied. He/she plans wisely for each stage of the child’s creative development and makes the study of music look exciting and meaningful, demonstrating at the same time

insight to appraise children's work objectively, providing encouragement for additional experiences and making children want to actively participate in the music lesson (Robinson, Bell, & Pogonowski 2011).

In recent years, the literature review regarding "creative music teacher" and "creative music teaching" has blossomed and a wide spectrum of definitions and lists of characteristics on personal traits or teaching practices have been discussed.

Abramo & Reynolds (2015) suggest that among the basic characteristics of a "creative music teacher" are responsiveness and attentiveness. A "creative music teacher" has keen observation and the ability to read a situation (Spendlove et al. 2005) in order to adjust, since students' moods shift from class to class. He/she behaves more like a music improviser using interplay between action and reflection to develop new pedagogies, thus leading him to an inner emotional satisfaction.

The personality of the music teacher is a significant factor in determining whether someone is or isn't creative, dares or does not. According to the literature, a "creative music teacher" is open-minded and flexible, he/she likes to motivate his/her students and takes into consideration their concerns and interests. He/she loves to be exposed, being adventurous and resourceful, taking risks and ignoring what others think and he/she is willing to confront with both success and failure at the same time. In general, the "creative music teacher" is effective since he allows curriculum to "come to life" by being flexible navigating the gap between the curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived (Davidovitch & Milgram 2006; Beghetto & Kaufman 2013). He/she teaches principles of learning by doing; he/she provides experiences for the enrichment of life in order that the student can realise or achieve complete living and generally to develop fully the individual's potential powers (Larson 1940). He/she also has a strong personality, positive self-image, and self-determination (Kokotsaki 2011), is persistent (Odena 2012), patient, has an excellent sense of humour, and is positive and well organised. He/she has a lot of imagination, enthusiasm, and curiosity about his/her lesson. Apart from music, the "creative music teacher" displays a wide range of interests in other areas as well as he/she is creative himself/herself (Robinson, Bell, & Pogonowski 2011), functioning effectively with a high degree of originality, not only in his/her professional career but in his/her personal life as well.

Additionally, a "creative music teacher" accepts tension, ambiguity, is able to accept instability, and experiments with different possibilities (Fromm 1959; Rogers 1959; Wierseman, Schalk, & Kleef 2012), approaching knowledge differently and enjoying finding novel ideas (Starko 2005; Torrance 1988). The creative teacher likes to embrace multiple identities such as a performer, conductor, or composer (Austin, Isbell, & Russell 2012). By viewing his/her music identity and non-music identity (gender, age, hobbies, etc.) as complex and intersecting, the "creative music teacher" integrates high levels of musicianship into his/her teaching and grows as a musician and educator (Pellegrino 2011). By combining all these identities, the "creative music teacher" connects with his/her students in more

creative ways thus devising an innovative curriculum and instruction according to their needs (Abramo & Reynolds 2015).

As far as the teaching practices and the environment of the classroom, a “creative music teacher” always experiments with innovative teaching practices promoting creative problem-based learning in a child-centred education. In general, he/she likes teaching in a playful manner (Kokotsaki 2011). He/she fosters active participation through differentiation and using cooperative learning a lot where every student participates (ibid.). He/she stops featuring in a lead role and moves off the stage becoming the “Guide on the Side”, acting more as a facilitator. He/she steps back and no longer is the centre of the musical experience (Blair 2009), perceives himself/herself as an equal member of the learning community and directs and encourages students to discover their own conceptual understandings instead. The creative teacher allows his/her students to be active producers and thinkers rather than consumers and reproducers of knowledge (Burnard 2012). The creative music teacher makes a shift in his/her pedagogical thinking. He/she challenges students by finding creative teaching strategies that encourage them to participate in activities, thus giving them the opportunity to think creatively, critically, and analytically whilst being immersed in music-making. He/she asks open-ended musical questions, organises his/her lessons in such a way as to offer students opportunities based on performance, experimentation, construction, actual application, and accomplishment. He/she applies ideas to a new context and devises unusual strategies, blending irrelevant elements to address skills (Mednick 1962). The “creative music teacher” likes divergent thinking and applies it in the teaching and learning process (Guilford 1967; Webster 1990). However, applying divergent and imaginative thinking is a difficult task that requires hard work, careful planning, and innovative techniques.

Contemporary music teaching is ideal in engaging every student to study and employ creative skills (Poutiainen 2012). For the creative teacher, the concept that creativity is the unique attribute of a few talented is a myth and outmoded, and has no place in his/her way of thinking or teaching (Burnard 2012). The classroom is seen as a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse and reflection (Fosnot 1996). The “creative music teacher” has a great sense of empathy and values his/her student’s independence in order to feel free (Kokotsaki 2011). He/she lets his/her students have some degree of control, allowing them to “construct” their understanding of music by experimenting, with less intervention from him.

The “creative music teacher” raises the interest of his/her students; he/she promotes critical thinking skills and the development of Bloom’s taxonomy higher-order thinking skills (analyse, evaluate, create). In his/her lessons there are phases of “ebb and flow”, as the students and teacher move back and forth between the steps (Robinson, Bell, & Pogonowski 2011). The sequence of the activities is flexible, whereby the teacher analyses and responds to the students’ musical responses and directs them toward the next step.

He/she also integrates the use of technology such as smartphones, MP3 players, or tablets to enhance learning. Pogonowski (1988) also emphasises that one of the most important components of a creative music teaching practice is the degree to which the teacher invites the students to reflect upon their musical thought processes. So, the “creative music teacher” uses a comprehensive assessment, including self-assessment processes which are based on information from multiple sources and via interactive dialogue (Robinson, Bell, & Pogonowski 2011).

The “creative music teacher” has a professional autonomy (Rogers 1959) so he/she values his/her students’ independence as well, allowing them to feel free and to become more productive in performing, creating, and reflecting. As Pellegrino says, “[Music making] is a way of engaging [students], getting their attention, and getting them to see what it’s all about [...]. It’s a constant hook [...] it just enhances the classroom and makes it a true music classroom” (Pellegrino 2015, p. 187). He/she feels strongly the need to examine critically the material given to the students. As for the communication, interaction, collaboration and in general the relation of the “creative music teacher” to his/her students or other colleagues, he/she is open to their ideas and respects their views.

### **The “Creative Music Teacher”: From Theory to Practice**

Music teachers’ perceptions on what makes a “creative music teacher”, as well as their attitudes towards attempting to try out innovative practices in their music teaching, are considered to be determining factors for the teachers’ everyday decisions in the music classroom. Although the topic of the “creative music teacher” has been widely discussed for years in the literature, very little has been written on how music teachers perceive creative music teaching and how they actually feel about being creative in their teaching.

In this context, we found it challenging to investigate the perceptions of Cypriot secondary school music teachers on what constitutes a “creative music teacher” and what they identify as the creative teachers’ personality qualities and teaching approaches. Moreover, the teachers’ innovative practices in various areas of music teaching and learning, as well as their attitudes towards trying out innovative practices and barriers they may face in practice, were also perspectives we looked at. Bearing in mind that the Cypriot educational system is a centralised one, we attempted to look at the extent to which Cypriot music teachers in secondary schools take risks and dare the unexpected in their teaching, or play it safe, relying on tried and tested recipes such as those found in school textbooks and official educational material.

The data for this study was collected through an anonymous self-completed electronic questionnaire, with closed and open-ended questions, devised in order to meet the aims of the specific study. The sample was geographically stratified and consisted of

eighty-nine teachers, representing the 48% of the total population of public secondary school music teachers in Cyprus. 67% of the participants were women and 33% were men. With regard to years of experience as music teachers, 13% had been working for fewer than eight years, 37% had nine to fifteen years of teaching experience, 16% were music teachers for sixteen to twenty years and a third of the participants had teaching experience more than twenty years.

## Definition of the “Creative Music Teacher”

The way someone perceives something is mirrored in his/her practices. We wanted to see how our participants conceptually framed the term “creative music teacher”. Accordingly, we asked them to define, using their own words, what they considered as the profile of the “creative music teacher”.

The definitions given by the teachers who participated in the study were quite to the point, identifying a lot of the characteristics mentioned in the literature. Key words in their answers were the words “innovative”, “inspiring”, “adaptable”, “alternative” and “new”. The “creative music teacher”, according to their views, is

- the teacher who adapts creativity as a skill to experiment with innovative ways of music teaching and learning;
- the one who dares to go out of the box, the one who takes risks meeting the needs and the strengths of all students;
- the one who can achieve what he/she imagines and dreams of;
- the teacher who fosters active learning. He/she always experiments with innovative teaching practices, is positive, organised, friendly to the students, acts as a facilitator, his/her lessons are always innovative and unique. His/her students adore the subject of music and they enjoy their lessons;
- the one who, with love and enthusiasm, attempts to apply as many creative ways as possible in teaching and learning. He/she seeks for new methods in order to make a pleasant lesson.
- the teacher who inspires his/her students and makes them want to actively participate in the music lesson.

The music teachers’ responses show that, at least in theory, they can grasp the meaning of the term “creative music teacher”. However, surprisingly, words like “risk” and “daring” were present in only six of the eighty-nine answers.

As already mentioned above, we believe that the personality of the music teacher is a significant factor in determining whether someone is or isn't creative, daring or not daring to try new approaches and innovative activities in music teaching and learning. For this reason, we decided to check which personality traits of the "creative music teacher" were considered by the participants to be important. In order to do this, a table with a list consisting of thirty characteristics was prepared, drawn from the literature review on creative teacher and music teacher, and the music teachers were asked to select those eight they considered most important. The overarching characteristics which ranked higher in music teachers' preferences are the ones you see in Table 1.

<b>Most popular choices</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Enthusiastic	<b>75%</b>
Organized	<b>74%</b>
Positive	<b>71%</b>
Flexible	<b>69%</b>
Dynamic	<b>59%</b>
Has sense of humour	<b>57%</b>
Patient	<b>51%</b>

**Tab. 1:** Secondary school music teachers' choices on what constitutes the "creative music teacher" – most popular choices

The "creative music teacher" should be enthusiastic, organised, positive, flexible, dynamic, have a sense of humour, and be patient. All of them have been selected by at least half of the participants. In Table 2, the least popular choices are shown. According to the teachers' choices, a "creative music teacher" does not need to be risky, outgoing, modest, affectionate, curious, or selfish.

<b>Least popular choices</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Selfish	<b>2%</b>
Curious	<b>5%</b>
Affectionate	<b>5%</b>
Modest	<b>7%</b>
Outgoing	<b>9%</b>
Risky	<b>9%</b>

**Tab. 2:** Secondary school music teachers' choices on what constitutes the "creative music teacher" – least popular choices

Indeed some of these characteristics may not be significant ingredients for the profile of the “creative music teacher”. However, the most striking choices for us were the words “curious” and “risky”, since in many definitions met in the literature of the field the word, risk is present, as it is considered one of the most significant qualities of the creative teacher. Curiosity is also something that is repeatedly mentioned. Nevertheless, only 9% and 5% of the music teachers respectively selected them as one of the eight most important characteristics from among the thirty.

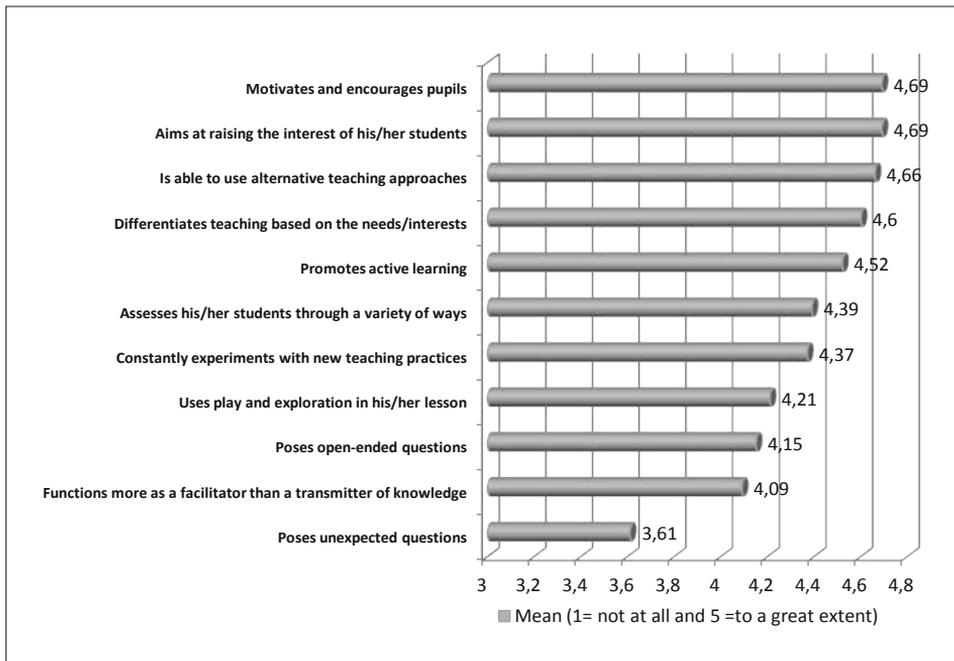
In order to further investigate the music teachers’ views on whom they consider to be a “creative music teacher”, we devised a list of twenty-six statements regarding “Teachers’ Pedagogical Practices”, “Teachers’ Personal Qualities / Personality Traits”, and their “Collaboration with Colleagues and Students”. These categories reveal many similarities with the findings of other recent literature in terms of both stakeholder and government understandings of what constitutes “creative music teaching” (Odena & Welch 2012; Odena, Plummeridge, & Welch 2005; Koutsoupidou 2008).

We used a five-point Likert scale with “1 = not at all” and “5 = to a great extent”. The means of the responses for each category of question are shown below.

### *Teachers’ Pedagogical Practices*

It is worth mentioning that all the statements included under this category were considered significant practices by the secondary school music teachers (mean > 3.6). According to the participant views, the “creative music teacher” is someone who motivates and encourages pupils, aims at raising the interest of the students, uses alternative teaching approaches, differentiates teaching to meet students’ needs, promotes active learning, and uses a variety of tools to assess students’ learning.

Looking at the category of statements belonging under what we called the umbrella of “pedagogical practices” (Figure 1), we see that the statements falling into this category with the highest mean were not the traits someone would expect to see as the most significant for the “creative music teacher”. Comparing the five statements ranked highest to the five ranked lowest, we see that those statements with the lowest mean are more significant practices for a creative teacher, and support evidence found in the literature. Participating teachers, however, did not share this view. One of the most predominant characteristic of the “creative music teacher”, as already mentioned, is that he constantly experiments with new teaching practices, which was not one of the popular answers among the teachers.



**Fig. 1:** Music teachers' views on the significance of certain pedagogical practices of the creative music teacher

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the responses of men and women. There was a significant difference in two of the statements, showing that men, more than women, believe strongly that it is important for a creative teacher to pose open ended questions (females  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ; males  $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) ( $p = 0.02$ ) and also pose unexpected questions to their students (females  $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ; males  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) ( $p = 0.04$ ).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses according to the years of experience of the music teachers. There was a significant effect of the years of experience regarding the statements "raising the interest of their student", and "assessing his/her students through a variety of ways": here teachers with more than twenty years of experience showed a mean touching 4.9 and 4.5 respectively, whereas the music teacher with less experience (< eight years), although still considered it important, they were found to be the group who ranked both items quite low ( $M = 4.00$  and below).

### *Teachers' Personal Qualities / Personality Traits*

The personal qualities of the "creative music teacher" was the second umbrella title of statements, as an attempt to triangulate data collected from other questions. The means of the responses of the personal qualities are presented, starting from the most popular to the

least popular in Figure 2. Teachers considered all of the characteristics of the personality of the creative teacher included in this question as important. The one ranked highest was “is distinguished by his/her diligence”, but surprisingly, the one ranked lowest was “he/she likes taking risks”, a characteristic that is among the most significant ones met in the literature. Gender did not make any significant differences in regards to the responses in this area. However, the one-way ANOVA test revealed a significant effect of the years of experience with regard to certain statements. More specifically, it is remarkable that our findings suggest that the music teachers with experience up to eight years had the lowest mean in the statements which described the creative music teacher as someone with a high degree of energy ( $M = 3.89$ ), who is determined ( $M = 3.78$ ), who has a sense of humour ( $M = 3.78$ ), and as someone who takes risks ( $M = 3.67$ ). One would expect that all the aforementioned would be considered important for younger in age teachers.

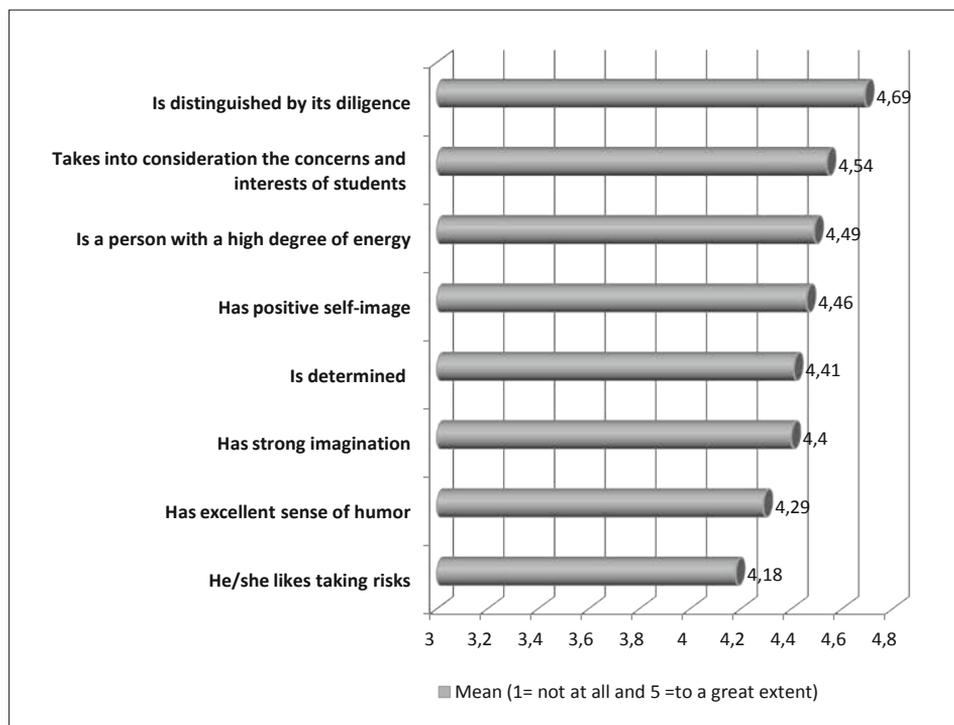


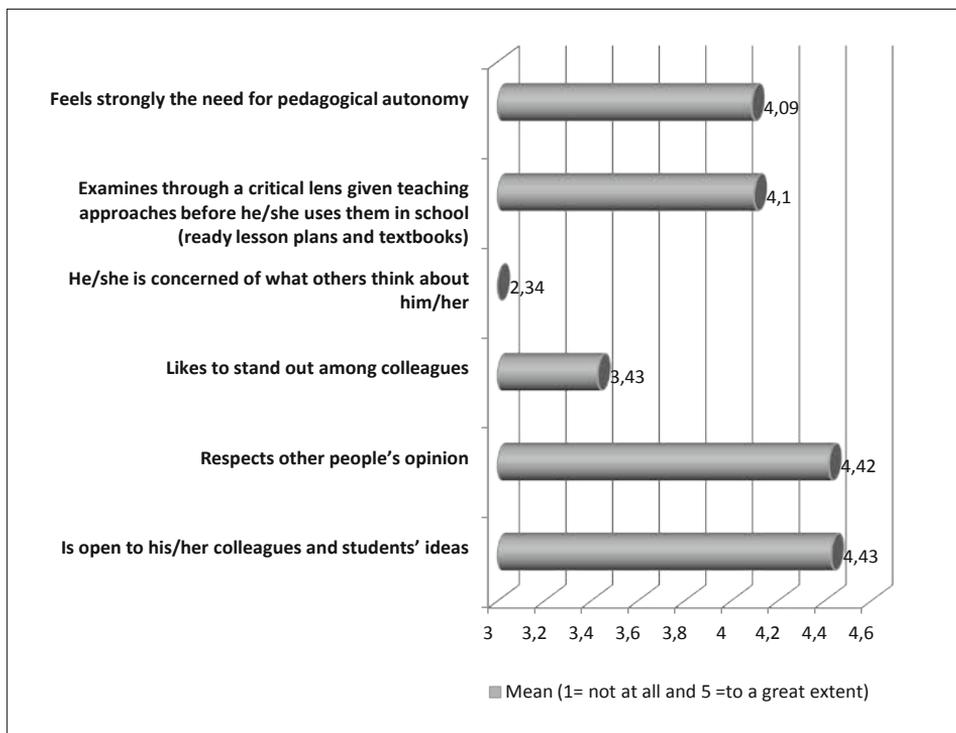
Fig. 2: Music teachers' views on the creative music teacher's personal qualities / personality traits

### ***Collaboration with Colleagues and Students***

In respect of the communication, interaction, collaboration, and in general the relation of the “creative music teacher” to his/her students or other colleagues, the teachers' views suggest that a “creative music teacher” is someone who does not care what others think

about him/her and does not want to stand out among colleagues. He/she is open to his/her colleagues and students ideas and respects their views, but at the same time he/she strongly feels the need for pedagogical autonomy and examines critically the material given to them. Once again, we were surprised to see the statements regarding “feeling the need for pedagogical autonomy” and “critically examining the teaching material” as having a lower mean than others, as these are the prevailing characteristics in the literature.

We attempted to see if gender or years of experience made any difference to the responses of the music teachers in this set of statements. Indeed, the t-test showed that men felt more the need for pedagogical autonomy questions (females  $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ; males  $M = 4.53$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) ( $p = 0.01$ ). The one-way between ANOVA test revealed that teachers with experience between sixteen to twenty years strongly felt the need for pedagogical autonomy ( $M = 4.6$ ) whereas the teachers with experience zero to eight years had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.6$ ) in this statement.



**Fig. 3:** Music teachers' views on the creative music teacher's relationship with colleagues and students

### *Music Teachers' Innovative Practices*

Besides their perceptions and attitudes towards creative music teaching, we wanted to investigate the participants' actual innovative practices and how their beliefs on teaching creatively are mirrored in their everyday teaching. Accordingly, we asked the music teachers to describe at least one innovative practice that they use in the context of listening activities, singing, improvising, composing, students' assessment, and in regards to classroom arrangement and students' organisation.

Regarding our music teachers' innovative practices in listening activities, we received some very interesting answers. Some of the music teachers referred to the use of "improvised movement", as a way of responding to a musical piece or choreographed movement, and to understand musical elements in a piece. Playing together with recorded music, either a simple orchestration or the musical theme of the piece, was something often found in the answers. Making up stories and role-play whilst listening to a musical piece, improvised or prepared after discussion was mentioned by a few music teachers. A very common approach was the use of listening maps and graphic scores as visual help for understanding certain elements of the music. Moreover, music teachers reported that they use a musical piece as a stimulus for composing music. More than that, some of them stated that "copying" the music is something that they sometimes engage their students in, and this involved attempting to play the melody or an ostinato from the piece by ear, using informal learning practices.

Analysing the data related to the activity of singing, we realised that many secondary school music teachers did not perceive what we meant by "teaching creatively", as the creative practices they used as examples in singing were not *that* creative. More than half of the answers dealt with standard singing activities such as singing alone or in a group, evaluating each group, using body percussion when singing. Posture was also mentioned, as well as the use of voice warm-up exercises, varied repertory, singing canons, etc. However, there were some interesting perspectives such as singing in different postures and observing how the sound changed or using twentieth-century techniques to sing a phrase by using atonal materials with contrasting emotion, different vocal sounds, like pitch slides and scatting in blues and jazz style, or by switching between singing and speaking lyrics to experiment with different vocal sounds, like nasality and wordplay in hip-hop style and then discuss it.

There were also some creative ideas in regards to voice warm-up exercises such as through role-play, using funny exercises with the students' names, imitating the sounds of musical instruments, using positive phrases like "I love you", etc.

Concerning song orchestration, which is an activity frequently used in Cypriot secondary schools, most of the answers were describing common and standard processes of orchestrating songs. Only a few cases gave some examples of more creative approaches to orchestration. Those referred to informal learning practices, where students attempt to

copy the original orchestration by ear and adjust it to the musical equipment they have in the classroom, orchestrating with body percussion or with any object/material that can produce an interesting sound. Beatboxing was also mentioned here as a way of orchestrating a song.

As far as improvisation and composing activities are concerned, there were various ideas put forward which were more commonly used approaches already found in music textbooks and lesson plans. Those referred to adding music to create a soundtrack for a short video clip or composing music for commercials, using the multiple possibilities that technology offers for composing, making interdisciplinary connections in creating music, improvising or composing music for images, emotions, poems, scenarios, graphic scores, and so on. Whilst all of them can be recognised as creative and even effective, they were not adaptations, re-creations, or innovative attempts.

In 2010 there was an educational reform in Cyprus, where in the new curriculum a variety of tools for students' assessment was suggested which included rubrics, checklists, concept maps, and so on. Disappointingly, in the question asking for innovative practices regarding students' assessment, not even one of these tools was mentioned. Instead, the music teachers mainly referred to informal everyday ways of assessment such as observation to assess participation and the interest of students – which are quite subjective. From the responses, it was evident that emphasis is given to the assessment of knowledge and specific skills such as performing on instruments, improvisation, composition, and listening activities. Interestingly, there was no reference to the assessment of singing skills. The assessment tools mentioned by the teachers were videotaping/recording the students' compositions and performances, self/peer assessment based on specific criteria given to the students or developed by the teacher, the students' portfolio, and the "traditional" written test.

Conversely, we were happy to see that the majority of the teachers shared some progressive ideas in regards to classroom arrangement and student organisation. Examples included classrooms without desks, classrooms with desks only for instruments used for collaborative creative work, and the use of various spaces for group work in small ensembles.

In the open ended question, "What was the general feeling gained through your efforts to implement innovative teaching practices in your class?" almost all answers revealed teachers' positive emotions of satisfaction, motivation, enjoyment, and fulfilment, as well as the positive response and enthusiasm from the side of the students. This was something that was highlighted by a significant percentage of the participating teachers, who loved seeing their students enjoying the lesson, responding to a great extent to the activities, and showing impressive willingness to participate and collaborate with their classmates. The teachers admitted however, that teaching creatively demands a lot of hard work and organisation can be a tiring procedure that does not always have the expected

outcomes. There were two cases where teachers reported that the general feeling was not positive, as students were reserved and did not respond to the extent the teachers thought they would.

When asked what they need to unfold their creativity, the most common response was “training”, a word which was repeatedly found among their answers. Teachers reported that they want a boost in their confidence and it would help them to observe innovative lessons from innovative and gifted teachers. In addition, they asked for smaller numbers of students in the class and better equipment in the music laboratories. They also mentioned that they would like more autonomy and more free time in school, so that they can search for creative approaches to music teaching and learning.

## Conclusion

It becomes evident that there can be a gap between grasping the meaning of something and implementing it in practice. On one level, we would argue that the responses on what constitutes a creative music teacher were close enough to what literature in the field suggests. When looking more closely, however, we found that, when asked to describe their innovative and creative teaching practices, the participants tended to draw on traditional, standard, well-established approaches to music teaching and learning already used in Cypriot secondary music education contexts. There were only a few cases where we would identify the approaches reported by the teachers as indeed innovative. It was obvious from the music teachers’ answers that they insist on relying on given textbooks and educational material and they play it safe, approaching music teaching with conservatism. Although the majority of them claimed to be positively disposed towards the pedagogical autonomy of the music teacher, taking into account the teaching practices they described in the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, they obviously avoid taking risks. It seems more that they indeed try to teach what they are supposed to (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) but they fail to take into consideration the factor “student”. Their attitude towards music teaching and learning shows that in many cases they are not passionate about what they are doing and they do not try to find new ways to teach a lesson which is exciting, relevant, and interesting for the students. They do not have a desire to dare for the unexpected, which, as Elisondo, Donolo, & Rinaudo aptly put it,

“goes against monotonous activities, doing the same thing and always obtaining the same results. The unexpected characterises the creative processes, redefines, transforms and makes them singular and complex. Proposing educational contexts using unexpected components may be a new way to break established practice” (Elisondo, Donolo, & Rinaudo 2013, p. 14).

Our findings reveal that Cypriot secondary school teachers want to do their job well, using what they have and what they know, but in most cases try out things or activities already tested by other colleagues and ideas proposed in books. It became obvious from various closed and open-ended questions that even younger colleagues are reluctant to take risks and dare the unexpected.

In the literature it is suggested that “building new ways of teaching that move beyond predictable and expected tasks may enrich teaching practice and professional development” (ibid.). This is exactly our wish and hope for the Cypriot secondary music education, a shakeup of the status quo in music teaching and learning.

Music teachers need to begin to think differently, to create ideas, starting from what has to be done/learnt, and work more on how to achieve their goals most effectively, not constantly relying on ready-made solutions. Music teachers should be encouraged, starting from university years, to try out, attempt, adapt, and challenge. They should be encouraged to start taking risks, experimenting with various ideas, repertoires, and approaches without the fear of failing, be engaged themselves in creative processes which “have a lot of unexpected, uncertain and unpredictable situations that give place to uncertainty, motivation, surprise and the desire to walk unexplored short cuts and pathways” (ibid., p. 12).

Music teachers need to be given opportunities, time, and resources to act as researchers who value originality, risk-taking, and problem solving (Burnard 2012). They should enter the game of music-teaching with the philosophy and courage of a jazz performer, who does not always know for certain whether his/her improvisations will work as he/she wishes. Furthermore, they should start acting like business people, making their product attractive to the client and making music attractive to students. The creative music teachers dare the unexpected, focusing on how to make their students involved in personally meaningful musical experiences.

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## Appendix

### Survey for Music Teachers in Secondary Education

*Daring the Unexpected:*

*Secondary School Music Teachers' Perceptions and Teaching Practices in Cyprus*

#### I. Teacher's Details – Demographic Information

<b>Mark the specific checkbox (✓):</b>	
1. School/s you teach this year	<input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Lyceum <input type="checkbox"/> Music School
2. School/s location	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicosia <input type="checkbox"/> Limassol <input type="checkbox"/> Larnaca <input type="checkbox"/> Famagusta <input type="checkbox"/> Paphos
3. Years of experience as a music teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> 0–8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9–15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16–20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20+
4. Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male

#### II. The Characteristics of a Creative Music Teacher

**1. Give your own definition of the creative music teacher:**

.....

.....

.....

**2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements in regards to the characteristics of the creative music teacher:**

1 = not at all, 2 = fairly little, 3 = neither, 4 = fairly much, 5 = very much

	Subjects					
1.	Poses unexpected questions	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Asks open-ended questions (looking not only "what" but also the "how" and "why") supporting thus divergent thinking	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Likes to raise the interest of his/her students	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Motivates and encourages pupils	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Has excellent sense of humour	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Differentiates teaching based on the needs and interests of students	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Flexible and able to use various alternative teaching approaches	1	2	3	4	5

8.	Has a strong imagination	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Uses play and exploration in the lesson	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Has a positive self-image	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Concerned of what others think about him/her	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Being determined	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Constantly experiments with new teaching practices	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Feels strongly the need for pedagogical autonomy	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Likes to stand out among colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Distinguished by his/her diligence	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Possessed of intuitive perception and intuition about the response of his/her students	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Likes to take risks	1	2	3	4	5
19.	A person with a high degree of energy	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Open to students' ideas and his/her colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Examines through a critical lens existing teaching approaches before implementing them (ready lesson plans and textbooks)	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Respects other people's opinions	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Assess with a variety of ways his/her students	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Promotes active learning	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Functions more as a facilitator rather than a transmitter of knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Takes in to consideration the concerns and interests of students	1	2	3	4	5

**3. Circle only eight (8) personality traits you consider as the most important of a creative music teacher:**

positive friendly patient calm

strict excited polite relaxed

flexible pleasant stable well organised affectionate

has humour sympathetic diligent fair

objective competitive curious persistent

smart egocentric extroverted risk-taker

humble resourceful decisive

### III. Music Teachers' Use of Innovative Practices in Their Music Teaching

1. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to music LISTENING.
2. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to SINGING.
3. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to PLAYING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS/ORCHESTRATION.
4. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to IMPROVISATION.
5. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to COMPOSITION.
6. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to students' ASSESSMENT in music.
7. Please describe at least one innovative practice you used in your teaching in regards to Classroom arrangement and student organization.
8. Mention at least one innovative practice you used in the DESIGN OF A LESSON.
9. What was the general feeling gained through your efforts implementing innovative teaching practices in your lesson?

Thank you. We truly value the information you have provided.