

MUSI 464

CURRICULUM STUDIES IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Group dynamics within the NEMP group and team tasks

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By

Peh Siew Hoon

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Supervised by
Dr Roger Buckton
Head, School of Music

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of group dynamics in the various tasks of The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) for music (1996). The objective of this paper is to look at group dynamics from four main areas which have been considered as the most relevant to the focus. These are

1. peer influence in a group setting,
2. spatial arrangements in the group situation,
3. physical characteristics and the musical abilities of the group leaders, and
4. gender of the group members.

A total of one hundred and thirty-five tapes, providing a random sample of ten percent of the entire NEMP sampled population, were viewed. Sixty-eight at Year 4 and sixty-seven at Year 8. These observations were represented in a tabular form before they were analysed according to the four areas noted above.

The main findings of this study were

- 1) A significant level of group dynamics existed and played a part in determining the results of the NEMP music tasks. However, its importance varied from group to group and also from task to task.
- 2) The presence of peer influence affected the actions and the musical responses of the group members.
- 3) The domination of a certain gender in a particular activity depended on the age of the child and the nature of the activity.
- 4) Spatial factors did affect the actions and the musical responses of the group.
- 5) A leader did emerge from most of the groups. He/she was not always the most musical child but was almost always the most aggressive or charismatic. Some were good musical leaders while others were not.
- 6) The TA's attitude and mannerism, the noise in the environment, the level of disruptions present during the performing of the task, the nature of the task itself and the appropriateness of each task to the age group affected the group dynamics.
- 7) It may be preferable to administer some of the tasks on an individual basis.

The results shown in this study reflect the importance of the group dynamics within the NEMP group and team music tasks and this information will prove to be useful in the administering of future NEMP tasks.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

It is an indisputable fact that human beings are social animals by nature. From the time of birth, almost all individuals belong to a group. Marvin E. Shaw, a noted authority in the study of groups, said that the typical human being spends a major portion of his waking life in groups of one sort or another. Life itself may be said to originate in groups.¹

The literature about groups has gone back to the distant past but serious research on the importance of group dynamics has only started in recent years. Cartwright and Zander confirmed that “Group dynamics began, as an identifiable field of inquiry, in the United States toward the end of the 1930’s. Its origination as a distinct specialty is associated primarily with Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) who popularized the term, group dynamics, and in 1945 established the first organization devoted explicitly to research on group dynamics.”²

Lewin’s views on group dynamics is widely accepted by his colleagues. As noted by Forsyth, “Despite variations among group dynamicists, virtually all agree with Lewin’s basic concept of *interactionism*: behavior is a function of the person and the environment.”³ In Lewin’s opinion, a group can be defined as “a collection of individuals who are interdependent on one another.”⁴ This position was further refined by Fiedler who defined a group as “a set of individuals who share a common fate, that is, who are *interdependent* in the sense that an event which affects one

member is likely to affect all.”⁵ McGrath added that “a group is an aggregation of two or more people who are to some degree in dynamic interrelation with one another.”⁶

It should be noted that the recent growth of interest in group dynamics is not only a result of the merging of certain trends within the social sciences but at the same time fulfilling a need for human beings to have a better understanding of the social world they live in.⁷ It is undeniable that group dynamics is an important factor in the way a group operates.

This study explores the role that group dynamics played in the various tasks of The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) for music (1996). As reported by Crooks and Flockton, the NEMP “commenced in 1993, with the task of assessing and reporting on the achievement of New Zealand primary school children in all areas of the school curriculum. Children are assessed at two class levels: Year 4 (halfway through primary education) and Year 8 (at the end of primary education). Different curriculum areas and skills are assessed each year, over a four year cycle.”⁸

According to Crooks, groups were used in the NEMP tasks because ‘much of the work that is done in schools and in our society is performed in and by groups. Our national curriculum places emphasis on social skills, which are able to be assessed in groups. Groups also allow less capable students to be supported by more capable students. Finally, there are curriculum goals which can only be achieved and assessed in groups: such things as group music performance, drama, and other goals which require interaction among participants.’⁹

He added that the group size of four was deliberately chosen as many of the NEMP tasks involved both pair-work as well as group work. Groups of four were considered good as no members would be left out and also, 'groups larger than four would have been unwieldy and hard to videotape'.¹⁰

This paper aims to look at the interaction process of a group from four main areas which have been perceived to be the most relevant to the focus. These are the importance of peer influence in a group setting, the spatial arrangements in the group situation, the physical characteristics and the musical abilities of the group leaders and the gender of the group members.

1.2 Peer influence

The age groups of the pupils who participated in the NEMP test were 8 years old and 12 years old. As a child grows older, he/she tends to spend more time away from home and during this period, peers become more influential as teachers and models. There is no doubt that every child wants to be socially accepted by his/her peers and at the age of 8 and 12, the child will be very easily influenced by friends or even by someone who has strong personality. Forsyth confirmed this statement. He commented that "we tend to think that we personally pick and choose our beliefs, attitudes, and values through thoughtful reflection. Yet the groups that we belong to are, in many cases, the true source of even our most private and cherished beliefs."¹¹ Taking this into consideration, it will be interesting to observe the role played by peer influence in the group and team tasks and how it affected the results.

1.3 Spatial arrangement

Another aspect of group dynamics to be explored in this research will be the importance of the spatial arrangements in the group situation. Shaw noted that there seems to be relatively little research devoted to this area of group dynamics. He remarked it is quite true that “spatial arrangements in groups exert significant influences upon the perception of status, the patterns of participation, leadership activities, and the affective reactions of group members.”¹²

In the group and the team tasks of the NEMP, the four pupils were placed in specific positions. As we shall discuss in a later chapter, such an arrangement might have influenced the results for certain tasks. The quality of the interaction between group members can sometimes be determined by the seating arrangement. Shaw also believes that there is a relationship between spatial arrangements and leadership.¹³ This view is further supported by a related study conducted by Bass and Lubeck in 1949.

1.4 Attributes of group leaders

The third aspect of group dynamics to be explored is the importance of physical characteristics and the musical ability of the group leaders. According to Shaw, the influence of physical attributes such as size, weight, height, and general health and the effect they have on the behaviour of the individual group member and the responses of other group members to the outstanding child are important issues. However, he does acknowledge the fact that such physical traits can sometimes be overcome by “the effects of more powerful variables such as personality and ability.” He also feels

that there is relatively little attention devoted to the investigation of the effects of physical traits in group dynamics. For example, the skinny group member may be less accepted in the group and is hence less effective as a group member.¹⁴

The group and team tasks in the NEMP are performed by children in the same age group and from the same school. Therefore, there is a very high possibility that they are acquainted with each other before attempting the tasks. Knowing the musical ability of certain members of the group will also affect the results of these tasks as it is only natural for the less musically-able child to follow the child with better musical ability. Thus, the perceived or actual abilities of the group leader often determine how effectively he/she performs in the group and consequently, this will influence how the others react to him/her as the group leader.

1.5 Gender

Last but not least, the final aspect of group dynamics which will be relevant in this research is the gender of the group members. The gender of the group members can be seen as a fairly obvious factor which determines group behaviour. Perry stated that based on the cognitive-developmental theory, children are believed to have firmly established their sexuality by the time they reach the concrete operations state which, according to Piaget, begins at about 7 years of age. Children delight in perceiving themselves to be similar to their peers. It is also at this stage that they begin to learn the role of conformity.¹⁵ For example, the society has stereotyped boys as assertive and rough, while girls are demure and more reserved. On the other hand, girls are perceived to be more interested in music than boys. Thus, it will be interesting to see

how the respective gender actually conform to the stereotype image and this may yet be another factor which will affect their behaviour and in turn, the results obtain from the NEMP tests.

Apart from looking at the effect of group dynamics in the group and team tasks of the NEMP, this research paper also aims to determine the suitability of each of the tasks as a group or team activity. It is assumed at this stage that after a detailed analysis of the videotapes of the tasks provided, there will be certain tasks which will be more suitable to be offered as an individual task in future NEMP due to the conflicting nature of the group dynamics present.

1.6 Questions

The aim of this study is to find the answers for certain questions related to the workings of group dynamics in the NEMP for music (1996). These questions are: Were group dynamics present? Did the presence of group dynamics affect the results of the test? Were the children influenced by their peers? Did spatial factors have an effect on the group dynamics? Did physical attributes and musical ability play a part in the choice of a leader? Did the gender of the group members affect the results? Were the tasks suitable to be a group or team task or would it be better to offer them as an individual task?

1.7 Conclusion

The focus of this study is to examine the importance of group dynamics within the NEMP group and team tasks situation. However, group dynamics is a complex field

of study by itself and hence, this research paper will **only** focus on four main aspects. As the pupils participating in the NEMP are from Year 4 and Year 8, it is thus quite appropriate to look at the peer influence they have on each other and as discussed before, this peer influence stems from the social needs of a child of that age. One of the interesting point will be to how the pupils adjust to each other in the group and if this will in turn affect the results of the NEMP tests.

Another area of group dynamics covered in this paper is the importance of spatial arrangements in the group situation and the third aspect is to explore whether the physical characteristics and the musical ability of group leaders will affect the group dynamics. Finally, the issue of whether the gender of the group members affects the NEMP results is also discussed.

In addition to the four main areas explored, the suitability of each task as a group or team task is assessed. The desired outcome of this study is to provide more information on the role of group dynamics in the 1996 NEMP so that this aspect will be taken into consideration for future NEMP tasks.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

2.1 Group dynamics

The popularity of the study of group dynamics is largely due to the impetus provided by the work of Kurt Lewin and his students. In fact, Forsyth regarded Lewin as the ‘parent’ of group dynamics. He was the first to use this term to represent “both the powerful processes that influence individuals when in group situations and the study of these processes”.¹ The term *group dynamics* was further refined by Cartwright & Zander as “a field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development, and their interrelations with individuals, other groups, and larger institutions.”²

Is group dynamics a subfield of sociology or psychology? Forsyth observed that “group dynamics seems to have two sides. To some, the field is sociological, for it focuses on groups of people and how these groups influence and are influenced by societal forces. Others, however, maintain that group dynamics is a profoundly psychological science; the focus is on individuals’ thoughts, actions, and emotions, and these individuals just happen to be in groups rather than alone.”³ Ivan Steiner however, added a third perspective to this issue. He believes that the study of group dynamics is a combination of both sociology and psychology.

Based on this belief, Steiner derived two ways in which group dynamics can be studied. The first method is termed as the *individualistic approach* and it focused on

the individual in the group. This approach seeks to explain the behaviour of the individual in the group and is keen to find out if social behaviour is truly determined by psychological processes. A contrasting approach is known as the *group oriented approach*. In this approach, “the individual is presumed to be an element in a larger system, a group, organization, or society. And what he does is presumed to reflect the state of the larger system and the events occurring in it”⁴ Forsyth agreed with Steiner’s comment that the group-oriented perspective was more applicable to the sociological research while the psychological researchers favored the individualistic orientation.⁵

Shaw however, felt that the real issue of this field is not the roots of group dynamics but rather the proper approach to the analysis of groups.⁶ Cartwright & Zander agreed with this view and said that a good analysis of any group should answer four main questions: “(a) What is the proper relation between data collection and theory building? (b) What are the proper objects of study and techniques of observation? (c) What are the basic variables that determine what happens in groups? (d) How can the many factors affecting group life be combined into a comprehensive conceptual system?”⁷

As the study of group dynamics is a relatively new area of research, it is perhaps inevitable that some experts in this field find it hard to agree on certain basic issues. However, as the purpose of this study is to explore the workings of group dynamics in the NEMP for music (1996), it will be appropriate to define group dynamics as a

subfield of sociology and to apply Steiner's individualistic approach to the study of this field.

2.2 Peer influence

Peer influence become more significant as a child grows older. Erikson supported this idea by noting that "the world of peers assumes a position of equal importance to that of adults; peers are needed for self-esteem, and serve as a criteria for the measurement of the boy's or girl's own success or failure, and among them, the child finds another source of extra-familial identification."⁸

Bany and Johnson agreed with Erikson's view. They believed that every group has their own norms which is a kind of peer-group influence. In their opinion, norms can be defined as an evolution from "group interaction and may include customs, traditions, codes, values, standards, rules, fad, and fashions. They are concerned with expected behavior in matters of consequence to the group"⁹ Furthermore, "norms are not the behavior itself; rather, they represent what people in groups think behavior ought to be or what they expect it to be."¹⁰

This opinion is congruent to Bonner's argument that "norms are a regulator of behavior for members of a group."¹¹ For many children, the fear of disapproval from their peers is a strong motivational factor to conform with the group's norms. These norms may sometimes be against the child's natural instincts. Thus it will be interesting to see the workings of peer influence in the group and team tasks in the NEMP for music (1996).

2.3 Spatial arrangement

Spatial arrangement is found to have an important effect on the quality interaction of a group. Shaw noticed a direct link between seating preferences and self-perception.

He observed that “ persons who perceive themselves to have relatively high status in the group select positions that are in accord with this perception.”¹² This observation is supported by Strodbeck and Hook and Hare and Bales. The latter found that “subjects who scored high on a pencil-and-paper measure of dominance tended to choose the more central seats in the group situation.”¹³

The importance of centrality of one’s position in the group is echoed by Bany and Johnson . They pointed out that “when a person’s position was found to be low in centrality relative to other members of the group, that position was found to be a follower position and there was little opportunity for the member to experience prestige, activity, or self-expression.”¹⁴

Besides the link with the perceived status of the individual, there is also a close link between spatial arrangements and leadership. The position an individual sits may determine his chances to be a leader in the group. A study conducted by Howells and Becker confirmed this statement. In this study, they found out that “ the spatial position determines the flow of communication, which in turn determines leadership emergence.”¹⁵

Besides the interperson distance which affects individual and group behaviour, spatial arrangements also affects the communication within a group. Stienzor found that “persons in groups were more likely to interact with others if they could see them as well as hear them.”¹⁶ Furthermore, the findings also indicated that “interaction between persons in groups was not only affected by the content of what was said but by such nonverbal factors as gestures, postures, and the total physical impressions that individual made on one another.”¹⁷

These research proves that spatial arrangement does affect group dynamics to a large extent. Hence, it will be helpful to keep these opinions in the mind while studying the role played by spatial arrangement in the NEMP for music (1996).

2.4 Attributes of group leaders

Another factor which might have affected the results of the NEMP for music (1996) could be the influence of certain attributes of the group leaders. Ralph Stogdill discovered a close relationship between leadership and weight, height, and measures of physique through extensive studies conducted. He concluded that physically superior men have a slightly better chance of becoming leaders than others. However, he noted that there is no evidence that size is related to the performance of leaders.¹⁸

As mentioned in chapter I, the children who participated in the group and team tasks of the 1996 NEMP for music attended the same school as their group members. Consequently, there is a possibility that they know each other’s musical ability before taking the test together. Forsyth claimed that the dynamics of a group can be altered

by the emergence of leaders. One of the criteria for leadership listed by him is task abilities. He believed that “possessing skills and abilities that (1) are valued by the other group members or (2) increase the group’s chances for achieving success also gives an individual an edge during leader emergence.”¹⁹ Goldman and Fraas supported the idea that “groups are more accepting of leaders who have previously demonstrated task ability.”²⁰

2.5 Gender

The gender of the group members has a large influence on the group dynamics as well. Shaw also noted that “women and men behave differently in groups, and this has important implications for group process. Differences in behavior are usually assumed to be due to role differences imposed upon men and women by the culture in which they live.”²¹ Bartol and Martin confirmed this view when his studies revealed that men outnumber women in the leadership.²² Crocker and McGraw also added that “the lone man in an otherwise all-female group often becomes the leader, whereas the lone woman in an otherwise all-male group has little influence.”²³ The difference in gender behaviour stems from childhood. Mead agreed that “role differences are molded by culture during infancy and childhood”²⁴

The difference in gender personality leads to a difference in interaction behaviours. Males are generally stereotyped as aggressive and self-assertive while females are perceived to be more reserved and timid. Reitan and Shaw stated that “...females play a relatively submissive role, whereas men play a relatively dominant role. These

considerations suggest that women should conform to the norms of the groups more than men.”²⁵

The groups and teams in the NEMP for music (1996) consist of boys and girls.

Therefore, it will be beneficial to the research to look into the role played by gender and how that affected the group dynamics.

2.6 Conclusion

Group dynamics is a new field of study but the literature for it is already extensive.

Some people may argue that it is a subfield of sociology while others may perceive it to be a subfield of psychology. As it is a large field of study, four main areas of concern are included in this study. These are peer influence, spatial arrangement, attributes of group leaders and gender.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of group dynamics in the group and team tasks of the NEMP for music (1996). As discussed in earlier chapters, group dynamics is a considerable field of study in itself, therefore this paper focuses on four key areas. These are the importance of; 1.0) peer influence in a group setting, 2.0) the gender of the group members, 3.0) the effects of the spatial arrangements in the group and 4.0) the physical and musical attributes of the group leaders.

3.2 Method

The research technique used is observation. As noted by Bell, this method 'can often reveal characteristics of groups or individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means.'¹ However, it should be taken into account that a limitation of this research technique is that it can be prone to a high level of subjectivity. Cohen and Manion stated that it is common for observation studies to be 'subjective, biased, impressionistic, idiosyncratic and lacking in the precise quantifiable measures'² Being made aware of this danger, this researcher has attempted to overcome it by undertaking a structured observation and saw her role as one which was to observe and record in as objective a way as possible.

¹ Bell, J. (1993) *Observation studies, doing your research project: A guide for first time researchers in education and social science* (2nd edition), Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 168-174.

² Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1989) *Research methods in education. London: Rouldege, p129.*

In addition, Ms Rachel Lim, a Masters in Education student, assisted by taking on the role as an independent observer to provide inter-observer reliability. Ms Lim was asked to watch four videotapes³; two from each level. With the sample provided, a reliability level of 92.3% was found by using the formula⁴ of

$$A \div (A + D) = \%$$

There were a number of ways to record the events. Four main areas of behaviour were observed. These areas were further divided into more specific categories. These categories are as follows:

1. Peer influence in a group setting

1.1) Were group dynamics present?

Group dynamics included eye contact, nods, smiles or other forms of verbal or body language which suggested that the pupils were aware of each other's presence in the group.

1.2) Was peer influence present?

Peer influence was considered present if any pupil's actions, musical responses or reactions were followed by any others in the group.

³ They were 4TC S007, 4GB S104, 8TA F003 and 8GA F007.

⁴ **A** stands for agreements and **D** stands for disagreements.

1.3) Did peer influence affect the movements and actions of the group members?

Were the *movements* and *actions* of any group member followed by the others? This included the dance movements, the way they handled the musical and any other body gestures.

1.4) Did peer influence affect the musical responses of the group members?

Were the *musical responses* of any group member followed the others? Musical responses included rhythmic patterns, keeping beat and pulse of the given piece, choice of musical instruments, melodic patterns and pitch patterns.

2. The gender of the group members

2.1) Did the gender differences affect the dynamics of the group?

Were there same-sex cliques formed within the group? Did the pupils show visible awareness of the presence of opposite sex in the group, either in their standing positions, musical responses or any other actions.

2.2) Which gender tended to dominate the group?

Did the boys or the girls play a more domineering role in speech, movements or musical responses?

3. The effects of the spatial arrangements in the group

3.1) Did spatial differences affect the dynamics of the group?

Were the group interactions of the pupils affected by their sitting or standing positions?

3.2) How many group members were there?

The number of pupils recorded on the videotape.

3.3) Did their sitting arrangements show group dynamics?

Did the pupils sit closer to the group members they prefer? Were there *seating cliques*?

3.4) Did spatial factors affect the movements and actions of the group members?

Was the pupil's *movements* and *actions* affected by his/her position in the group or the distance between the other group members and himself/herself.

3.5) Did the spatial factors affect the musical responses of the group members?

Was the pupil's *musical responses* affected by his/her position in the group or the distance between the other group members and himself/herself.

4. Leaders

4.1) Was there a leader in the group?

Was there a pupil who stood out among the group. The group members followed his/her actions, directions or musical responses.

4.2) Were the group members influenced musically by the leader?

Did the group followed his/her musical responses or musical directions?

4.2) Was the person a good leader?

Did he/she lead the group well musically? His/her directions resulted in the group providing good musical responses.

These fourteen questions were used as categories during the observation of the videos. For each of these questions, a tick was used to indicate the presence of the specific behaviour and a cross was used indicate the absence. The observations were charted onto a table each time the event occurred. The database programme, Filemaker Pro was used to record this information and to achieve the statistical results which follow.

These observations were based on a random sample of ten percent of the entire programme. A total of one hundred and thirty-five tapes were used in this study. Sixty-eight at Year 4 and sixty-seven at Year 8. Each of the videotapes was watched closely with a similar procedure. Firstly, the videotapes were played and any significant answers to the questions were noted. In the event that the actions were not too obvious, the videotapes were played a second time with special attention given to certain sections.

The researcher had numbered the seating plan for each group. The person on the extreme right of the screen was numbered as B1 or G1 (depending on the gender of the group member). Moreover, apart from the structured categories of observations, the researcher also noted any interesting or unusual point for each videotape and included these observations in the discussion of the findings in the following chapter.

3.3 Findings

Table 1 : An overview of the results of this study⁵

1.1 Peer influence in a group setting

Description	All	Year 4	Year 8
a) Group Dynamics	100	100	100
b) Peer influence	100	100	100
c) Action affected	100	100	100
d) Musical response affected	100	100	100

1.2) The gender of the group members

Description	All	Year 4	Year 8
a) Gender differences	82.2	86.8	77.6
b) Boys dominate	42.2	42.7	41.8
c) Girls dominate	40.0	44.1	35.8
d) None dominates	17.8	13.2	22.4
e) Not applicable	11.1	8.8	13.4

⁵ All findings are presented in percentage form.

1.3 The effects of the spatial arrangements in the group

Description	All	Year 4	Year 8
a) Spatial differences	95.6	91.2	100
b) Number of pupils (2)	2.2	0.0	4.5
c) Number of pupils (3)	21.5	19.1	23.9
d) Number of pupils (4)	76.3	80.9	71.6
e) Seating cliques	30.4	36.8	23.9
f) Actions affected	94.3	88.2	100
g) Musical response affected	93.3	86.8	100

1.4 Leaders

Description	All	Year 4	Year 8
a) Leader (boy)	91.2	42.7	49.3
b) Leader (girl)	41.5	47.1	35.8
c) Leader (none)	12.6	10.3	14.9
d) Influence musically	80.7	80.9	80.6
e) Good leader	61.5	60.3	62.7
f) Bad leader	19.3	20.6	17.9
g) Not applicable	17.8	17.7	17.9

Table 2 : Year 4⁶

2.1 Peer influence in a group setting

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Group Dynamics	100	100	100	100	100	100
b) Peer influence	100	100	100	100	100	100
c) Action affected	100	100	100	100	100	100
d) Musical response affected	100	100	100	100	100	100

⁶ 68 videotapes were viewed.

2.2 The gender of the group members

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Gender differences	77.8	100	66.7	91.7	100	83.3
b) Boys dominate	33.3	58.3	33.3	50.0	63.6	25
c) Girls dominate	44.4	41.7	33.3	41.7	36.3	58.3
d) None dominates	11.1	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
e) Not applicable	11.1	0.0	16.7	8.3	0.0	16.7

2.3 The effects of the spatial arrangements in the group

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Spatial differences	33.3	100	100	100	100	100
b) Number of pupils (2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
c) Number of pupils (3)	11.1	25.0	25.0	8.3	9.1	33.3
d) Number of pupils (4)	88.9	75.0	75.0	91.7	90.9	66.7
e) Seating cliques	33.3	25.0	75.0	8.3	27.3	50.0
f) Actions affected	11.1	100	91.7	100	100	100
g) Musical response affected	11.1	100	100	100	100	100

2.4 Leaders

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Leader (boy)	44.4	58.3	16.7	58.3	63.6	25.0
b) Leader (girl)	44.4	41.7	33.3	41.7	36.4	75.0
c) Leader (none)	11.1	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
d) Influence musically	88.9	100	0.0	100	100	100
e) Good leader	44.4	66.7	0.0	100	63.6	83.3
f) Bad leader	44.4	33.3	0.0	0.0	36.4	16.7
g) Not applicable	11.1	0.0	100	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 3 : Year 8⁷

3.1 Peer influence in a group setting

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Group Dynamics	100	100	100	100	100	100
b) Peer influence	100	100	100	100	100	100
c) Action affected	100	100	100	100	100	100
d) Musical response affected	100	100	100	100	100	100

3.2 The gender of the group members

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Gender differences	80.0	90.9	50.0	91.7	90.0	91.7
b) Boys dominate	70.0	18.2	33.3	58.3	10.0	50.0
c) Girls dominate	10.0	63.6	16.7	33.3	60.0	41.7
d) None dominates	10.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	30.0	0.0
e) Not applicable	10.0	9.1	0.0	8.3	0.0	8.3

⁷ 67 videotapes were viewed.

3.3 The effects of the spatial arrangements in the group

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Spatial differences	100	100	100	100	100	100
b) Number of pupils (2)	0.0	9.1	0.0	8.3	10.0	0.0
c) Number of pupils (3)	20.0	9.1	16.7	25.0	30.0	41.7
d) Number of pupils (4)	80.0	81.8	83.3	66.7	60.0	58.3
e) Seating cliques	0.0	18.2	33.3	33.3	20.0	100
f) Actions affected	100	100	100	100	100	100
g) Musical response affected	100	100	100	100	100	100

3.4 Leaders

Description	Group A	Group B	Group C	Team A	Team B	Team C
a) Leader (boy)	80.0	27.3	25.0	66.7	20.0	75.0
b) Leader (girl)	10.0	72.7	0.0	33.3	80.0	25.0
c) Leader (none)	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
d) Influence musically	90.0	100	0.0	100	100	100
e) Good leader	50.0	63.6	0.0	100	100	66.7
f) Bad leader	40.0	36.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
g) Not applicable	0.0	0.0	100	0.0	0.0	0.0

3.4 Conclusion

The results obtained in this chapter were achieved through observations of the videotapes of the NEMP for music (1996). A total of one hundred and thirty-five videotapes were observed for the purpose of this study. This is done using a structured checklist which consisted of questions focusing on the four main areas of group dynamics. Based on the results reflected, an analysis and discussion of these results follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of data

The statistical results obtained from observing a sample of 135 video-tapes of the NEMP tasks, as revealed in Chapter III, showed that group dynamics exerted a significant effect on all the groups studied. Since the group and team activities required the children to work as a group, a significant level of group dynamics can be anticipated. However, it is noted that the extent of the group dynamics differed from group to group and also from task to task.

One of the main aspects of group dynamics is peer influence, and this was found to be happening in all groups. Most of the children observed, tended to follow each other's movements or in some cases, one child took the leadership role. This influence was greater in the group activities - *Musical Sticks*, *Team Machine* and *Beat and Rhythm*.

These three activities required the children to respond to the music with physical movements and it was apparent that their musical responses were significantly influenced by each other's actions. The nature of the tasks required created movements which would directly reflect the children's responses to the music and reveal their musicality.

Although peer influence was also noticeable in the team tasks, the effect was not as strong. The children tended to be more concerned about their individual exploration

of the sounds produced by the percussion instruments than to watch the actions of their peers.

Gender differences is another important element of group dynamics. The extent varied between tasks and the ages of the children. This was shown by the difference in boys' and girls' dominance of the group in the various activities.

At year 4, the boys played a dominating role *Team Machine*, *Line Music* and *Animal Parade* whereas at year 8, they dominated *Musical Sticks*, *Beat and Rhythm*, *Line Music* and *Radical Rhymes*. This difference might be due to the fact that at year 4, the girls were not that conscious of how they would be regarded by the opposite sex and also, they appeared to be less disturbed by the presence of the video recorder in the room. Therefore, they were more spontaneous in their responses to activities like *Musical Sticks* and *Radical Rhymes*, which required them to reveal more of their musicality.

However, the year 8 girls were obviously more conscious of themselves and were more reserved in their actions. These might have curbed their spontaneous responses to certain activities and resulted in the boys dominating these activities. This change of role of gender dominance in different activities at different age groups and tasks was shown clearly in *Musical Sticks* and *NZ Tourism Video*.

Another aspect of group dynamics present in this study was spatial differences. They seemed to be present in all activities except *Musical Sticks* in year 4. Spatial factors included the number of children in a group and the seating pattern of each group.

The seating pattern of each group was interpreted as an indication of their social relationship to each other and the extent they were influenced by each other physically or musically. If the children were sitting in close proximity with the group member(s) whom they felt most comfortable with, they were then categorised as being in a *seating clique*. An example of a seating clique is 4TC S007. G1 and G2 worked as a pair while G3 was ignored most of the time. The results showed that the children at year 4 were in a greater number of seating cliques than the children at year 8 in most activities except for *Line Music* and *Radical Rhymes*.

Leadership was yet another aspect of group dynamics present in this study.

Significant levels of leadership emerged in all activities except *Musical Sticks* and *Beat and Rhythm*. In this study, a child is termed as a *leader* of the group if he or she was able to exert some form of influence either on the actions or on the musical responses of his or her group members.

The results showed that all the leaders had influence on the actions and the musical responses of their group members except the leaders *Musical Sticks*. In this particular task, the children tended to be more focused on their own actions than to be influenced by others in the group.

There were many kinds of leaders which emerged in this study. While most leaders were found to be good musically¹, there were others who were distinctly weak and completely misled the group.² Some leaders were strong and aggressive³, while others were very mild and weak.⁴

Contrary to popular belief that leaders tend to be physically bigger and better in whatever they do, this did not necessarily apply to this study. Not all the leaders were the biggest in the group and as seen earlier, certainly not all of them were the most musically able of the group. In fact, the results seemed to suggest that the quality of a leader was more dependent on personality and charisma than musical ability.

The quality and requirements of a leader in a group depended largely on the nature of the activity. For example, in *Team Machine*, a leader was required to initiate group discussions as the children were expected to be part of a team machine. On the other hand, in an activity like *Beat and Rhythm*, the children mostly followed the instructions on the video and so had little time to look at their peers.

¹ For example, 8GB F010

² For example, 4TB S039

³ For example, 4TB S016

⁴ For example, 8GA F010 and 8TC F007

4.2 Discussion

The teacher administrator (TA) played a key role in affecting the group dynamics within each group. For example, one TA⁵ was strict and even scolded the children while they were interacting thus influencing the dynamics of that group. The atmosphere of this group was at times tense and there was a lack of spontaneity.

On the other hand, some TAs appeared to be friendly and supportive. One⁶ exuded enthusiasm and this came through clearly with the children in her group being more relaxed and freer in their responses. The interaction of this group was enhanced and the children seemed to enjoy carrying out this task. Overall, it was noted that the attitudes and mannerisms of the TA did make a difference in the behaviour and performance of the group.

Other TAs actually participated in the task and thus significantly affecting the results. For example, in one group with only three members⁷, one of the teachers joined in the activity as a fourth group member. This influenced the dynamics of the group very much as the children obviously relied on her as their leader and seemed to follow her musically as well.

Another way the TA had influenced the group behaviour and the musical responses of the group members was by instructing the children on what was to be done. The ideas were provided for the children to a certain extent and this hindered the musical

⁵ 4GB S097

⁶ 4TC S009

⁷ 4GC S010

responses which the group might otherwise have developed. In one instance⁸, the TA encouraged the children to respond to the music and when they delayed in their responses, the TA gave suggestions and provided certain clear instructions on the actions to be done.

In another example⁹, the TA helped to direct the thoughts and ideas of the group by giving the children leading questions and helping them to write down their answers. Moreover, instead of letting the children divide the work among themselves as part of a group interaction process, the TA distributed the tasks to each child. No doubt such TAs meant to help the children. However, by interfering with the interaction process of the group, they actually hindered the role of group dynamics and this influenced the results.

Another way which the TAs had affected the dynamics of a group was when they tried to give the instructions while the instruction video was being played. In such cases¹⁰, when first listening to the music, the children had less opportunity to explore their natural responses. It also minimised the contact between the group members at this stage because they had to pay attention to what the teacher was saying in addition to listening to the music.

The instructions provided by the TAs for each activity ^{with} was also crucial to the overall responses of the task. One example of this was the *Beat and Rhythm* task. Although

⁸ 8GB F031

⁹ 4TB S097

¹⁰ For example, 8GA F005

the TAs had read the same instructions to the groups, some were more vigilant in the carrying out of these instructions.

According to the *Teacher Administrator's Manual* (p.104), the instruction was “When the screen is red - everyone plays the same beat. When it's yellow, one person plays a rhythm, and the rest of you play the beat.” Most of the children in this activity started by following the demonstration rhythm provided by the instruction video. While some TAs were not bothered by the lack of creativity of the children's rhythm, some others insisted that each of the rhythms played by the member had to be different from the others.

Due to the different ways this task had been administered, it was very difficult to gauge the creative potential of each child. Therefore, it seems important that instructions be standardised with the TAs before tasks are administered.

As the research method used was observation studies, it was vital that the whole task had to be recorded properly with each child within the range of the camera.

Unfortunately, this was not always the case. Some video-tapes¹¹, did not have all the children in the range of the camera. Some of the recordings¹², had inadequate lighting and were so dark that it was difficult to determine some of the actions and interaction of the children. There were also some video-tapes¹³, which the discussion was not recorded at all.

¹¹ For example, 4GA S005 and 8GA F001

¹² For example, 8GA F005

¹³ For example, 4GA S039

Another factor which had affected the group dynamics of the tasks was the noise of the surrounding. The acoustic environment was very noisy and this made it hard for the group to interact with each other successfully. For example, the noise factor in 8TC F010 meant that the group members needed more effort to pay attention to what was being said.

Sometimes, other TAs administered tasks within close proximity of the task being viewed. On one occasion¹⁴, the group interaction was affected by this factor. The task, *Line Music*, required the children to explore the sounds of different percussion instruments. While the children were experimenting with the instruments, they were stopped by the TA who was administering another task nearby. The awareness that they were not alone in the room inhibited the children's activities. The children were more reluctant to try out the instruments and they appeared to be very conscious of the other people in the room. When the TA told them to keep the volume down, the communication of the group stopped abruptly and this changed the dynamics of the group.

Apart from problems with the acoustic environment, there were also many other types of disruptions. These ranged from other teachers coming into the room while the task was being performed, to a whole class of pupils being brought into the area.

¹⁴ 8TA F003

Another disruptions include one group member leaving the group while the task was being performed.¹⁵ When the members left the group, the group dynamics changed. For example, in 8TA F031, the leader (B2) left the room for a while and during this time, the leadership was momentarily transferred to G2 before returning to B2 again when he came back to the task.¹⁶

The nature of the task itself affected group dynamics. Some required more group co-operation. For example, activities like *Team Machine* and *Radical Rhymes* generated more group dynamics than activities like *Musical Sticks* and *Beat and Rhythm*. The former placed a greater emphasis on group work while the latter required more individual effort.

Some activities seemed to be more appropriate for year 4 than year 8. For example, activities like *Musical Sticks* and *Beat and Rhythm* were enjoyed by children in year 4 but not that much at year 8. Given such activities, the year 8 children looked enthusiastic and bored.¹⁷ On the other hand, activities like *Team Machine* and *Radical Rhymes* seemed to be enjoyed by children at both levels.

Thus, we can see that group dynamics did play a role in the NEMP for music (1996). Based on the results of this study, certain recommendations will be made in the following chapter.

¹⁵ For example, 8GA F099 and 8TA F031

¹⁶ The seating arrangement of this group is G1 G2 B1 B2

¹⁷ For example, 8GC F007

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

A significant level of group dynamics existed and played a part in determining the results of the NEMP music tasks. However, its importance varied from group to group and also from task to task. The presence of peer influence affected the actions and the musical responses of the group members. In addition, it was found that some tasks were performed better by boys at year 4 while others were performed better by the girls.

The domination of a certain gender in a particular activity also depended on the age of the child and the nature of the activity. Also, it was found that the spatial factors did affect the actions and the musical responses of the group and that most of the activities had leaders. The leader of a group was not always the most musical child but was almost always the most aggressive or charismatic. Some were good musical leaders while others were not.

Other factors which affected the dynamics of a group included the TA's attitude and mannerism. The level of help they gave the children in the performance of their tasks and their degree of adherence to the instructions of the tasks also influenced the results.

Besides the TA's factor, group dynamics were also affected by the noise in the environment, the level of disruptions present during the performing of the task, the nature of the task itself and finally, the appropriateness of each task to the age group.

Therefore, we can now answer the research questions to this study set in Chapter I. The presence of group dynamics did affect the musical results of the test. The children were influenced by their peers and the seating arrangement did have an effect on the workings of the group dynamics.

However, the physical attributes and musical ability of a child ^{was} ~~was~~ not the only criteria to a leadership position. The gender of the group members did not necessarily affect the musical result of that group but certain activities were dominated by a certain gender. Some of the tasks placed a greater emphasis on individual effort and might be better if offered as an individual task.

On a larger scale, group dynamics should be recognised as an important factor in determining the success of any activity and have ~~a~~ greater implications in teaching in a classroom situation. The nurturing of the dynamics of a group can lead to a motivated and interested class.

The results shown in this study reflect the importance of the group dynamics within the NEMP group and team music tasks and this information will prove to be useful in the administering of future NEMP tasks.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results of this study.

Recommendation 1:

That the training of all TAs to be more standardised with a conscious effort to minimise personality differences in the NEMP tasks.

Recommendation 2:

That TAs to be informed of their roles as task administrator^{and} do not include participation in the activities designed for the children.

Recommendation 3:

That the level of TA's involvement be standardised and an appropriate length of time for children to work out the answers for themselves before attempting to help them be determined.

Recommendation 4:

That the children to be allowed to explore the full potential of their musicality and instruments without being stopped.

Recommendation 5:

That not more than one task to be performed in one area. Also, the area should be a quiet area. This is to reduce distractions to the children.

Recommendation 6:

That it is made known to the others in the school to keep out of the areas where the tasks are performed to lessen disruptions.

Recommendation 7:

That the appropriateness of the task for each age group be re-evaluated. Certain tasks may be more appropriate to be offered as an individual task.

Recommendation 8:

That the adequate video-recording of each task is ensured for future study purposes.

Recommendation 9:

To ensure that the selected children turn up to perform the tasks.

Recommendation 10:

That there should be a short break between each activity.

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APPENDIX ONE

Data of NEMP observations on Filemaker Pro 2.1

APPENDIX TWO

E-mail from Associate Professor Terry Crooks

Date sent: Thu, 01 Oct 1998 20:23:13 +1200
From: Terry Crooks <terence.crooks@stonebow.otago.ac.nz>
Subject: NEMP music results
To: SHP18@student.canterbury.ac.nz

Dear Siew Hoon,

Thank you for your message. We are grateful for the work you are doing on our music tasks. Here are my attempts to answer your questions.

1. Groups were used because much of the work that is done in schools and in our society is performed in and by groups. Our national curriculum places emphasis on social skills, which are able to be assessed in groups. Groups also allow less capable students to be supported by more capable students. Finally, there are curriculum goals which can only be achieved and assessed in groups: such things as group music performance, drama, and other goals which require interaction among participants.
2. We chose a group size of 4 for several reasons. Many of our tasks involve some work in pairs followed by some work in the whole group. This works well with 4 member groups. Groups of 3 members often end up with one member left out while the other two work together. Groups larger than four would have been unwieldy and hard to videotape.
3. The tasks for national monitoring are selected on the basis of several criteria (see the details in the Appendix 1 of any of our reports). In particular, we are looking for tasks that are revealing, enjoyable for the children, cover important and enduring skills and knowledge, manageable in quite limited time periods, and collectively represent a good broad picture of achievement in a curriculum area. Some tasks end up being team tasks because they require interaction among children, or are relatively difficult to be handled by only one child, or will reveal more of each child's thinking because of the relatively natural interaction among the group members.

I hope these comments are helpful. If you need more, please note that I will be away from my office tomorrow and will probably not be able to comment further until Monday next week.

Regards,

Terry

Terry Crooks

Terence.Crooks@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
Associate Professor Terry Crooks
Educational Assessment Research Unit
University of Otago
Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand
Fax 64 (3) 479-7550