

# **Empowering Transformative Learning in Adult Education through Music and Theatre**

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*Dedicated to the memory of my mother, a woman of strength and love*

*Mary Ellen Cunningham Grainger*

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**ABSTRACT**

*Softly, deftly music shall caress you*

*Hear it, feel it secretly possess you*

(Phantom of the Opera, Andrew Lloyd Webber 2004)

The power of Transformative learning through Music and Theatre is something I have questioned and wanted to research. By using the medium of music in the classroom, is it possible to teach literacy and numeracy? This thesis explores the possibilities, in action research and the uncovering of cognitive abilities. The ability of music in all can affect the emotions of the students and further transform their learning. There is also discussions and explorations to barriers to education. It also discusses the holistic effect of music in adult education.

**Table of Contents**

Table of Contents.....	9
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
The impact of Music in Lifelong Learning .....	1
The Education and Music Journey .....	2
Who are the Travellers?.....	6
The Task Force on the Travelling People .....	7
Navan Travellers Education Centre.....	7
Music and Emotion .....	8
The Mozart Effect.....	9
Conflict in Learning .....	11
Conclusion.....	14
Chapter 2 Literature Review .....	15
Introduction: .....	15
Understanding Marginalised Ethnicity.....	15
Education that Marginalises .....	16
Freedom and Inclusion in Education.....	18
Education and Partnership.....	19
Using Music to Build Partnership.....	20
Individual Learning.....	21
Participation.....	23
Barriers to Participation the Teacher Experience .....	24
Barriers to Education the Student perspective.....	26
Barriers to Education in a Patriarchal Society.....	28
Conclusion.....	29
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	31
Introduction .....	31
The Power of Music .....	31
Music and Therapeutic Benefits .....	32
Case Study and explanation to approach. ....	34
Literacy, Numeracy and Music.....	36
Music and Literacy .....	37
Music to Learn.....	38
Music and Self Development .....	39
Music, Performance and Self Perception.....	40

Theatre and Self Identification .....	41
Interviews.....	45
Ethics .....	46
Conclusion.....	49
Chapter 4 Research Findings.....	50
Introduction .....	50
Interview Findings.....	50
Findings .....	51
My Ontological Position.....	52
Conclusion.....	53
Chapter 5 Reflection and Summary .....	54
Critical Reflection .....	54
Final Conclusion .....	56
Bibliography .....	61
Appendix A - I Will Always Love You .....	64
Appendix B - If Tomorrow Never Comes .....	66
Appendix C – Initial Masters Presentation.....	70
Appendix D – CD Cover Picture.....	76
Appendix E – CD List of Songs .....	77
Appendix F – Information on Movies Viewed.....	78
Appendix G – Monologue of Gender .....	81

## **Outline of Chapters**

### Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one presents an outline of my thesis. It frames my journey of education and music, through auto ethnography. It also shows various theories on music and the impact on learning. It gives an insight to the students I taught and discusses my experience in teaching.

### Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two gives details of the travelling community, their journey in transformative learning and the research found from various theorists. It also focusses on the barriers to learning and education.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter show the framework of the methodology used in the research. It outlines how the method and methodology progressed during literacy lessons. It also discusses the use of media to highlight the lives of others.

### Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter deliberates the finding from the research carried out with the students.

### Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter discuss critical reflection and outlines the significances of lifelong learning for the Traveller women.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

*“The long and winding road, that leads to your door”*,

(The Beatles, 1970)

### My Journey through Education

The topic of this thesis is to investigate the positive factors that music has played with students in other areas of lifelong learning. I want to explore how music, particularly singing, has an impact on students in other subjects. I have always had a belief that my ability as a self-taught guitarist and a singer has somehow given me the capacity to use these talents and skills to push me forward in further adult learning. The sense of achievement gained from singing, performing and now teaching music, I believe is linked. I have found that there is poor research in the area of understanding how music can be used to develop the cognitive skills of students in areas outside of pure music itself. These areas include the ability to develop reading and writing skills, also the ability of music performance to develop confidence skills. So the question I have asked myself is: can listening to music or learning to play an instrument enhance or improve adults learning skills in other areas of adult learning

Through the medium of auto-ethnography, I have written about the impact of music education and how it has affected my life and how I put this to use in teaching as an adult educator. The emotional impact of music can have a lasting learning in adult education. I am intrigued by the neurological effect of music on people, and I have examined this to explain further how it can be utilised in learning. I will also discuss music enabling cognitive abilities.

One of the main impacts of adult learning for me has been the apprehension in adults, which causes barriers to their ability to in lifelong learning

### The impact of Music in Lifelong Learning

The main research comprised of young women from the Travelling community, an ethnic minority in Ireland; aged between 19 and 24 years of age, at the Navan Travellers Education Centre, (NTEC), Co Meath, between 2010 and 2012. The centre was state funded and managed by County Meath Vocational Education Committee, through the Department of Education. I

will later explain the circumstances, both the classroom and the ethnicity of this particular group of young women. The secondary research involved the rest of the women in the centre and the classes, the group work in the NTEC with each group of women.

There are other studies discussed on private students, both adults and teenagers, taking vocal lessons for various reasons; both private and professional. These adult private students were studying for personal improvement of their voices while the teenagers were studying music for their Leaving Certificate and also for various music institutions. This research was carried out between 2010 and 2012.

This research will also investigate the therapeutic effects of music in education. I have seen the positive response from students, young and old from learning music and how it has had a changing affect in their lives, and in non-music fields.

### The Education and Music Journey

In order to explain how I commenced teaching at the traveller centre, I will begin with my family and my educational background. I am the youngest of a large complex family combination of fourteen children. Both my parents had seven children between them before they met. When they married, they continued to have a further seven children. There are births in every decade from the 1930s, to 1960s

In our family, education was never seen as something to strive towards. My father had left school at an early age, and he taught himself to read and write. He became a printer in a large printing company, and he earned a good salary. We had a comfortable home, despite the number of children. He had a love of reading and was constantly reading into his retirement. If you interrupted my father, you did so at your peril. My mother was a dressmaker and had left school at the age of twelve. She also loved reading. My parents, both hard working people, saw education mainly as a means to finding a job with a decent wage. Most of my siblings left school between the ages of twelve to fourteen and two at sixteen. Despite my parents' objections I fought with them to continue my studies. I was the only one to stay in school until I was eighteen, and the only one to obtain a Leaving Certificate. I managed to get a part-time job during secondary school in a tailors/menswear shop, to earn my "keep" at home. I loved school, and I achieved and excelled in both primary and secondary schools. The only time I was absent from school was due to illness or bereavement, two of my brothers died when they



were teenagers from Cystic Fibrosis, when I was aged eight and nine, and I was hospitalised for a throat illness when I was ten years of age.

Secondary school was at a Dublin Vocational Education School (VEC) school, in a tough working class area of Dublin; I was bullied, physically and psychologically. I was a soft-spoken teenager that did not enjoy sports and spent most of my time playing games with girls of my own age. Despite this, I loved learning and struggled through the intimidation and fear of some of my peers.

Looking back, I realised the benefit of my education. I loved reading, I read every book I could get my hands on, I read all the time. Even though I was from a large family and we were all very close in age, my abiding memory was spending most of my childhood alone on the stairs reading. When I finished secondary school, having obtained my Leaving Certificate, I began working in fulltime employment. I continued my journey in education during my twenties and thirties, while in fulltime employment in finance and administration. I took evening classes in management, accountancy and other subjects. I was constantly trying to improve myself, as education had always a positive impact in my life.

Apart from my journey through education, I can never remember a time in my life when I didn't sing. I've been singing since I joined the boy scouts at the age of seven years. I believe I came out of the womb singing! I sang and people listened. The fact that people listened was something that took me years to understand, and still try to understand now. I just wanted to sing. I never understood why, I enjoyed it, but I could not hear what people heard.

In 1976, at the age of sixteen, I was given a present of a guitar. The only instruments I ever played, up to this time, was a tambourine and a child's xylophone, I once received for Christmas. I found books on guitar playing and began my music education journey. I practiced and practiced for hours every day. If I didn't know a chord, I would look it up or ask a guitarist. I began playing and singing in the church at Sunday mass in the late 1970s. By then, I felt confident enough to play in public. My parents were never involved in my journey to learn music.

My love of education as well as music brought me through some dark times in my childhood and adolescent years. I had suffered sexual abuse at the hands of six men from the age of five. This was never made known to my parents. I hid this secret for many years. I also hid the

secret that I was gay and disclosed this to a sister whom I am close to when I was twenty-five. At this time, I moved to Windsor in England for employment. I did not pursue music or education at all. The time away from Ireland was a journey of self-discovery. When I was 30 years of age, I moved to Lille in France for a year with an IT company doing finance. I learned to speak French fluently, and established myself in a little café/bar every Friday night performing, mainly singing in English.

Later in life, during my teaching, I could see the huge encouragement by parents with some of the students, I was heartened by this, but also saddened that I was never given any help or motivation by my parents, I eventually realised that the desire to learn the guitar was fundamentally, to accompany myself singing. From this beginning, I went on to perform in pubs and other music venues as a soloist and with groups, not only in Ireland, but around the world. Over the years the ability to sing and play has offered me many opportunities to perform and to travel to many countries and meet many people.

When I was in my forties, I became frustrated and unfulfilled with my full-time employment. Even though I was performing and singing in the evenings at various venues, I felt trapped and I needed to do something more with my life. At this stage of my professional career I had been made redundant five times. I felt there was a message in the ether or from the universe to do something else with my life, so in 2004, I applied, auditioned and was accepted to the full-time four year honours degree course at Dundalk Institute of Technology, where I graduated in 2009 with a Honours Degree in music. I gave notice in work and began preparing for my new adventure, back to education. Financially, I had everything prepared and I knew I would have very little difficulty in finding part-time work and earn money doing performances.

While in college, I was given the opportunity to improve my singing ability, learning proper techniques, breathing and performance. I learnt to sing in all categories of music; from opera to contemporary to Irish traditional songs. During this time, I also learned to play the basics of keyboard and piano. I believed it was important to have the ability to be able to play for singing lessons, in vocal warm-ups and when students had problems with certain notes in songs. This meant I could read the music score and play the piece for them to hear it. During my studies in college I commenced teaching, apart from using the piano as I have stated, the students used mainly backing tracks for singing. In third and fourth year, I specialised in music education. It was during my third year at college, that I received an opportunity to teach in a private school of music. I taught singing to students of all ages, from seven years of age to

adults. Some of the students were preparing for singing exams with the ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music), and the RIAM, (Royal Irish Academy of Music). This was in all genres of music. Others were preparing for their state secondary school exams, Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate. The rest, mainly the adults, were learning for pleasure. I never thought I would be in a situation to see this happen, and yet here I was, doing my dream job.

I tried my best, to impart to these students my love of music and my intrinsic desire to sing. I was now the educator, I felt so privileged to be in this teaching position. I was once the student who was eager to read and open my mind to education. Now I was the teacher. I slowly began to realise that this new journey as an educator would also be a learning curve for me, but in a different way. This would be a more reflective method that would challenge me in ensuring I was giving the students the best of my knowledge, ability and enthusiasm.

For the people reading this, it appears like it was a dream come true, however, it did have its challenges. There were a few areas that I felt I was stuck, and I struggled with aspects of the course and college lecturers. In my first year, I had to learn to read music, and it required a 70% pass rate. I had never learned to read music before, and all I knew were the letters and diagrams used for guitar chords. I also had to learn a lot about music theory and analysis. This took a lot of patience from my fellow younger college mates to prepare me for the exam. I also sometimes struggled with younger lecturers. Some of them were recently qualified and in their late 20s. I sometimes questioned their decisions, to myself, and felt they favoured certain students over others. There were times when I did restrain myself in speaking out regarding their comments, sometimes it became very personal. One lecturer who was organising an opera spoke to me, out loud, in front of the whole group, “sorry Brian, there are no male gay characters in this opera”. I also experienced bullying from a young student. He appeared to be very homophobic; I immediately put a stop to this. He apologised and then proceeded to make ageist comments towards me. I was unmoved, I had been through this before when I was younger, this was not going to affect my journey of learning.

Once I graduated with my honours degree, I decided to continue my studies further. With a combination of my love of music and fulfilment in learning, I completed a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Adult and Community Education in 2010, at Maynooth University. This is when I got the opportunity to teach the traveller women at the Navan Traveller Education Centre in Navan as an adult educator.

I have always had a belief that my ability as a self-taught guitarist and a singer from a very young age has somehow given me an ability to delve into these talents and abilities to push me forward in further adult learning. The sense of achievement gained from singing, performing and teaching music, I believe is definitely linked. So the question I have asked myself is: can listening to music, singing a song or learning to play an instrument enhance or improve adults learning skills in general?

Who are the Travellers?

A Traveller is defined as “The community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.”, (The Equality Authority, 2006, p. 35). Travellers are acknowledged in many reports as one of the most marginalised groups in Irish society. This is emphasised, for example, in the Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, ( Task Force on the Travelling Community, 1995). Many Travellers fare poorly on every indicator used to measure the disadvantaged, including **educational achievement**, health status, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, life expectancy, infant mortality, gender equality, political representation, accommodation, and living conditions.

The recognition of Traveller ethnicity is central to any equality of status or standing for the Traveller community and also provides the basis for new relationships of respect, care and solidarity between the Traveller and settled communities, (The Equality Authority, 2006, p. 9).

The Traveller community in Ireland is an ethnic minority group. Their status was only officially recognised by the Irish government in a statement by the then Taoiseach, (Prime Minister), Enda Kenny, in March 2017. Their culture and customs are very strong within their community. The role of the women in this community has largely been a domestic one as they are homemakers and mothers. The women are usually married at 17 years of age, sometimes through arranged marriages, and it is more than likely with a young man from their culture. It is very rare for a traveller woman to marry outside of her ethnic group. The young women are not permitted to socialise outside their community; they do not go to nightclubs or bars, and only socialise at family events. Their interaction with the “settled” community is minimal on a social scale. Once they are married, they become the “homemaker” and mother to the many children that they will bear.

### The Task Force on the Travelling People

The Task Force on the Travelling People was established in 1993. Its Terms of Reference require it: “To advise and report on the needs of travellers and to make recommendations, for consideration by relevant Ministers, to ensure that appropriate and co-ordinated planning is undertaken at national and local level in the Traveller Ethnicity of Housing, Health, Education, Equality, Employment, Cultural and Antidiscrimination areas. To explore the possibilities for developing mechanisms to enable travellers to participate and contribute to decisions affecting their lifestyle and environment; ( Task Force on the Travelling Community, 1995, p. 10). In order to meet its terms of reference the Report:

“examines and makes recommendations in relation to principal areas, as follows: – accommodation, health, **education and training**, and economic development, including the co-ordination of policy approaches by the relevant statutory agencies; – relationships between Travellers and ‘Settled’ people; – the experience of Travellers with a particular focus on culture and discrimination, (The Equality Authority, 2006, pp. 25-26).

### Navan Travellers Education Centre

The Navan Travellers Education Centre, (NTEC), was a centre for traveller women learners only. The centre had female educators and I was the only male educator; a settled man teaching in a woman only environment. The traveller women came from a culture of traditional values. In these values there is a defined role in gender. They see the men as the patriarch of the family. I was neither traveller nor female, so I did feel at a disadvantage and could sense their reluctance to engage with me. I was the minority among a social minority. There were barriers and I did not know if they were based on ethnicity, personality or gender or a combination of all three.

“The criticism of gender does not come from one person examining both sides, but from one body of academics examining one side and another, the other. Feminism in its various forms has been a key social and intellectual driver for imagining a better future for women but also to a lesser extent for men”, (Magrath, 2019, p. 277).

I was mindful of this unconventional situation and I needed to find out the ‘do’s and don’ts’ from fellow teachers. It was important not to ‘overstep the mark’, or create unforeseen barriers, despite what was already in place. Sometimes the information received from colleagues can be more important than facts and figures in books. During the research, I questioned why we wanted to educate the travelling community women to a middle-class level of thinking. Why was it so important to bring education to this particular community. I will discuss this further in the thesis.

### Music and Emotion

Philip Ball author of “The Music Instinct, How music works and why we can’t do without it” discusses in the chapter on “music being in the mind” how music can stimulate the brain in ways to assist with other cognitive tasks. He states

“Up until 1993 it was a fairy tale. But, since the introduction of the MRI, (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), neuroscientists can see how the brain functions when it processes music and can investigate whether there is an overlap with other mental functions. Music has an overall effect on the whole brain, he describes it as a gymnasium for the mind”. (Ball, 2010, p. 241).

This has always been the question in my mind and Ball asks it too when he says,

“why are we moved by music? There is something uniquely intangible about the way music works its chemistry. In art, paintings depict feelings, whether in faces, gestures or circumstances. Literature stimulates emotion through narrative, and allusion. But music is invisible and transient: it sighs and roars for a moment, and then it is gone”, (Ball, 2010, p. 256).

Music seems to have an everlasting affect but yet this appears to be a contradiction. The concept of music being experienced as it is played performed or listened to can evoke emotions while it is happening.

“Even though the music is gone”, as Ball states, “the effect can last for much longer”. (Ball, 2010, p. 256).

## The Mozart Effect

A study by neurobiologist Frances Rauscher and her co-workers, Shaw and Ky, at the University of California in their report in 1993 showed that college students showed slightly better results in spatial-reasoning tests after listening to a Mozart sonata for ten minutes, (Sonata for Two Pianos, K488), than either listening to a “relaxation tape” or sitting in silence. The tests involved analysing patterns and figuring out how a piece of paper folded will look when one corner is snipped off and then opened up. Ball argues that

“this was a limited measure of intelligence, but nonetheless the students increased their IQ by eight or nine points” (Ball, 2010, p. 250).

“Musical understanding is inseparable from the experiences of music”, (Scruton, 1997, p. 217). This is a strong statement by Roger Scruton, a professor in Aesthetics. He continues in asking, “but which experience, and how is it obtained? “People hear music, they also overhear it in crowded restaurants or supermarkets, they sing it, they play it, and listen to it”, (Scruton, 1997, p. 217).

I have asked my students about when and where they hear music: in what locations, circumstances and occasions; happy or sad. Initially there was a pause as they think about this. They usually answer at a birthday party, when everyone sings “happy birthday”. I mentioned christenings, weddings and Christmas time. The reaction has been surprising. They gave me a look of ‘sure that’s obvious!’ To think that I would assume that there was no music at these celebrations. Listening to music for these students is an everyday event, but to suggest that there is music at religious ceremonies was looked upon as a natural occurrence and not the opposite. I always listen to music when I am studying or reading books, however, most of the students see music as an occasion of celebration.

“In the 1960s there was inconclusive experiments performed on what researchers referred to as ‘the White Christmas effect’. This was when the version by Bing Crosby was universally known, some of the people involved in the experiment could ‘hear’ it when the volume was turned down to near zero. This was an insight into auditory association. Music can activate the auditory cortex” (Oliver Sacks, 2008, pp. 34-36)

Music is used in areas of mediation and therapy. This is widely accepted in society, but it is taken for granted that this occurs. Scruton states that

“Music begins when people listen to the sounds that they are making and discover tones. Scruton discusses listening as having two forms; “listening for the sake of information and listening for its own sake. As rational beings we have a capacity that no other animals have, which is to listen for the sake of listening. We take “time off” from our ordinary pursuits and listen to the sounds by which we are surrounded”, (Scruton, 1997, p. 218).

Schellenberg, a Canadian composer has researched into ‘Music and Cognitive Abilities’. He concluded that

“listening to music and music lessons can lead to short-term and long-term cognitive benefits” (Schellenberger, 2004).

Music is an area that improves abstract reasoning and acquiring musical knowledge is similar to gaining a second language. As I have stated, during my first year in college, I had to learn to read music. It is similar to another language except it is more about understanding symbols and their meaning. I had learnt to speak French, so I knew I had an aptitude for languages. This ability, I am convinced came from my love and knowledge of music. This was the beginning of my understanding of the advantages of using music to teach literacy and numeracy. A singer who learns a new or unfamiliar song, will listen to the piece, read through the lyrics, and will also count out the rhythmic beats. This is the crux of literacy and numeracy.

Continuing on from the learning of languages, the following article is an extract from a study by Anruddh Patel in the Department of Theoretical Neurobiology in San Diego, California, USA. He suggests that musical training can benefit the neural encoding of speech. He proposes the “OPERA” hypothesis;

“1 **Overlap**: an anatomical overlap in the brain networks that process an acoustic feature used both in music and speech.

2 **Precision**: music places higher demands than speech, in terms of the precision of processing.

3 **Emotion**: the musical activities that engage this network bring out strong positive emotion.



4 Repetition: the musical activities that engage this network are frequently repeated.

5 Attention: the musical activities are linked with focused attention.

Speech shares the same networks with music so the “OPERA” hypothesis is used to account for the observed greater subcortical encoding of speech in musically trained individuals, and to suggest means by which musical training might improve linguistic reading abilities” (Patel Aniruddh, 2011)

This article was noticeable as the synonym had a musical ring to it. The use of the “OPERA” term is giving this theory a stronger case. This study supports the argument that music improves skills in other areas. I taught singing to adults in their early twenties. Their level of education was between level one to three on the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), on a scale of one to ten, (ten being the highest). Literacy can be a challenge and is included as part of their education schedule. Through learning music, I had noticed an improvement in their reading ability. This is due to their approach to learning new songs to sing as a group. Not only that, but I had discovered that they are more interested in learning new songs and are eager to learn on a regular basis. This music ability had shown a marked improvement in their reading skills.

There is a question about people who are tone deaf, known as Amusia. This is defined as ‘the inability to produce or comprehend music or musical sounds’. ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)) How can students who are tone deaf can still hear the music? How can music help them improve their reading skills? They can still hear the music, understand the lyrics and grasp the rhythm. It is the pitch of a song that they cannot discern. For the purpose of learning, they are hearing the words, and this is the purpose of using music in the literacy class.

### Conflict in Learning

As well as teaching music, literacy and numeracy, in 2010-2012, I was involved in a European funded teaching project to upskill adults who were unemployed for a long period of time due to the economic downturn. According to the Central Statistics Office, (CSO), the unemployment rate for the country during this period was respectively, 13.8%, 14.6%, and 14.7%. The project was to offer people in the locality classes in English, Mathematics and Computer skills. Due to my financial qualifications, I was involved in teaching mathematics

in education centres across the County Meath area. The VEC had set up classrooms in towns in the county for groups of twelve to fifteen students at each centre. The idea was to assess each student and teach mathematics from basic level to FETAC level three, which is equivalent to third year in secondary school.

During these classes, I met with students who were at varying levels of education; some were at the basic numeracy level, while most were at an average level. There were students who were advanced and possessed a great aptitude for mathematics. Due to their unemployment status, some of the students were disagreeable. I did experience some hostility and anger towards me in the classroom. Hearing statements such as, “When will I ever have to multiply and divide fractions?” This was from a man in his thirties who had been made redundant from the construction industry. He was under a lot of financial pressure, in mortgage arrears and was afraid of losing his home.

As I state, I grew up in a house with nine brothers, a loving caring busy mother and a domineering angry father. A ‘manly’ home! Sports mainly horseracing and wrestling were on the television most Saturdays. Anderson and Magrath wrote about this gender type presumption. Although it is in an American context of sport, it still applies;

“Anger tends to be socially considered to be a masculine emotion (along with confidence and stoicism), while tenderness.(along with sadness, uncertainty, and agreeableness) are social considered to be feminine emotions. Socially speaking, people recognise that either men or women can access and demonstrate these emotions, but society maintains that men generally experience the first set of emotions and women the second. All sorts of sports, games and social activities are labelled as masculine or feminine: football, basketball, and baseball sports for men while certain forms of dancing and netball are viewed as women’s sports”, (Magrath, 2019, p. 258).

I was a child in the 60s and I was anything but a male gender stereotype. I wanted to play with dolls, play skipping and have an imaginary tea party.

“It is different directions for different brains,” Rippon writes. “It is about trying to understand the gender stereotype from a different approach”. (Rippon, 2018, p. 434)

She further states that

“if we could follow the brain journey of babies, that from birth all signposts of social and cultural norms, to toys, clothes or books, as some examples can be signposted in different directions for different brains.”, (Rippon, 2018, p. 434).

Rippon’s theory is idealistic in its concept; however, we learn more and more about the activity of the brain.

The following analysis by Merriam and Caffarella who quote Levy (1983), about some of the factors we know about hemispheric specialisation of the brain. These are

1. “Right hemisphere processes add emotional and humorous overtones important for the understanding the full meaning of oral and written communications.
2. The two hemispheres differ in their perceptual roles, but both sides are involved in the creation and appreciation of art and music
3. Both hemispheres are involved in thinking, logic, and reasoning.
4. The right hemisphere seems to play a special role in emotion. If students are emotionally engaged, both sides of the brain will participate in the equational process regardless of subject matter,” (Merriam, 1991, p. 168).

The above findings are about the activity of the brain irrespective of gender. People have determined the feminine-masculine characteristics of individuals, in an ever-changing society. Where once it was ok to call a young effeminate boy a “sissy”, or the opposite in a young girl a “tomboy”. In a current society, this is not acceptable. In the late 1960s, when I was a young boy of seven years, I was referred to as a “sissy”. I liked to play ‘girls’ games rather than ‘boys’ games, according to the society of the time. So the young boy of six years of age might be inclined to play with a skipping rope or a doll, and the young girl of five years of age might want to kick a football. That was certainly the situation in my young life.

I noticed when teaching music in the private school of music, I was teaching more girls than boys, however the ratio was four girls to one boy. If a young boy is talented and driven, he will find a way to cultivate this, I know, I did it myself.

Magrath looks at gender in another light when he says that:

“Masculinity is never stationary. The opinions, expectations and behaviour of people, depend on the norms and structures of the society in which people live. Masculinities are subject to change”. (Magrath, 2019, p. 514)

In this age of the twenty first century, the idea of blue for boys and pink for girls may be a statement of the past. I have heard comments from parents that they will raise their new-born child as “gender neutral”. Meaning that they will not gravitate towards the predictable stereotypical gender type. I look at my younger nieces and nephews who are free to choose what toys to play with. There are no hard and fast rules about the football for boys and the teasetts for girls. There are parents who are more attuned to their children to the extent that they do not want their son in an all-boys secondary school. They chose to send him to a mixed school instead.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my journey through music. The impact of music on lifelong learning teaching at the NTEC and a description of the travelling community. I have outlined my experience of education and the effects of music in my life. I have shown how music can impact on cognitive skills. How we as educators, from our training and life experiences, can learn to see these signs.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

*“I’m a freeborn man of the travelling people”*

Luke Kelly, *The Dubliners*

### Introduction:

This literature review is an insight into marginalised minorities. The approach to education for ethnic minorities in Ireland and how music in education can build partnerships. This has been carried out through individual learning, participation and also the barriers that the student and the teacher experience in the classroom. There is also a discussion on gender and its effects in the teaching arena.

### Understanding Marginalised Ethnicity

Researching and reading Paulo Freire, I could identify with his theories when teaching at the NTEC. The Traveller women are from a marginalised ethnic minority- (the oppressed). They rely on the settled community (the oppressors) for their education. This is very much like the work Friere carried out with deprived groups in Brazil. He states;

“The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the worlds as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them the less, they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world”, (Freire, 2017, p. 46).

He goes on to state that

“The oppressed receive the euphemistic title of “welfare recipients” (Freire, 2017, p. 47)

(The women at the centre were being paid an education allowance to attend classes).

“They are treated as individual cases, as marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a ‘good, organised, and just society’. The minority, The oppressed are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society, which must therefore adjust these

‘incompetent and lazy’ folk to its own patterns by changing their mentality. These marginals need to be ‘integrated’, ‘incorporated’ into the healthy society that they have ‘forsaken’”, (Freire, 2017, p. 47).

When I commenced teaching the Traveller women, I did have an element of prejudgment and ill-informed views that clouded my opinion of the group. When it was explained to me that the students were being paid an allowance, or a wage, as they called it, I definitely had preconceived assumptions.

### Education that Marginalises

In my research, I decided to introduce the work of the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal. He is the founder of the “Theatre of the Oppressed”. In 1973, Boal with the Government of Peru began a national literacy campaign, with the objective of eliminating illiteracy within a four-year period.

“At the time, it was estimated that three to four million people were illiterate in a population of fourteen million. To further complicate the situation there are at least 41 dialects and further investigation discovered at least 45 different languages”, (Boal, 2018, p. 120).

Boal’s idea was to use his knowledge and experience in theatre to consider

“theatre as a language”, (Boal, 2018, p. 126).

He deliberates on the aspects of and the transformation of the spectator to actor, from ‘witness’ to ‘protagonist’ and this transformation happens in four stages

“First stage: Knowing the body;

Second stage: Making the body expressive

Third stage: The theatre as language

Fourth stage: Forum theatre”. (Boal, 2018, pp. 126-127)

For the purposes of the media classes, I concentrated on these points or stages “Knowing the body” and “Forum theatre”, I did not utilise these points directly, but from various points within this paradigm. Boal states that;

“the initial contact with a group of “peasants, workers, or villagers” to be confronted with the idea of doing a theatrical performance can be difficult. He believes that their conception can be distorted by the media of television, and theatre can be seen as playful or leisurely” (Boal, 2018, pp. 126-127).

I realised that this would be the same situation within the centre, and I was convinced that they would not be comfortable doing any kind of theatrical performance. Although Boal makes suggestions of exercises to introduce groups to the process, I knew that this would not be the best approach. The lives of the women in the home can be tough and oppressive. From listening to them initially, I believed that the theatre and play-acting would be indeed frivolous. I felt I needed to take a different approach to my concept of this type of thinking.

“In Forum theatre, there are three parts;

- 1 Simultaneous dramaturgy,
- 2 Image theatre,
- 3 Forum theatre,

(the spectators intervene directly in the dramatic action and act)” (Boal, 2018, p. 126).

I was loosely using this concept in a different format; as much as I was not asking the group to intervene or act; they would not have been comfortable, I arrived at the following idea. Every second Thursday, I held a class that involved all of the women in the centre. The purpose of this class was left to me to decide what this would entail. I decided to call it a ‘Media Movie Morning’ class. The concept was to show the women certain movies that looked at other peoples’ marginalised lives. In turn, I hoped they would identify with either the story or the characters in these movies. I was apprehensive at the beginning, as I wasn’t sure if the format of this class would make an impact on the students. The plan involved a discussion among the group after the movie was shown. The action research on this concept is discussed in chapter three.

The theorist Friere discusses the ‘banking approach’,

“where education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorise, and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store” (Freire, 2017, p. 45).

Initially I thought that this would be my teaching style with the group.

Freire also writes that;

“The students are filed away through lack of creativity, transformation and it’s a misguided system for knowledge; a characteristic of the ideology of oppression” (Freire, 2017, p. 45).

Despite my initial opinion, this would go against everything that I believed in as an educator. In my mind, this was what I was thinking but there was a conflict within me, knowing that the banking system would not work. Thankfully, once I met the group in their own classrooms, I knew that the more open system as stated here would be the best way to commence the teaching process. After a short period of teaching at the centre, I realised that I needed to take a very open-minded approach to teaching the women. I saw this method as being an equal’s opportunity class in learning and teaching. The challenge was not to ask the students, it was to be open to what they would ask to learn. Taking from Friere,

“when is the interests of the oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them” (Freire, 2017, p. 47)

### Freedom and Inclusion in Education

I had learnt that that every student had the ability to make their own decisions regarding their learning. The learning process, however, was mainly my responsibility. Using Merriam’s approach, quoting Tough (1967, 1979);

“who assumed that adults have a wide range of abilities for planning and guiding their own learning activities” (Merriam, 1991, p. 45).



Merriam lists three types of assistance in learning;

- “1 Assisting learners with individual projects as content or learning process experts
- 2 Incorporating ways for learners to be more self-directed as part of the formal instructional process
- 3 Fostering formal institutional and governmental policies that recognise the value of this form of learning and encourage practices that could better assist people to learn on their own” (Merriam, 1991, p. 53).

I fully supported the first two types of assistance with regard to the students. I absolutely supported the idea of self-directed learning for adults and have always been a promoter of this type of approach. During music classes, there was discussions with the students to understand their preferences for the type of music they wanted to listen to, and what type of songs the singing group wanted to perform. I did have a preconceived idea that they would sing songs from their own ethnic background; songs of the nomadic travelling community, that may have been passed on. This tradition did not exist among the women.

“Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the teacher cease to exist, and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach”, (Freire, 2017, p. 53).

### Education and Partnership

At a conference on ‘Transformative Learning in “Fostering Parallels of Relationship towards transformative learning’, one of the presenters, Devika Dibya Choudhuri, organises a set of classroom exercises that serve as an exercise to engage in the process of relationship, that progressively deepen trust, and risk taking. It addressed the conflict in relationships. Icebreakers are used, as discussed. Once the students get more acquainted with each other, the dialogue and the relationship are important components in the triggering of transformational learning. The emphasis is placed on the teacher, or educator to value and participate with the relationship building. However, Choudhuri states that “Delpit (1996), has noted that

“facilitative approach can have coded communications that are only accessible to those who share in the same cultural capital but can confuse students who are not”. (Choudhuri, 2007, p. 92)

Sometimes, there is a divide between facilitating and instructing. Facilitating is regarded as less authoritarian, while instructing is what Friere refers to as the “banking approach” which he strongly advises against.

“The banking concept does not admit to (such) partnership- and necessarily so. To resolve the teacher-student contradiction, to exchange the role of depositor, prescriber, domesticator, for the role of student among students would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation” (Freire, 2017, p. 48)

During classes, there were situations where students who were not guitar players were not able to be part of decisions about what was the best musical key to sing a song, and what chords were needed to play. This caused frustration within the group, so, in these situations, I needed to intervene and use a directive approach.

“The educated individual is the adapted person, because he or she is better “fit” for the world. Translated into practice, this concept is well suited to the purposes of the oppressors, whose tranquillity rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it”, (Freire, 2017, p. 49).

I realised also, that I need to listen to the group.

“The students no longer docile listeners are non-critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration and re-considers the earlier considerations as the students express their own”, (Freire, 2017, p. 54).

### Using Music to Build Partnership

When I first enquired from the students at the NTEC about the type of music they liked, there was no question that their preference was mainly American country music, especially Dolly Parton, Garth Brookes and Patsy Cline by the older women, and a mixture of country and modern pop female singers, Adele and Christina Perri. It would have been pointless to ignore these preferences. For the literacy classes, the group decided to use songs from artists like

Dolly Parton 'I Will Always Love You' (1974), and Garth Brookes 'If Tomorrow Never comes' (1989),(see appendix A and B for lyrics).

“Learning is cumulative in nature- nothing has meaning or is learned in isolation from prior experience’ quoting Dewey “no one can think about anything without experience and information about it” (Merriam, 1991, p. 173).

## Individual Learning

How adults learn on their own has been a major area of inquiry for researchers interested in self-directed learning.

“Until quite recently, it was assumed that the process of self-directed learning was similar in nature to the formal learning process. Learners were seen as planning and carrying out their self-directed learning activities in a fairly linear pattern: establishing goals and objectives, locating resources, choosing learning strategies, and the like”. (Tough,1979, Knowles, 1975).

Within the last decade, alternative descriptions of the process of self-direction have begun to emerge, which paint a very different picture.

“Adults engaging in self-directed learning do not necessarily follow a definite set of steps or a linear format. Rather many variables , from circumstances and coincidence to motivational issues, determine how people learn on their own” (Spear and Mocker, 1984; Danis and Tremblay,1987; Spear.1988: Berger, 1990).

Merriam quotes Tough (1979 ,pp. 95-96) on the thirteen steps on decision making points about choosing what, where, and how to learn. In these thirteen points of ways to learn, he discusses

“deciding what knowledge and skill to learn.” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 44-45).

This was an easy decision for me with some groups, as they were keen singers and a possessed strong love of music. Another decision that is required as stated by Merriam.

“when to begin, the pace of the learning and estimating the current level of a student’s knowledge, skill or progress in gaining the desired knowledge and skill” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 44-45).

These factors were very relevant for the students. I had prepared lesson plans to teach guitar as well as singing over the specific two-week period. It was a great opportunity to ascertain their skill levels, their knowledge and their openness to learning something completely new.

A further decision from the theory by Tough was

“obtaining the desired resources or equipment’ and ‘saving and obtaining the money necessary for the use of resources” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 44-45)

There were no guitars available at the centre, so we needed to discuss how we could obtain some. The Coordinator and I devised a plan, as the women were being paid an allowance to attend the centre, we decided that the centre would buy the guitars for them, and the money would be deducted from their wages (this was how they referred to their allowance), on a weekly basis until it was paid in full. This was the ideal solution, and they were happy with the decision. Some of the other collaborative decisions included,

“preparing or adapting a room for learning, and ‘taking steps to increase the motivation for certain learning episodes” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 44-45)

We did not have a permanent classroom for lessons, so we improvised and used the staff room for the duration. Concerning the ‘motivation’, this was the easiest part of the learning; they were all very interested in taking a music class.

“A number of variables determine how people learn on their own: the learner’s own motivations, the circumstances in which learner’s find themselves. The learner’s ability to carry out the content to be learned, and coincidence in essence, self-directed learning occurs both by design and by chance- depending on the interests, circumstances in which they find themselves. The learner’s ability to locate appropriate and useful resources had often been cited as a key aspect of learning on one’s own. A question often been raised concerning the role of the educator: Should we change our formal instructional programs to allow adults to take greater control and therefore be more self-directed in the learning process? Should we advocate changes in our present policies and procedures to reflect this context of learning as a key aspect of the adult learning enterprise, or should we leave this context to the individual learner” (Merriam, 1991, p. 55).

## Participation

One of the problems at the NTEC was several students erratic attendance. The singing group had started out with seven attendees, which finally reduced to just the four sisters. Four of the seven students who had taken the guitar lessons showed great promise and seemed to have a natural aptitude to the guitar. In one case, there was a student who frequently attended and progressed with the guitar lessons, however, a decision was made by her husband to move to another location, so as she had no choice in this decision and did not return to the centre. The other student, at 18 years of age was extremely shy, and again showed great promise with guitar lessons. With this particular student, the coordinator and I had concerns about her behaviour within the group due to her shyness. She had isolated herself from the group, remained very quiet during the classes, and in a class of six students, it was very noticeable. We decided that I would offer separate one-on-one guitar lesson as a form of support and help her with her nervousness in the group. Part of this decision was to try and help her overcome her shyness and with the use of music, I tried to communicate with her in a calmer environment. The main purpose of the one-to-one lessons were to establish rapport using music as the point of contact.

“It was also to encourage verbal processing of the issues related to the songs, and to promote emotional expression in response to the musical material”. (McFerran, 2010, p. 89).

The guitar lesson itself was a distraction, the purpose of the lesson was to encourage her to feel comfortable and safe to communicate without any feeling of confrontation.

These lessons took place just before the regular classes, it was hoped to help her personal development in relating to the rest of the group. If they were going to perform as a group, there would need to be a sense of a team, among themselves and I wanted them to bond together as this makes for a better group performance. It seemed to help her, and with the dynamic of the group, particularly with the four sisters, it did have the potential to be a bit of a clique, a closed unit. In reality, the sisters were very open and welcoming towards the other two students. The group did develop, and they were bonding well together. Unfortunately, she just stopped attending, the only explanation was that the family had moved away, and she would have had no choice in that decision.

## Barriers to Participation the Teacher Experience

The research by Levy (1983), quoted by Merriam and Caffarella, on features about hemispheric specialisation of the brain state that the right hemisphere plays a role in emotion.

“Both sides of the brain will participate in the equal process irrespective of subject matter” (Merriam, 1991, p. 168)

However, what if this is not the case. Dirkx studies on “Adult Learning and the Emotional Self” about the “*Meaning and Role of Emotions in Adult Learning*”, gives examples of adult learners and tutors who have experienced conflict and frustration on their learning journey. I couldn’t believe when I read the first few paragraphs; they were almost identical statements and experiences that I had been through in that period.

“The learner was experiencing difficulties and the tutor was feeling frustration and anger. He writes that “these descriptions of incidents within settings of adult learning illustrate the powerful role that emotions can play in the lives of both tutors and learners”. Dirkx states “that emotions are widely recognised as a kind of emotional baggage that impedes effective teaching and learning. One adult learner responded to him when talking about tensions and issues in her dislocated worker retraining group; Yeah, I know we are all struggling. They just need to get it off their chest, so they can concentrate on getting something out of this.” (Dirkx, 2008, pp. 7-9)

He discusses three interrelated issues:

“(i) the nature and meaning of emotion, (ii) the changing understanding of the role of emotion in human experience, and (iii) the integration of emotion in adult learning”. (Dirkx, 2008, pp. 7-9).

“The two hemispheres differ in their perceptual roles, but both sides are involved in the creation and appreciation of art and music” (Merriam, 1991, p. 168)

I do agree with these findings, but there are situations where other factors have impeded the learner. During a music class of a group of singers, I have also felt resistance and sometimes outbursts that ended up with an adult learner refusing to sing. This mainly occurred every time the group were trying to learn a new song and it doesn’t seem to “come together” on the first few attempts. They can become frustrated and in turn this can have a roll-on effect on me as a

tutor. I recalled being very frustrated with the students, but I knew that no matter how I coaxed or encouraged, they refused to co-operate. Upon reflection, I realised that they wanted to emulate the singer and artist, exactly as it sounds on the recording. Here lay the conflict in learning. Their frustration was now clear. They were not getting that perfect sound that they heard in the original song. I explained to them that they it would not sound exactly like the original. This would be their unique version of the song. When they realised this, they made several more attempts and with encouragement on my behalf, they finally agreed to continue rehearsals.

Dirkx writes that

“learning tasks and anticipation of being evaluated often precipitate emotional reactions among learners. They may feel anxious about doing well on a test, fear failure, or perceive themselves as unable to meet expectations. At times, it can be the structure of the learning experience that can cause an emotional reaction; there is not enough direction or in fact there is too much. Some students may feel joy about finally seeing the light about some problem or learning task, while others feel overwhelmed by the multiplicity of their daily life demands. There are times; students may give voice within the learning setting to the strong feelings and emotions being evoked by these various issues. Teachers may be the unwitting targets of such feelings, and they may react angrily at what they perceived as an attack on them by the students” (Dirkx, 2008, p. 10).

I agree with Dirkx on this statement. I have experienced anger from adult learners. Some have confronted me with outbursts and constant interruptions during a maths class. I felt myself growing very angry and had to step out of the class for a short period to calm down.

This entire experience of conflict in the classroom was a huge learning curve for me. I have always been open to learning, no matter what emotional state of mind I have been, learning and openness to learning has always been a part of me. This was an area in teaching that I need to find a way to confront and be in a position to be able to handle in the future. I had to learn to use emotional intelligence to understand where the students were at in their lives. I needed to look at the situation with ether sympathy or empathy. It was important to check myself and realise that this was not a personal attack on me as a person, it was their own frustrations, cares and worries that were bringing them to this point. In an environment of adult education, I

believe it is important to see the signs, offer a listening ear, take the student aside and see what other support that can be given either from myself or the adult centre.

In understanding the interaction between the teacher and the student the role of gender and the biases of gender come into play. This was not apparent to me in mainstream adult education which were mostly mixed sex classes and people from the same social majority group. At the NTEC I had to consider not only the students perception of me as a middle aged man from the social majority of society but what my understanding of gender was and the possible role it played in being a barrier between me and the all-female students.

In research carried out by Gina Rippon in her “The Gendered Brain”, a group of fellow students and I discussed how we would present this study. By brainstorming, we decided to do a presentation in rhyme, story and monologue, with props and visuals. As a group we set about our own individual pieces, but we remained open to each other to read our work for any suggestions or criticisms. From the discussions and readings, I devised a short monologue, see Appendix G, monologue, which is semi-autobiographical, where I acted as a child of six years of age as stated in the story.

The concept was to look at different phases of life and the effect of gender stereotyping had on each of us. This helped me to reflect upon myself. As male and the stereotype of the male through the eyes of the women I was teaching. I was learning how to overcome this gender perception that they had of me. Rippon states that there are rules in the gender game, and her idea is to dispel them. She continues to write that

“the power of gender stereotypes becomes evident because we are mouldable”,  
(Rippon, 2018, p. 434).

### Barriers to Education the Student perspective

When I commenced teaching at the NTEC, I had my own prejudgments and uninformed views of Travellers upbringing. This was due to my education and limited interaction with members of the Traveller community. However, I was enthusiastic at the thought of the teaching because apart from all the prejudices about the travelling community, one thing had always been known about this community; their ability to tell stories, and their musical talent. I was hoping that my love of music and their musical talent would be a connection we could make, and I could, hopefully breakdown any barriers between us. I was open to the adventure, as I saw it however,



I was aware of barriers in education. In light of these circumstances, Merriam quotes Dao, who talks about the nine clusters of reasons for non-participation in 'Barriers to Participation' he states the following.

“Not enough time to participate in educational activities” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

Some of the women who had very young children, had difficulty in returning to the centre. Their husbands would not take an active part in childcare, as this conflicted with their culture.

“Individual and personal problems” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

The women were in a family environment and culture where the man comes first. As they were learning and discovering more about themselves, this led to conflict.

“Too difficult to succeed in educational activities” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

Literacy classes were the main focus in the centre, and this caused difficulty for some of the women. One student was learning how to write her name and address and was progressing very slowly. She arrived at the centre one Monday morning in a distraught state. She was calmed and explained that over the weekend she had moved address, so she had to begin again in learning how to write her new home address.

“Against the social norms to participate in educational activities” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

The concept of education for women in the Traveller community was going against everything in their ethnic culture. Some of the women did everything they could to be at the centre every day

“Negative feelings toward the institution offering instruction” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

The fact that most of the educators were from the settled community, (except for one teacher who was from the Traveller community), in itself was seen as 'the institution' and the Board of Education too.

“Negative experiences with educational activities” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

The music classes were always seen as a positive experience. Even though I wanted to introduce music to all of the literature classes, I felt it was not going to be useful with the classes that were on a one-to-one situation. Music in a group setting worked better, because

there were no individual learners “singled out” in the group. Everyone was free to speak, or not, if that was what they decided.

Merriam states that

“Results of educational activities are not valued” (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87)

The majority of the women at the centre were struggling with the basics of basic literacy and numeracy. They did not see beyond this. Their misplaced value in education was a monetary one. They were paid an allowance to attend the centre, not participation. As this was the circumstances, the last two statements also tie in with the observation.

“Indifference to “educational activities” and “unawareness of educational activities available”, (Merriam, 1991, pp. 86-87).

Although I do see how these barriers are relevant to the women at the centre, the information was gathered from 278 employees from seventeen profit making organisations.

#### Barriers to Education in a Patriarchal Society

There were other reasons that the traveller women were affected by barriers to their education. Their culture is a patriarchal society. No matter what education was offered, the final decision about the women’s lives was still dominated by their husbands or fathers. There were exceptional cases with single women, but even still, their father would have the final decision, or a widow; the main male relative in her family, brother or father, could make decisions about her future. I often wondered if the women could dare to believe that they were ‘allowed’ to be at the centre. It was part-time, mainly mornings, (some of the younger students were full time, all day), so the husbands and fathers were not inconvenienced in anyway. They were finished work (as they referred to the education centre). They could still collect children from school and be home in time to cook a meal for their male relatives, while keeping the house clean and tidy. The students were given an allowance to attend the centre, the expression of “earn to learn” comes to mind, however it was sometimes a case of earn to attend, the motivator was the allowance they received. This was a way to “sell” it to their male relatives, particularly the wives to their husbands.

In one instance, one of the married students (twenty years of age), recently had a baby and wanted to return to the centre. Her husband refused to take care of the new-born, so this was a

barrier for her to return to education. Eventually an arrangement was made with the couple as follows. The husband was happy to take care of the baby in the mornings (9.15 am to 12.30 pm), while his wife returned to the centre. If the baby required a nappy change, he would drive to the centre, she would take the baby and change the nappy and return the baby to the husband. This may appear to be a radical move, but for both mother and father, there was a social and cultural change. That fact that the father agreed to childcare, was against the cultural patriarchal mode of their ethnicity, and that he “allowed” his wife to return to the centre, was also going against their culture.

There is also questionability about the motivation behind this. Are we looking at the “earn to learn” culture or is it about the emancipation of the women in the traveller community? There was a shift in the paradigm. Traveller women were now driving; not only driving but driving their husband’s cars. When the drink-driving laws changed in Ireland, Drinkaware, the governments drink awareness programme advised that it is not acceptable to drink alcohol and drive. Alcohol consumption is a huge part of Traveller society. With these tough laws in place, the men were not taking a chance, so the wives drove them where they want to go and have the use of the car for the duration. This was a newfound freedom for women in their community and a huge social change

The saying that you can’t teach an old dog new tricks still arises in the minds of both educators and adult learners themselves as they set forth on new learning ventures.

Intelligence is defined in a number of ways. From the perspective of the casual observer, intelligence is often equated with “being smart”- that is, being able to act intelligently when dealing with everyday life. But there is also another definition of intelligence that most adults have carried with them since their primary school days-intelligence is a specific measurement of the ‘ability to learn’.

“Although many adults may not actually know their IQ scores, they often have vague recollections of being labelled an ‘average student’, with some perhaps being ‘above average’ and others ‘below’” (Merriam, 1991, p. 140).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined teaching a marginalised ethnic group by using citing various theorists. This shows the importance of education being available to all adult groups in society,

not just the mainstream. I believe that every student brings their own innate skill, knowledge and life experience to the classroom. This enables them to progress in their learning journey. I have used Merriam to show methods of assisting in learning. Furthermore, I have used Freire to explain the teacher-student relations, the student-teacher relations and how it impacts in both teaching and learning for both. I have opened the view about participation and what barriers can prevent the learner. Also with regards to gender, I have discussed implications of breaking conformity statements and dispelling the stereotypes.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

*“ABC, easy as one, two, three. Are simple as do re mi”*

(Jackson 5, 1970)

### Introduction

The details in this chapter detail the methodology and methods used, and the reasoning behind them. The importance of gaining trust, and how I approached each class in introducing myself as their male educator. There is an exploration into understanding music and how it affects our brain. I will mention the therapeutic effects of music, and how it can be a universal language. There are details of the interviews held. There was also an emphasis on listening to the students and seeing the advantage in what they decided to sing and not my suggestions. The progression of how to sing well and how to perform. The purpose and significance of the ethics involved in the research taken with the group. I have outlined the work of the Task Force of the group and the policies taken. This continued to weekly movie mornings that were inspired by the work of Augusto Boal, and how the movies had an impact (or not), on the students.

### The Power of Music

In chapter one I explained how music is a driving force in all aspects of my life. My musical talent and its ability provided a doorway to enable me to further my education at third level. Following on from my music degree in 2009 I had the opportunity to enrol in the postgraduate diploma in Adult and Community Education.

The concept of music towards learning in other areas of education has been a huge benefit in my life; and has helped me to develop several skills in other aspects of my life—relationships, listening skills, presentation skills, confidence in teaching, and being open to people. The power of music has the ability to open doors to many opportunities, especially if it’s a person’s natural talent. Music has given me the opportunity to perform around the world and provided experiences of other cultures and a love of travel.

I believe that music can transform other areas of learning when people acknowledge their achievements in music and in the ease at which they have learned it. There have been studies

that show how learning through music has worked with primary and secondary students. There is significantly less research completed in adult learning.

### Music and Therapeutic Benefits

Although I am not researching music therapy here, I do have an interest in the therapeutic effects of music with people. I understand the powerful emotion that music can instil, and I have experienced this in my own life. There are certain pieces of music that I listen to when I am happy, when I want to dance, when I want to cry, and even when I want to remember a relative or friend. In 2008, this interest took me to a music therapy weekend workshop which was facilitated by Dr Julie Sutton Head Music Therapist, Nordoff Robbins, Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

We spent the entire weekend on different features of music therapy; mental illness, hospice care, creative groups and working with young children. Music in a therapeutic capacity needs to be focused specifically in its own discipline. However, I did learn so much from this weekend that I believe would equip me in the classroom in dealing with students in an emotional capacity. Music therapy is a specific science with anticipated results. Therapeutic effects of music make you feel different kinds of emotion, when listening or playing. The benefit of the music is the therapeutic effect rather than the specific discipline of music therapy

Music is an everyday occurrence in peoples' lives; it is heard from morning till night, from the breakfast radio shows, the car stereo, in the supermarket, the doctor's/dentist's waiting rooms, advertisements and on TV and radio; (commercial jingles). No matter what language a song is sung, people will still hear music; it transcends boundaries and is universal.

According to Dr David Ludden, an American psychologist; "music is a universal language. As a musician I believe it, because with music you can communicate across cultural and linguistic boundaries in ways you can't with ordinary languages like English or French. You don't have to speak French to enjoy a piece of music by a French composer like Debussy". One of his most beautiful compositions is "Two romances for voice and piano", (Piano and Soprano). "The use of body language: postures and gestures that people use to convey emotions", (Ludden, 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/about-us/our-history/>.

Having the skills to teach music and singing, gave me a doorway into the lives of the women at the traveller centre. To these students, music is a passion and very much part of their lives.

The main concern I had with the students was the choice of music to use in the classroom. Playing a classical piece of music would have been pointless, as they do not listen to this genre. On the other hand, there are some pieces of classical music used in movies. Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings is played in the movie Platoon"(1986). Tchaikovsky's ballet "Swan Lake" was the inspiration for the movie "Black Swan (2010), and his music was played throughout the movie. Even though they would have heard the music while watching a film it was perceived as creating the atmosphere of the scenes in each movie. During my final year of my music degree, I did a micro teaching class in a primary school. I decided to use various pieces of well-known classical music pieces, by Mozart, Beethoven and others. The concept was to let the pupils hear the music and ask them to say what it reminded them of in their life, and to draw a picture, while listening to the music. I played the Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy", from "Swan Lake". The pupils immediately identified it from the movie "ELF"(2003). It seemed that every other piece of music I played for them was from a children's movie. I suddenly realised that I was the one that was learning.

"Studies show that people are good at detecting the emotions conveyed in unfamiliar music idioms: the basic emotions of happiness and sadness. Special features of melody contribute to the expression of emotion in music. Higher pitch, more fluctuations in pitch, rhythm and faster tempo convey happiness, while the opposite conveys sadness." (Ludden, 2015).

**"If you can't sing well, sing loud !"**

The above statement was said to me by a teacher many years ago. I have been asked by people about their singing voice and should they join a choir. I believe that everyone should be given the opportunity. When I was involved in voluntary music groups in the Catholic church, there was two processes that took place. Initially, people had to audition to join. If they were up to an acceptable standard they were allowed to join. Gradually, this process was stopped. I never agreed with the auditioning procedure, I felt it was unfair. It wasn't only about the singing; it was also about the participation. There were some quiet singers, who would play a tambourine, or work the sound system or could play an instrument. Some members were responsible for choosing the hymns for mass. It meant that everyone could take part, singer and non-singer.

There is plenty of research on participation in choirs and local musical societies in an informal situation that show how positive, motivational and inspirational this effects people's lives. There are positive effects to be gained from music and from which adults could benefit to develop transformative learning skills. Nick Stewart is a psychologist in Bath University who carried out research on the benefits of choir singing.

“Members of the choir saw their heart rates beat in unison. Some members felt the mental health benefits of singing in a group” (Stewart, 2016).

In my music degree course, for four semesters we had modules in choir conducting. In the third semester we had to find a choir to practise with. I had the opportunity to conduct an all-female choir in North Dublin call the “Can Beltos”. This was a group of women aged between thirty to fifty, who sang for fun, because they liked to sing. The musical director allowed me to conduct the choir in rehearsals. The women spoke about the fun, camaraderie and the “family” feeling while being a part of the group. I was privileged to conduct the choir at a public concert, and at a singing competition. They are still going strong, have entered many further competitions and have won a number of trophies. In college, each student conducted the rest of the class, and it was beneficial, however, when I got the opportunity to work with the Can Beltos, I learnt first-hand the positive benefits of being part of a choir. As their interim conductor, I also learnt the responsible task I had to bring out the best sound in a unified way. It was a great to work with a real live choir. I came away from that experience feeling very positive. This came from their enthusiasm, dedication and work ethic.

Case Study and explanation to approach.

The group involved in the research comprises of young women from the NTEC. They were aged between 19 years and 24 years. The main core of the group was four sisters, all of whom are very gifted singers. Two of them learned to play guitar, through lessons we had in June 2011. (They managed to master the guitar in a matter of two weeks; which was quite remarkable). There were other members in the group, but their attendance was erratic.

“The aim of the research is not to uncover a single authoritative truth but to record and reflect on the experiences of participants i.e. ‘a specific version of reality rather than one that can be regarded as definitive” (Bryman, 2008, p. 19).



The four sisters were (A,K,L,M) I will use initials to retain their anonymity. The youngest was “K”. she still lived at home with their parents. She was 19 years old. She was the joker of the pack. She was shy in the beginning. It took a few weeks for her eventually to feel comfortable to sing with some confidence in the classroom. She had a quiet singing voice. She was happy to sing as part of the group or in a duet, but never offered to sing solo. During the two week summer classes, she learnt to play the guitar and mastered it very well.

The next sister, “A” was in her early twenties and had a young child. Her whole focus was about her daughter. She was the outgoing sister who had strong opinions and could persuade the other sisters to her way of thinking. When it came to singing, again, like “A”, she was shy at the beginning. Her voice was surprisingly strong, and she gained confidence over time which meant, I needed to concentrate on dynamics, (softly, loudly).

The third sister was “L”. she had a very subtle low husky voice. She was the softest of the sisters and was always the most helpful. She also learnt the guitar remarkably quickly and became a strong confident musician who played almost all of the songs. The huskiness, which almost like a hoarseness, gave her a very unique sound. She was happy to sing solo, and she had a quiet confidence. She was one of the easiest to teach, in that her ability to learn techniques came easy to her.

Finally, the oldest sister, “M”. She had three school going children. Her husband was in prison, so she managed with assistance from her family. Academically, she achieved the most of all of the sisters. She was obtaining FETAC qualifications in other classes. She had a distinctive clear sound to her voice. It had a richness to it. Although she did have confidence in her ability to sing as she was outshined by the others. She was happy to stay in the background. My main objective with her was to bring her to a more leading position. The song she chose was “Songbird” by Fleetwood Mac. The result was amazing. She sang it so beautifully that I was moved to tears. She had no idea what had just happened. I worked with her on this song, and she just got better and better.

For these four sisters in the singing classes, and for the recording studio, the decision about what songs to sing were decided in collaboration with the students themselves. They chose songs by: Fleetwood Mac; (Songbird), Jason Mraz, (I’m Yours), Bette Midler; (The Rose), Adele; (Someone Like You), and some original compositions.

## Literacy, Numeracy and Music

I was asked to teach literacy and numeracy, as well as introducing music into the classroom. At the NTEC, the women's age ranged from 18 years to 50 years. I wanted to get an understanding of each of the groups and also, their level of literacy and numeracy, I was also trying to find out who was interested in music, I planned on doing some 'icebreaker games'. Although the students knew each other, I wanted them to get to know each other better and it was also for my benefit to familiarise myself with each of the classes. There were various types of games, ranging from remembering names, passing a book to one another to remember many people's names, to small groups composing a poem or a song to reflect the reality of the group. One of the exercises that I enjoyed did involve the "Stand Up" game. "Stand up if you live more than five miles from the centre". The people who stood up would then have an affiliation with other people who stood up. This was about gaining trust with each other and with me as an adult educator. They were a closed group, and as an ethnic minority, I realised it would take time for the women to be comfortable in the classroom with me as their adult educator. There was another reason; I was not from the Travelling community and I was male. I decided to use Icebreaker games to help with the commencement the classes. In most cases, these games are used in a group for them to get to know each other. As I state, the women knew each other relatively well, so it was more for my benefit, to get to know the women better. We put the group in teams of two. They spend five minutes telling each other five things about themselves. Then they re-join the group and tell the whole group about each other's information. They begin with the opening line, this is Mary, Mary is from; Mary likes.....

The Question Web: The students stand in a circle, take a ball of yarn (wool), and hold on to the end of the string while throwing the ball to another student. Ask this student a question such as "If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?" Once they have all answered the question, have them toss the ball of yarn to another student and ask them a question. When all of your students have taken a turn, explain that the web they created with the yarn represents the uniqueness of their classroom, and that their participation makes the classroom special for learning, (Media, 2019).

The theorist Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences, writes with regards to musical intelligence that

“certain parts of the brain play important roles in the perception and production of music, located in the right hemisphere” (Gardner, 1993, p. 9).

### Music and Literacy

Merriam and Caffarella quote Levy (1983), on the factors we know about hemispheric specialisation of the brain.

- “In most right handers, speech is almost entirely confined to the left hemisphere.
- Right hemisphere processes add emotional and humorous overtones important for the understanding the full meaning of oral and written communications.
- The two hemispheres differ in their perceptual roles, but both sides are involved in the creation and appreciation of art and music
- Both hemispheres are involved in thinking, logic, and reasoning.
- The right hemisphere seems to play a special role in emotion. If students are emotionally engaged, both sides of the brain will participate in the equational process regardless of subject matter” (Merriam, 1991, p. 168).

Music is the bridge of the brain’s hemisphere. With this theory in mind, I was hoping that I would tap into the intelligence and the emotions of the group.

To this end I opened the group up to discussion on music and what types of music. As I have stated, once we established trust, the groups were open to the type of lessons I had in mind. We had many discussions about different types of music, and I had a preconceived view that the women would be interested in Irish ballad music or even the music of their own traveller culture. From the discussions, I discovered that they were big fans of American country music: artists like Dolly Parton, Billy Joe Spears and Garth Brooks. My idea was to incorporate music and song into the literacy classes. I devised a lesson plan which included all of this. I felt it was important to understand the type of music that they like. Introducing classical music or even Irish traditional music would have been pointless.

## Music to Learn

The lesson plan comprised of the following: (see Appendix A). I decided to choose a famous song by Dolly Parton, 'I will always love you'(1973). I played the song and most of the group sang along, and they were pleased with the choice. I then subtly gave each of them an A4 page with the printed lyrics. I continued playing the song and did not ask the group to do anything other than listen and enjoy. I noticed that one by one, they picked up the sheet of lyrics and used them to sing along. I played the song again, I replaced the printed lyrics with another printed page; This page had the nouns omitted. I wrote the missing nouns on a white board and then asked them to put in the missing words. I repeated this process, but this time I omitted the verbs and wrote them on a white board while continuously playing the track. I observed the group were singing along and writing in the missing words at the same time. This method was to engage the students with the lyrics going further into understanding the structure and grammar of the lyrics. This was overcoming the preconceived barrier of education by enforcing them to be the subject of another person's superiority. They were learning and not seeing the lesson as an arduous task.

In the group classes, I used music to teach literacy and numeracy. The method I employed was to allow them listen to a familiar pop song (Bad Romance by Lady Gaga), and to encourage them to sing along. I would play the song a second time and provide them with the lyrics. This not only encouraged their singing but also helped their reading abilities. I would replace the page of lyrics of the same song, but would omit some of the verbs, or some of the nouns. I would play the song again and ask the trainees to fill in the blank spaces. The omitted words were then placed on a white board. This method encouraged many aspects of literacy including reading, writing and grammar. Further on from this, I would ask them to re-look at the lyrics and discuss the song itself; the tempo, the instruments used the style of the song and the way it was sung by the artist. By examining the lyrics in more depth, I would also discuss the moral aspect and the sociological aspects of the song. There were many discussions about the type of lyrics used and the type of music which accompanied the song. This proved to be an interesting aspect of reviewing pop songs. For example, the discussion evolved about the lyrics of 'Bad Romance', the group concluded that the song was primarily about love and devotion, but the music was paradoxically very aggressive. Most of the pop songs used in the lessons evoked a lot of discussion.

## Music and Self Development

Towards the end of the school timetable, we held two-week music seminar in June 2011. All trainees who attended the NTEC were invited to attend the music sessions. The final group were four sisters and three other students who took part and participated very enthusiastically. The three students in the group, the non-sisters stopped attending. The possible reasons have been addressed earlier in this chapter. Eventually it was just the four sisters who were involved. This was the beginning of music lessons at the Centre, which progressed to music classes taught by me as part of their Training Centre's curriculum with effect from September 2011.

From these regular classes, the trainees improved their singing ability and learned how to play guitar. Part of the initial process of voice training and singing involves vocal warm-ups. The students voices are very low pitched, and they struggled with higher notes. I always emphasised the importance of vocal warm-ups by encouraging them to improve their posture and breathing. This was a method I had used numerous times before with other students elsewhere.

“The best posture for singing is placing your feet shoulder width apart with the feet firmly on the floor. The knees slightly bent and flexible. The shoulders down and loose. The spine, so you imagine a plumb line running beside your body , with your ears, shoulders, pelvis, knees and ankles all lined up” (Miller, 2003, pp. 48-50).

For the breathing exercises; I used the Miller's method of

“hiss like a snake: inhale slowly, hold for two seconds and start to release your breath in a very controlled stream. Allow the air to “hiss” between your closed teeth to an “s” sound. Another good breathing exercise is to sing the alphabet in a single breath” (Miller, 2003, pp. 28-29).

Finally for the warmups, using a keyboard or a piano, play three notes; starting at middle “C” hum the three notes, three times and end in a vowel, (ah, oh, eh,). Then move to the next higher note, and progress upwards on the music scale until you feel you have reached the highest note you can sing. This can also be reversed and move downwards until you feel you have reached the lowest note you can sing. Humming is the best way to begin vocal warm-ups

The warm-ups lasted for 10-15 minutes and this part of the process was not received well by the trainees. They got bored and didn't enjoy the process. Sometimes they got distracted and forgot to hum or sing. My aim at every lesson was to remind them of the benefits of this process and how it would help them when they were singing for a long period, or when they had trouble reaching certain notes, particularly the higher ones. The other advantage of warm-up was they really helped with their diction. Sometimes when the trainees were singing, their words tended to roll into each other. Using vowel exercises their diction and normal speech improved.

### Music, Performance and Self Perception

There was a discussion between the students and the centre coordinator. It was agreed that the students would perform in a Christmas concert for their fellow trainees, tutors and other students in the campus. They played guitar and sang a mixture of modern pop songs and Christmas carols. It was their first time to perform to a large audience and the trainees were nervous. Prior to the Christmas performance, I initiated a "flash mob" performance. I did not prepare them for the performance or give them advance notice. I arrived into the classroom, and told them that they were going to sing, right away, outside the room. This involved the group appearing unannounced in the corridor of the Training Centre singing one song called 'Jar of Hearts' by Christina Perri (2010) and then returning to their classroom. It was an opportunity for the trainees to get a sense of a 'public performance' before they announced their official performance in December 2011.

I wanted to teach the students about stage presence and performance. (It is a live performance with no retakes). It was also a lesson in dynamics; (the loud and the soft). I wanted them to understand that as much as you sing a song, now you need to perform and in rehearsals it is the time to break it down, decide on the breath intervals, the soft part, the loud part. This was the only time I ever sang a complete song was in January of 2012. I decide to give them an idea of how to perform a song in a way that would take people on a journey. Sell the story of what was happening in the song. I have a strong belief that a singing teacher should not do a lot of singing in the classroom. Parts of songs may need to be sung for clarification, and to guide a student, but that is all. I sang 'Bring Him Home' by Claude-Michel Schonberg, from the musical, "Les Misérables" produced by Cameron Mackintosh in London's Westend.

I started to look closely at each of the students voices. One of the students (A), had a harsh sounding voice and for the CD in the studio, she wanted to sing “The Rose”, a song made famous by Better Middled. Student “A”, had a young daughter. The best way for me to explain the performance was for her to imagine she was singing this beautiful song to her daughter to help her to sleep, to think of the song as a lullaby. This, I believe worked for her. She said she found it challenging to sing so softly, and I explained that it is just as challenging to sing soft as it is to sing loud, I wanted them to learn without causing any damage to their vocal chords. Truly it was days like this in the classroom that I was at my best. I realised I was challenging the students and I was taking them on a journey of more than just singing a song, I was now bringing them into a world that I was very familiar with; performing.

#### Theatre and Self Identification

As stated in chapter two, I implanted the theories of Augusto Boal in the following manner. By showing certain movies to the students, I wanted to encourage a dialogue among the group. The movies (listed below) were sourced from my own collection and are a list of the types of movies that I decided to show to the group. The information on each movie is retrieved from The IMDB (Internet Movie Database) (Amazon, 2019). This is huge resource for people to access information on films worldwide. This was my interpretation of forum theatre by Augusto Boal.

#### **West Side Story 1961 (Musical)** (Amazon, 2019)

The discussion held after showing this movie was really of no consequence. They did not seem to understand the conflict between the two families. I thought that it would highlight the struggle between the settled community and the travellers. With probing questions, I asked them if they understood the storyline and the difference in the culture of the two families. They were unresponsive. Failure one.

My next endeavour was to show them the following movie;

**Rabbit-Proof Fence 2002 (Based on a true story)** (Amazon, 2019)

This film had a major impact on the women. They got it! They understood completely the marginalisation of the young girls and their plight. The ‘oppressor’ and the ‘oppressed’. Although, this type of ethnic purging never occurred in Ireland, there was a strong alignment from the women towards the three girls. Success! I was finally getting across the concept of Boal and Forum theatre. I needed to keep going with this concept. The next film was “*Dreamgirls*”. This storyline was aiming at the ethnic minority of African American women, friendship and family. It was set in the 60s and 70s, and it was a musical

**Dreamgirls 2006 (Musical)** (Amazon, 2019)

Although there was an agreement that they enjoyed the movie, it was only the younger students who were more interested in this one. There was a lot of stage costumes, so, to that age group it was very glamorous. The Travelling community are very extravagant when it comes to family celebrations; particularly weddings, where the bride will wear a one-off, never seen before gown that can be excessive to the point that is difficult to walk in the dress. The message of marginalisation did not come up in discussions. This was not a complete failure, but not a complete success in what I was attempting to achieve.

**Shirley Valentine 1989(Based on a play)**\_(Amazon, 2019)

Most of the older women in the group were affected by the movie, I am not sure if it was positive or negative. When it finished, they sat quietly and looked at each other. This was culture shock; a woman leaving her husband who had no intention of returning to him. Some of the women were keen to find a copy of the DVD. I believe it did strike a chord with some of them. One of the women was widowed and was not allowed to re-marry. The staff were aware that another of the younger women was in an abusive relationship. She was under pressure from her husband, as she was not getting pregnant.

“Many women from minority ethnic backgrounds might be too scared to make their resistance known because of the stigma that goes along with being a victim of domestic violence.” (Paveepoint, 2005).



This is from a resource leaflet on their website that encourages women to report domestic violence. The word “Pavee” comes from the original language of the Travelling community. It means “a traveller, a member of Ireland’s ethnic minority” however, the majority of the community now speak English.

Upon reflection, I was not sure what or if the movies would impact their lives. I thought I could just show “happy” movies each week, and they would have an enjoyable morning, but I saw the opportunity to promote Boal and his experiences. The question was; who was I to challenge these women’s’ lives? Why did I feel the need to show them, through media, other people’s, lives that were similar or contrasted to theirs. I did have some doubts at the time. I believed that what I was doing was trying to open their minds to aspects in life and somehow empower them to have control over their own lives.

### **The Wind That shakes the Barley 2006** (Amazon, 2019)

Many of the women would be familiar with Irish history and the impact of the 1916 Easter Rising. I thought this movie would give them a further insight to Irish emancipation.

### **Little Voice 1998.** (Amazon, 2019) A

I wanted the students to see a story about matriarchal dominance. There was very little discussion after this showing. They did not say very much. I felt maybe it was too unfamiliar a concept.

### **Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café.** ( Amazon 1991).

This time I was celebrating friendship between women, young and old. This movie did resonate with the students. Being at the NTEC together every day gave them that bond. Although the movie portrayed men in a bad light, the main theme was about women and their relationship with each other. The students did respond well to this movie. They understood that it was about lasting friendships and maintaining them. There is a dark piece in the movie when a man is murdered and mysteriously disappears, but overall, the women saw it as a bonding of female friendships.

**Educating Rita, 1983** (Amazon, 2019)

I felt that I was on to a winning movie here. The idea of an ordinary woman, a hairdresser would want to improve her life through education. The group were very blasé about the film. They did say they enjoyed it, but I felt that it was overreaching: with the idea of attending university. I realised that this film was more about my journey through education than it was theirs. (see Chapter one).

**Steel Magnolias, 1989 (Based on a play)** (Amazon, 2019)

This movie was the big “tear-jerker” for the women, it had stirred up many emotions for them the group. They were all crying during the movie and afterwards. This struck a chord with all of the group. There was a lot of issues that I felt they identified with; Marriage, children, death and the solidarity of women.

The travelling community were once a nomadic people, and the older women in the group would have experienced life on the road, travelling Ireland and the UK. The consequences of this hardship would have led to high infant mortality. Although this has improved as most of the women at the centre were living in a settled environment in houses, the statistics are high in children.

An article from a study by the Irish Times stated that;

“The Travelling community experienced a significantly higher infant death rate than that found in the settled population. Some ten per cent of Traveller children die before their second birthday, compared to just one per cent of the general population”. (The Irish Times, 2007)

The newspaper study also states that

“Some 50 per cent of Travellers die before their 39th birthday and some 70 per cent fail to live past the age of 59. It also noted that had been no improvement in Traveller’s health and life expectancy in twenty years” (The Irish Times, 2007)

The study concluded

“There had been no improvement in Traveller's health and life expectancy in 20 years. The study was from “*Travellers' Last Rights: Responding to Death in a Cultural Context*” “compiled from data during the 10-year period between 1995 and 2004 in the Dublin area. (The Irish Times, 2007).

## Interviews

In order to investigate the research further, Cohen, in *Research Methods in Education*, states that

“In methodology, one of the approaches used in educational research to gather data is the technique associated with a positive model-eliciting response to predetermined questions. This will result in a particular value of scientific research in education is that it will enable educators to develop the kind of sound knowledge base that characterises other professions and disciplines; and one that will ensure education a maturity and sense of progression it at present lacks” (Cohen L, 2000, pp. 44-45).

Further to this, Mason states that,

“One of the main virtues of expressing whatever it is you want to research and explains it as a puzzle is that it focuses your mind on research questions. Once you are thinking in terms of puzzles and explanations, it will be a relatively easy task to formulate a set of research questions, and these will form the backbone of your research design. The concept of research questions fits more generally with a wider range of ontological and epistemological positions”, (Mason, 2000, p. 19).

Considering this extract from Mason, I decided to approach the research with an interview style using the following proposed questions. The results of the interviews are discussed in Chapter Four.

1. What is your favourite part of music lessons?
2. What part do you dislike?
3. What do you think about when you are in music classes?
4. Does it make you feel good?
5. Do you think it helps with other subjects?
6. Can you explain how?
7. Do you think about music when you are in other classes?

“Interviewing is associated with qualitative research and in-depth interviewing with encouraging narratives from research participants about their experiences” (Oakley, 2000).

## Ethics

During the music lessons a trust had been built up between the sisters and myself. Everybody was open to being interviewed, in fact they were more than eager to take part. I explained that I would like to record the interviews and again they were willing to participate

An application was made to the Course Coordinator of NTEC requesting permission to approach the students about doing the research. With regards to the curriculum development lessons on literacy with songs, there were no interviews required.

Although I was aware of the ethical values that support all social research, I took the time to familiarise myself with NUI Maynooth Research Policy previous to beginning this study. I was mindful that the only reason I had contact with members of the Traveller community was because of my place as an educator, I was aware of my responsibility to the participants who agreed to take part in my research.

I was feeling responsible for the use of the information.

“It is important that the integrity and ethics of the research are held responsibly towards the students taking part, myself and society in general. It is only in the last twenty years that researchers have realised the ethical dimensions of their research and to take it seriously” (Silverman, 2006, p. 317).

I was concerned about my neutrality, I did not want to put my agenda or coerce the students in any way, my love of music and how it has changed my life was a barrier for me in this situation. I needed to just ask the questions and record their answers, without comment. It was important to detach myself and become the questioner and not the educator. However, I was aware of the following

“The researcher is not seen as separate from the researched, but to quite the famous Geertzian phrase ‘as an animal suspended in webs of significance, he himself has spun.’” (Bresler, 1995)

As much as I wanted to stay as neutral as possible, I was cognisant of my bias towards the power of positivity of music in learning.

As stated in chapter one, the travelling community have led a nomadic life in Ireland. They are the most marginalised groups in our society. They struggle with health, education, joblessness, and social segregation. The recent recognition of their ethnicity minority in 2017,

offers a new perspective on relations with the settled community, the majority. They maintain their inherent ethos in their community. Their women marry at a young age, usually to men in their own culture. Traveller women rarely socialise outside of their own families, so contact with the settled community socially is nominal. Overall, their role is homemaker and mother. When the Task Force was set up in 1993, it established the needs of the travelling community, and made suggestions of all essential services required including education and comprised of a focus on discrimination.

The centre was purely for traveller women to learn. I was the only male teacher, a settled man at that. Ironically, I was the minority, and I felt at a disadvantage even though their society is patriarchal. There was an air of hesitancy from the women. It was important for me to learn from the other tutors how best to approach the classroom situation, without embarrassing the women, or myself.

Jerry O'Neill writes 'In search of a clearing: The potential of narrative spaces for adult education growth', about it not being enough to start with our own narratives as the source of our useful theory. He states,

“We must develop this within a community of theoretical voices which speak to our story”. (Grummell Bernie, 2014, p. 153)..

The use of the word 'liminal', 'the space in between things' brings home the cultural difference between myself, a settled man and the traveller women I am about to teach. 'Otherness' was another word that came to mind. Standing at the threshold: not in the room, but not outside the room. It was vitally important *not to get it wrong, and not to offend*. These thoughts were on my mind constantly as I learned more about the women. I was unsure of what my research involved at the beginning and I was aware of building trust as an adult educator before thinking about taking further steps to my thesis research. It was important to achieve mutual respect initially and put any thoughts of research work to one side.

Paulo Freire states that

“ the oppressed are not 'marginals', are not people living 'outside' society. They have always been 'inside'-inside the structure which made them "beings for others". The solution is not to integrate them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves' ” (Freire, 2017, p. 47).

This meant realising that although the group were an ethnic minority, they are still part of society, and have been part of society all along. The Travelling community may have been perceived as being on the outside, but in the scheme of things, they are part of what makes up our society.

In order to gain the trust of the group, it was important to be ethically honest. As I spent more time teaching the women, it became a natural progression of mutual trust.

It was important to be cognisant of the following points by Merriam;

“1 Respondents should be told the purpose of the research and how the data they are being asked to provide will be used.

2 Respondents should be informed of the nature of the research before data are collected and should be allowed to withdraw at any given point.

3 There should be no unpleasant or damaging effects on the individual, the setting, or to others close to the participant either during or subsequent to the research.

4 The investigator must respect the privacy of the respondents and , whenever possible, ensure anonymity or confidentiality.

5 There should be no unprofessional behaviour required of the participants.

6 The participants should be given an opportunity to learn from the research” (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 194).

During one section of the research, two of these points were challenged by one of the participants. She arrived at the recording studio and stated she was uncomfortable and no longer wanted to be involved in the recording sessions. The other sisters were encouraging her to stay. The reason for this behaviour was due to the fact that she had not rehearsed her part in between recording times. They had been strongly advised that the recording studio was for the polished version of each song and that rehearsing and practising the songs had to be carried out in between recording sessions. She did state that I had told her that she did not have to stay if she didn't want to. I had made it clear that nobody should be uncomfortable, and everything would be carried out in a professional manner. After a lot of encouragement from the rest of the group, she agreed to stay and continue the recordings. I was very much aware of the ethics involved here. I ensured them that it was their decision to stay or not, and that I would respect their choice. However, in my preconceived belief, I assumed that their father would be strict

and not have the patience to tolerate her behaviour, it turned out, that I was totally incorrect; I was told by the other sisters that their father is hugely encouraging and would have cajoled and pleaded with her to continue.

The other point challenged was the question of what would they learn from this experience? The recording sessions and the final result of the album/CD was the end of the teaching. The centre was closing, and they were leaving with a finished product of an album of songs. I believe the experience was life changing, but it was the end of teaching and learning for all involved. Once the CD was produced, the women had no education centre to attend. The question I had was, where would they go from here?

### Conclusion

This chapter has examined the various methods I used in teaching. I have deliberated on creating trust with the students. The approach to teaching music for literacy and numeracy lessons. The effect of singing, progressing to performance and group participation. Through qualitative research, and questions posed, I have outlined the approach taken with relation to ethics in questions posed and gaining trust with the students. By using the medium of movies I have combined my approach and concepts of theorist Augusto Boal in forum theatre. showing how the traveller women can identify themselves in other peoples' lives. While I did employ various teaching practices, these practices were carried out through an ongoing process of evaluation and adjustment. This allowed me to see where my research was developing and with minor adjustments, to have positive impacts and results

## Chapter 4 Research Findings

*“What did you think I would do at this moment”*

(Michael Bubl  2009)

### Introduction

This chapter deals with the information from the interviews with the four sisters. The ‘what’ and ‘how’ they agreed on the songs for the recording of the CD (See Appendix for list of songs and the URL on ‘Soundcloud’ to listen to the tracks). There is also the result of their opinion on the classes. I have discussed my ontological position and my ignorance of knowledge on the travelling community. There is also a debate on the teaching culture at the NTEC.

### Interview Findings

I found that there were no negative responses from any of the students. Even though one of the questions was: what you do not like about the music class, it was more or less ignored by all of them, in fact I was given a strange look. A look that said, “why would you even ask me that question?” I would have been surprised if they had said anything negative. Every music class was a happy and enjoyable space, the only time there was any conflict was the one incident during the recording sessions, this was eventually resolved at the time and we continued on with the album/CD.

There were four students, all of which were sisters, although they were interviewed separately, I was aware that I was limiting the research.

The students were never bored in the classroom, in fact they were very enthusiastic as it was a subject in which they were all interested.

The answers to the questions were varied and really not what I expected, even though I have stated that I tried not to show any persuasion, I went away with a lot to think about. Overall, the answers were very positive, and they talked about gaining confidence as not all of them had sung in front of other people, mainly just their family. As stated, I have only used the initial of the Christian names of the students (A, K, L and M).

One of the sisters (M) told me that when she was twelve, she won a singing competition in a local school, it was for travellers only. She explained that her day started out badly, and she didn’t think she was going to win. It had been the last time she had sung in public. Also, she



was not 'shamed' (embarrassed), by singing in front of people. She answered that the music class boosted her confidence due to the fact that she felt she was being taught to sing correctly. Sometimes she would not attempt to sing certain songs but "when you are told you can do it, you do it right away". She loved singing with the group because it sounds lovely together and we all support each other. It is great to have the family singing together

(A) Her favourite part of the music lesson is getting the proper pronunciation; pronouncing the words properly.

(K) Said she looked forward to coming to the class.

(L) There is great passion for music in the family and I would like to learn more instruments. She had learned to play the guitar in a very short time

(K) I like going to class to learn more about harmonies in singing, I would like to learn more about rhythm

(L) It does help because music is relaxing When I am writing my own stuff in computer classes, there is always music involved

## Findings

The result of the interviews in general were positive. From the answers given, I do not believe there was one specific learning outcome, I saw the whole process being more holistic than specific. It gave me thought about the motivations of all involved, including myself. There was an openness to try something new without feeling awkward or embarrassed. There was a huge sense of 'family unity' when they sang together. I was pleased that there was positive anticipation about coming to the music classes.

I discovered that the women were very enthusiastic. I saw more and more as the classes progressed, their eagerness and openness to learn. I saw the improvement in their voices. I could see how the classes were helping with their concentration. In the beginning, I wasn't sure how far they would progress with the vocal lessons, techniques and performance training. I was delighted that they came through it. The recording studio was the toughest time. I urged them to rehearse before the recording sessions, I did believe they were taking it seriously, but they did rely on my guidance in bringing the songs together. Each time I felt I needed to push them in this area. I have included the recordings from the CD in the thesis. Everything, that I

had taught them, had come to this. This was the final lesson, and they end their time in the centre with the CD as a “certificate”, instead of a recognised FETAC accreditation in music. At the time, I was very proud of their efforts and I listen to the recordings often and feel very emotional. Looking back, I realise I have my favourite songs; “Jar of Hearts”, sung by the group, it showed the “Someone Like You”, sung by “L”, but truly my favourite is “Songbird”, sung by “M”. To this day, every time I listen to her sing that song, I am moved.

### My Ontological Position

My ontological stance is clear from my experience in the NTEC. I arrived there with a strong belief that I could teach the women, and that amid the learning, we would see development, both personal and educational. My love of education, my love of teaching, reading, singing, and playing music had culminated in a process of educating that would bring a positive reaction from the women. A strong belief in positive affirmations, were utmost in my teaching position, everything and anything that brought them closer to something as simple as being able to write their own address, or understanding some of the basics of guitar chords, was a light in the darkness. Although to some of the women, being able to write their address was a huge mountain to climb, I firmly believed that it was possible to achieve this. Their openness to learn, never wavered my determination to continue.

I have stated that I was ill-informed to the culture of the travelling community, I was vaguely aware of the stance of the women in their community and I was apprehensive in the beginning. I was hoping that in my research questions that I would get answers that I liked, or I thought they might give me. In the end I learnt so much about being patient, listening, and learning. The biggest lesson for me was seeing a younger version of myself with some of the students. The ones who were frustrated when they didn't comprehend something initially, and then after trying and trying, they achieved their goal. The ability to sing, the frustration of not knowing how it sounded, the chance to learn to sing correctly was some of the highlights for me. It was when the centre eventually closed that I realised what they had achieved. My fellow teachers comment on how much of an impact the music and literacy classes had made on the women and how it positively affected their performance in other class subjects.

I am not sure if I will ever know fully what the impact of the research will find. I had a vision to find a way to use music in learning and make sure it was fun as much as possible. It was important that above all, the literacy classes worked and there was an improvement in their

reading and writing. The centre closed down and there was no further contact with any of the women.

The research itself was not a difficult task. It was the women that really decided it for me. I could see some much potential in all of them, that it inspired me to pursue the work. When I began the research, I was in no doubt about the material, the students or the subject matter. The answers I received was not what I expected, and I was careful not to persuade the results in any way. Overall it was a positive outcome. Everyone learnt something from the work involved.

I had some questions about the teaching culture at the centre. We as a representation of the majority, were imposing cultural capital on the minority. I read information on

“Motivational orientations of learners” by Merriam; he quotes Morstain and Smart’s (1974), which included “External Expectations”, meaning that students complied with directives of someone else with authority. Also; “Escape/Stimulation” learners who are involved as a way of escaping a home routine”. (Merriam, 1991, pp. 84-85)

There are four others, but I saw these two as being most relevant to teaching at the centre.

## Conclusion

I have discussed the interview results and the findings from the students answers. I have outlined my belief in my ability to teach the women and my discovery of the culture of the travelling community.

## Chapter 5 Reflection and Summary

*Memories light the corners of my mind  
Misty water-coloured memories of the way we were  
Scattered pictures of the smiles we left behind  
Smiles we gave to one another for the way we were*

(Barbra Streisand 1973)

### Critical Reflection

This chapter outlines the result of the interviews of the four sisters. I came to discover the amazing talent of the students at the NTEC and I was amazed at how well they responded to the classes. Every day was a joy to go to there. I cannot remember a “bad day”. I remember there were tough days, when the students had not rehearsed before the recording studio, as they had been instructed. I was frustrated as I had emphasised that this was an extra cost to the NTEC. The studio was off campus and there was an hourly charge.

I often questioned their motivation to learn, even though they saw it as work and they were paid an allowance, I wondered if they were achieving something for themselves, or where they trying to please me and keep me happy. Who was benefitting the most from these teachings ? me as the educator, or the students as learners, or hopefully both. I wanted to believe that all of us were learning and they were somehow feeling empowered by our endeavours. One time during a class, one of the sisters said to me, “you are firm, but you are fair”. I had to stop and think about this statement. I felt I was being my best self in motivating them, soft and kind, I did not believe I was “firm”. If that was how I was perceived, I believed it was a kind declaration. Although I was told that I was “firm”, I had internalised this as being “tough”, my immediate thought of my own upbringing; having a strict father who ruled the home, it made me determined not to behave in that way at all. I wanted to take an open kind, fair and facilitating approach to the whole aspect of teaching.

My journey of teaching at the NTEC was a learning trail for me. I learnt to understand the travelling community so much more. Their religious beliefs, their strong sense of family, their bond with each other and their dedicated loyalty to the other women in the centre. There was never an unkind word spoken. They were a tremendous support to each other and encouraged

each other in learning. I don't ever recall having to ask a student to help another student, it happened automatically. Upon reflection, I was so aware of how my actions and my beliefs could affect the group. On the positive side, I believed my attitude was about learning being fun and productive. On the negative side, there were some situations I did not agree. I regard myself as an atheist, and the traveller women have a strong belief in the Catholic Church. On some occasions the centre would hold fundraisers, at the request of the students. One was held for breast cancer awareness. On this particular day, they had a statue of the Virgin Mary and they lit candles and said prayers. Although I do not conform to this belief, as a teacher, I felt obligated to attend and respect their actions. The students did take some time to accept me. Being the only male teacher in the centre was a big challenge for them. At the time, even though I was aware of it, they gradually got used to me being around, anyway, I was the "fun" teacher, I was encouraging them to learn in a subject that they had such passion about. Teaching at the centre never seemed like work, it was a pleasure to be there every day, I always felt the freedom to be myself.

There was nothing I would have changed about my research or my teaching. I believed my approach was always held with integrity and the best interest of the women. Every lesson plan I prepared, was carried out to bring out the best in the students. I wanted to take them on a journey of learning that was enjoyable and enriching, and mainly, without fear.

When I was told by other teachers at the NTEC about the students improvement in other classes, I was pleased. 'The students in your music group have really improved in the communications class', another tutor stated, 'I have found the group to be more co-operative together, they are friendlier and easier to work with as a group'. I was convinced that there was a positive change in the students. This to me was a transformation, this was transformative learning.

So there was the question as to why educate the travelling community to a middle-class level of thinking ?. Why was it so important to bring education to these women? Why not leave these women at home to take care of their husbands and children as their culture dictates? Why not let them travel the countryside in caravans? Why persuade them to live in a settled environment, and in a house.

The government set up the task force in 1993 to establish the needs for the travelling community and to make recommendations, including education. They continued to consult with the legislative agencies to establish relationships with the settled community. As this was

primarily politically motivated, there would be an element of settled people's type of policy in the type education to have an expected learning outcome. The Department of Education operates on a policy of seeing results, or a learning outcome for the investment. Is this education system in Ireland only for creating a middle class society, or for bringing out the potential in each student. The NTEC had almost all "settled" teachers. Initially, we arrived with our own bias. This potentially was a disadvantage. The other disadvantage was that we had our teacher training from a Department of Education prerequisite paradigm. So with this policy and our bias, we are endeavouring to teach the traveller women, "our" ways or learning.

I have written about my approach to teaching and the use of Freire and the "banking system". During my teaching and research, the students began to teach me. Their cultural knowledge, their musical talent was the doorway to their learning. The women did learn; their literacy improved, their diction and comprehension improved. They were gaining confidence in their individual way of learning. The initial approach was a middle class structure, I believe the results were not what I expected. I realised that there were two important factors; Empowerment and Emancipation. One of the many reasons that the women came to the centre was those of the group who were mothers and grandmothers, could see the benefit of education for their children and grandchildren. Some of the young mothers were happy to improve their education as they were now in a better position to help their children with homework. Why not give the women a chance to improve their education. I believe it was a golden opportunity. Yes, we know that they did receive an allowance to attend, but I firmly believe that they were there to learn. I saw the centre as a place of learning with no barriers. For the women and for me. The only barriers I experienced were my limitations to understanding the groups as I taught. I wanted to learn so much more of their culture, their customs and to use these features to research further in ways of teaching. The results I saw were positive and particularly for the four sisters; their result was the recordings and the final outcome was the realisation of the CD that they held in their hands. To them, this was the equivalent of a qualification.

### Final Conclusion

This thesis began with my journey through education and music. My discovery and the positive benefits I gained. I was so motivated every day to learn more and more. This inspired me to pursue my education further and impart on the women at the traveller centre, my experiences, my knowledge and my love of learning and the arts, especially singing.

The students received my absolute best efforts every day I was there. I wanted them to see how it had enriched my life in so many ways. Their oppression as an ethnic minority was a reminder of my oppression growing up and being bullied in school and in life. Being a settled man in a women's traveller environment, I identified so much with them in a way I could not explain at the time. I wanted them to see that I overcame obstacles and hopefully they could achieve this too. Although I never thought that any of the students would go on to further education, especially with the centre closing, at least they were given the best of me and my knowledge.

I have investigated data on the brain and the emotion evoked from music; the sad and the happy songs. I have discussed the implications of music in our everyday lives. Looking at music and its cognitive abilities show us how it can aid us in short and long term abilities. I explained the ethnicity of the Travelling community and the women in context with the NTEC. This has given an insight into the women, their culture and their education status that opens the door to their ability to learn and to improve.

While researching, I have outlined the emotional effect of music on us as human beings, and I have discussed the conflicts that can occur in people in learning. There are underlying factors that affect us all. The conflict in learning shows us how this can block students from being open to education. As an educator, it is vital not only to be aware of these factors, but to be equipped with the right emotional intelligence to recognise the difference between a personal attack from an student's outburst or understanding their own fears in learning.

I have written about my approach to teaching and the use of Freire and the "banking system". During my teaching and research, the students began to teach me. Their cultural knowledge, their musical talent was their pathway to learning. The women did learn; their literacy improved, and with some groups, their diction and comprehension improved. They were gaining confidence in their individual way of learning.

The initial approach to teaching the traveller women was from a middle class structure. The majority on the minority. I learnt about this more and more in the classroom and attempted to find a way to break this process. I realised that there were two important factors that emerged; Empowerment and Emancipation. Some of the young mothers were happy to improve their education as they were now in a better position to help their children with homework. Why not give the women a chance to improve their education. I believe it was a golden opportunity. Yes, we know that they did receive an allowance to attend, but I firmly believe that they were

there to learn. I eventually saw the centre as a place of openness with few barriers; for the women and for me.

The initial barriers I experienced was my limitation to understanding the groups as I taught. I wanted to learn so much more of their culture, their customs and to use these features to research further in ways of teaching. The results I saw were positive and particularly for the four sisters; their result was the recordings and their final outcome was the realisation of the CD that they held in their hands. To them, this was the equivalent of a qualification

The underlying implications of the centre for the students were social element, a place to meet their friends and family. The earnings (earn to learn), and for some it was to transfer their learning to their children and grandchildren.

It was important to understand the ethnicity of the students in order to ascertain the best approach to teaching. As much as I believed that I was transforming lives in my unorthodox approach to literacy through music, and forum theatre by watching certain movies. I realise that the process was a holistic progression than one “eureka” moment in learning. I have discussed the findings by Merriam, that every student brings their own knowledge to the classroom. This was to ensure inclusion in the classroom. It was important to work with the women at their pace, not as group work that would leave some of them behind in the process. This is not the essence of transformative learning where there is a hope progression. If some students are not comprehending the learning, the purpose is futile.

The process also involved the students in decisions through self-directed learning. Their choice of music, not mine. This proved important in the learning in the literacy classes and the choice of songs for the recording. The students that attended were fully engaged in the learning, however, there were some cases of unreliable attendance that was disappointing, but thankfully did not affect the rest of the students. There was nothing that could be done. As I stated the travelling community is a patriarchal society, and some families still moved around the country. The women would have no input on that decision.

I have reviewed the perspective on barriers to education from the view of the teacher, the students and external factors. It was important as a teacher to recognise the signs that impede learning in all areas and find a way to break through this. I have stated various factors of cause and effect and shown some resolutions.



Through the medium of music and theatre, I have shown the powerful effect it can have on students, especially the traveller women at the NTEC. I have discussed the therapeutic benefits of music. Whenever I used music in the classroom, the students were always open to learning. I had always been aware of the musical talents of the travelling community, so I utilised this to implement my teaching methods. The four sisters learnt about giving a public performance. They learnt about taking people on a journey through song. This, to me, is the essence of a performer. This aided them in their own self development and self-perception. With the rehearsal preparation they gained confidence. This gave them an eagerness to learn more.

Using the theory of Boal, and my concept of this by introducing the 'Movie Media Mornings' gave the women an opportunity to look at other people's lives and somehow connect to themselves. It was a journey of self-perception and self-identification. I could see the reaction to certain movies that did have an effect on them. The discussions after some of the movies, made me realise that the process was positive and enriching. Although the interviews were restricted to one small group of students, I reviewed the findings in general, rather than by specific student by specific question. This was unique, and in retrospect, I concluded that due to the fact they were sisters, the singing and music lessons were positive, but the family connection and their closeness was more important.

Finally

Every day at the centre, the learning and the teaching was a slow process. Even though there was a final date for the NTEC closing, I always wanted the students to know that there was no time constraint in their learning. I wanted the learning to be at their pace. From the methods of teaching I used, I could see their self-awareness developing which helped with their confidence building.

I wanted the music to go on forever. Whenever they hear a song I played in the classroom, I hope that it will bring them to a place of positivity and openness to what the possibilities can be for themselves through the self-directed learning.

I want to believe that the older lady remembers how to write her address, and that the women still listen to their favourite country and western songs and can write the words with confidence. I want to have confidence that the four sisters are still singing and performing together

I often think what would have happened if the NTEC had not closed. Through further research it would have been possible to develop the teaching methods further. The openness of the students and the support of course coordinator would have given me additional opportunities.

Although my main research has been on students within the travelling community, I am convinced that some of the methods stated in this thesis can be utilised in other communities in adult education.

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**Appendix A - I Will Always Love You****I Will Always Love You Lyrics**

If I should stay Well, I would only be in your way  
And so I'll go, and yet I know  
That I'll think of you each step of my way  
And I will always love you  
I will always love you  
Bitter-sweet memories  
That's all I have, and all I'm taking with me  
Good-bye, oh, please don't cry  
Cause we both know that I'm not What you need  
I will always love you  
I will always love you  
And I hope life, will treat you kind  
And I hope that you have all That you ever dreamed of  
Oh, I do wish you joy And I wish you happiness  
But above all this I wish you love  
I love you, I will always love

I, I will always, always love you  
I will always love you  
I will always love you  
I will always love you

Songwriters: Dolly Parton

I Will Always Love You lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC (1974)

**I Will Always Love You Lyrics (With Missing Words)**

If I should stay ( ) would only be in ( ) way  
And ( ) I'll go, and yet I ( )  
That I'll think of you every ( ) of my way  
And I will ( ) love you  
I will always ( ) you  
Bitter-sweet memories  
That's all I ( ) and all I'm taking with me  
Good-bye, oh, please don't ( )  
Cause we both ( ) that I'm not What you need  
I will always ( ) you  
I will always love you  
And I ( ) life, will treat you kind  
And I hope that you have all That ( ) ever dreamed of  
Oh, I do wish you ( ) And I wish you happiness  
But above all this I ( ) you love  
I love you, I will always love

I, I ( ) always, always love you  
I will ( ) love you  
I will always ( ) you  
I will always love ( )

Songwriters: Dolly Parton

I Will Always Love You lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC (1974)

**Missing Words from "I Will Always Love You"**

I your so know step always love have cry know hope love you joy wish will always  
love you

**Appendix B - If Tomorrow Never Comes****If Tomorrow Never Comes**

Sometimes late at night

I lie awake and watch her sleeping

She's lost in peaceful dreams

So I turn out the lights and lay there in the dark

And the thought crosses my mind

If I never wake up in the morning

Would she ever doubt the way I feel

About her in my heart

If tomorrow never comes

Will she know how much I loved her

Did I try in every way to show her every day

That she's my only one

And if my time on earth were through

And she must face this world without me

Is the love I gave her in the past

Gonna be enough to last

If tomorrow never comes

'Cause I've lost loved ones in my life

Who never knew how much I loved them

Now I live with the regret

That my true feelings for them never were revealed

So I made a promise to myself

To say each day how much she means to me

And avoid that circumstance

Where there's no second chance to tell her how I feel

If tomorrow never comes

Will she know how much I loved her

Did I try in every way to show her every day

That she's my only one



And if my time on earth were through  
And she must face this world without me  
Is the love I gave her in the past  
Gonna be enough to last  
If tomorrow never comes

So tell that someone that you love  
Just what you're thinking of  
If tomorrow never comes

Songwriters: Kent Evan Blazy / Troyal Garth Brooks

If Tomorrow Never Comes lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group, BMG Rights  
Management (1989)

**If Tomorrow Never Comes (Missing Words)**

Sometimes ( ) at night

I lie awake and ( ) her sleeping

She's lost in peaceful dreams

So I turn ( ) the lights and lay there in the( )

And ( ) thought crosses my mind

If I never ( ) up in the morning

Would she ever doubt the way I feel

About her in my heart

If tomorrow ( ) comes

Will ( ) know how much I loved her

Did I try in every way to show her every ( )

That she's my only( )

And if my ( ) on earth were through

And she must face this world without me

Is the love I gave her in the past

Gonna be enough to last

If tomorrow never comes

'Cause I've lost loved ones in my life

Who never knew how much I loved them

Now I live with the regret

That my true feelings for them never were revealed

So I made a promise to myself

To say each day how much she means to me

And avoid that circumstance

Where there's no second chance to tell her how I feel

If tomorrow never comes

Will she know how much I loved her

Did I try in every way to show her every day

That she's my only one

And if my time on earth were through

And she must face this world without me

Is the love I gave her in the past

Gonna be enough to last

If tomorrow never comes

So tell that someone that you love

Just what you're thinking of

If tomorrow never comes

Songwriters: Kent Evan Blazy / Troyal Garth Brooks

If Tomorrow Never Comes lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group, BMG Rights Management (1989)

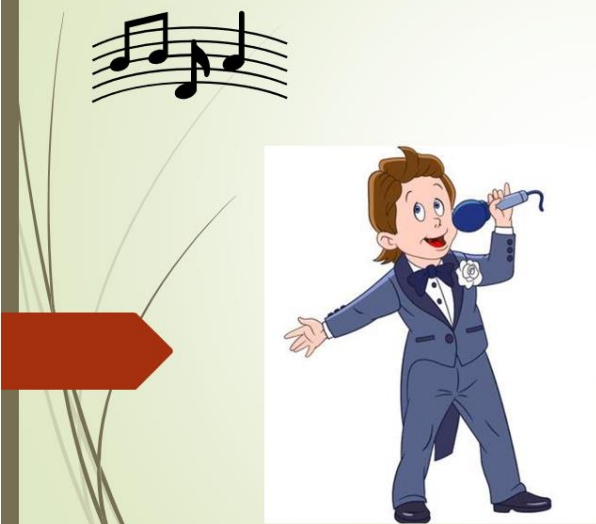
Late watch out the dark wake never she day one time

**Appendix C – Initial Masters Presentation**




**Transformative learning:**  
Using music to teach in education,  
and learning through music

**How music  
makes you  
learn !!!!**




**Transformative learning**

**I just wanted to  
sing !!!**



## Literacy

- Navan Traveller Education Centre for Women (2010-2012)
- 62 women Full Time/Part Time
- Literacy / Numeracy levels: from zero to FETAC level 4
  
- Theorists
  - Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed
  - Jean Piaget, (??) 4 stages of development (pedagogy)
  - Sharan Merriam, Learning in Adulthood
  - Philip Ball, The Music Instinct



## Transformative learning

'Transformative learning can be achieved when a learner reaches a particular level of literacy'.  
(Mezirow, 2000)



ACTIVE LISTENING	STEADY BEAT AWARENESS	ORAL LANGUAGE: LISTENING, SPEAKING & VOCABULARY	VOCABULARY
PRINT AWARENESS	PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	COMPREHENSION	AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION

## Media



*"It's just emotion that's taking me over"* The Bee Gees

- Movie Media Mornings
- West Side Story
- Rabbit Proof Fence
- Dream Girls
- Shirley Valentine
  
- Augusto Boal- Forum Theatre

## Curriculum



### If Tomorrow Never Comes, by Garth Brooks

- Sometimes late at night  
I lie awake and watch her sleeping  
She's lost in peaceful dreams  
So I turn out the lights and lay there in the dark  
And the thought crosses my mind  
If I never wake up in the morning  
Would she ever doubt the way I feel  
About her in my heart
- If tomorrow never comes  
Will she know how much I loved her  
Did I try in every way to show her every day  
That she's my only one  
And if my time on earth were through  
And she must face this world without me  
Is the love I gave her in the past  
Gonna be enough to last  
If tomorrow never comes

'Cause I've lost loved ones in my life  
Who never knew how much I loved them  
Now I live with the regret  
That my true feelings for them never were  
revealed  
So I made a promise to myself  
To say...



## Research

### Students

4 sisters: K\*, L\*, A, M (18-28 years old)

Singing and Guitar\* FETAC qualification V Record an album CD



### Research Questions :

- 1 *What is your favourite part of the music class*
- 2 *What do you think about the idea of singing as a group / sisters*
- 3 *What do you think about when you are in the music class*
- 4 *Do you think music helps with other classes/subjects*
- 5 *Do you think about music when you're in other classes*

## **Notes for Presentation**

Presentation: Transformative Learning, Mezirow

Using music to teach in education, and learning through music

Philip Ball has a PhD in Physics and is the author of “The Music Instinct”, *How music works and why we can't do without it*. In his chapter on “*music being in the mind*”, he discusses how music can stimulate the brain in ways to assist with other cognitive tasks.

Music seems to have an everlasting affect but yet this appears to be a contradiction. The concept of music being experienced as it is played performed or listened to can evoke emotions while it is happening. Even though the music is gone as Ball states, the effect can last for much longer.

### **Literacy**

The women with level two literacy recognised the need for education, especially for their children and many are attending in order that they can assist their children with their homework and also that their children will see them learning and the mothers will then support their children in their education

### **Curriculum Research**

**Media** Augusto Boal

### **Research**

Singing/Music

Freire, Piaget Merriam, Ball

*The ideal method for this research is a quantitative approach. The aim of the research is not to uncover a single authoritative truth but to record and reflect on the experiences of participants i.e. 'a specific version of reality rather than one that can be regarded as definitive' (Bryman 2008, p.19)*



**Songs to play :**

Carrickfergus

If Tomorrow never Comes

Jar of Hearts

Songbird

**Appendix D – CD Cover Picture**



**Appendix E – CD List of Songs**

The list of the songs on the final recording of the CD are listed as follows

- 1 Someone Like you
- 2 Runaway
- 3 Broken Heart
- 4 Songbird
- 5 If There's Love
- 6 I'm Yours
- 7 Jar of Hearts
- 8 Love is Real
- 9 I Don't Wanna Talk About It
- 10 The Rose

You can listen to the tracks here:

<https://soundcloud.com/brian-grainger/sets/the-hand-sisters>

## **Appendix F – Information on Movies Viewed**

### **West Side Story 1961 (Musical)** (Amazon, 2019)

This is an award-winning Musical adaptation of the classic romantic tragedy, "Romeo and Juliet". The feuding families become two warring New York City gangs- the "White Jets" led by Riff and the Puerto Rican "Sharks", led by Bernardo. Their hatred escalates to a point where neither can co-exist with any form of understanding. But when Riff's best friend (and former Jet) Tony and Bernardo's younger sister Maria meet at a dance, no one can do anything to stop their love. Maria and Tony begin meeting in secret, planning to run away. Then the Sharks and Jets plan a fight under the highway - whoever wins gains control of the streets. Maria sends Tony to stop it, hoping it can end the violence. It goes terribly wrong, and before the lovers know what's happened, tragedy strikes and doesn't stop until the climactic and heart-breaking ending.

### **Rabbit-Proof Fence 2002 (Based on a true story)** (Amazon, 2019)

Australian drama (directed by Phillip Noyce) film based on the book "*Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*" by Doris Pilkington Garimara. It concerns the author's mother, who at the age of 14 years, her 8 year old sister Daisy and their 10 year old cousin Gracie (all mixed race Aboriginals or Half casts), who ran away from the Moore River Native Settlement, (an internment camp), north of Perth Australia, in order to return to their Aboriginal families, after being placed there in 1931. The film follows the girls as they trek/walk for nine weeks along 1,500 miles (2414km) of the Australian rabbit-proof fence to return to their community at Jigalong while being tracked by a white authority figure and a black tracker.

### **Dreamgirls 2006 (Musical)** (Amazon, 2019)

During the late 1960s and early 70s, three friends from Detroit, Effie White Deena Jones and Lorrell Robinson form an R&B act called '*The Dreamettes*'. The women compete in a local talent contest where they are discovered by Curtis Taylor, Jr, a ruthless talent manager who offers them a job to be the backup singers for headliner James 'Thunder' Early. They take the job and soon find out that Curtis has now taken over their lives. Their first professional show is at the Apollo Theatre in New York City. Effie's brother, C.C. White is a talented songwriter who begins to write songs for Early and the group. Using the talents of C.C., Curtis decides to

change their style from R&B music to pop music and to go out on their own. Curtis also moves the beautiful Deena to the lead singer spot and moves Effie to backup. Now called '*The Dreams*,' they become a worldwide success with Deena as the lead singer. However, in time the three women realize that life is not all about fame and fortune. The moral of this story is that family and friends are the most important aspect of life.

### **Shirley Valentine 1989(Based on a play)**\_(Amazon, 2019)

This was originally written as a monologue in a one act play by English playwright Willy Russell. This was made into a movie and starred English actress Pauline Collins. The movie included other characters and locations. Shirley's a middle-aged Liverpool housewife. Her husband is set in his way, and there is a regular meal every night. He is somewhat abusive towards her and she finds herself talking to the wall while she prepares her husband's "chip'n'egg dinner", wondering what happened to her life. She compares scenes in her current life with what she used to be like and feels she's stagnated and in a rut. But when her best friend wins an all-expenses-paid vacation to Greece for two, Shirley begins to see the world, and herself, in a different light. When she arrives in Greece, she decides she is not returning home to Liverpool, England. There is a scene towards the end of the movie when her husband arrives on the Greek Island to find her and talk her into returning home to England. Shirley has completely changed, and he doesn't recognise her at all.

### **The Wind That shakes the Barley 2006** (Amazon, 2019)

This is set in rural Ireland in the 1920s during the civil war after the 1916 uprising. Due to the unrest in the country, the British government deploy soldiers to control the Irish streets. These soldiers were known as the "Black and Tans" due to their uniforms. They controlled with an iron fist and were cruel and brutal towards the Irish people.

### **Little Voice 1998.** (Amazon, 2019)

A reclusive shy girly named L.V. (Little Voice), spends her time listening to her late fathers' old records in her room. When the ghost of her father visits, she sings the songs of the great singers like; Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe and Shirley Bassey. She is exploited by her

mother's current boyfriend, a talent scout. During her preparations for a public performance, she befriends a racing-pigeon telephone engineer.

**Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café.** ( Amazon 1991).

(Amazon, 2019) Evelyn Couch is in her 40s and having trouble in her marriage. It appears that no one seems to take her seriously. While in a nursing home visiting a relative, she meets Ninny Threadgoode, an outgoing old woman, who tells her the story of Idgie Threadgoode, a young woman in 1920's Alabama. Through Idgie's inspiring life, Evelyn learns to be more assertive and builds a lasting friendship of her own with Ninny.

**Educating Rita, 1983** (Amazon, 2019)

In London, twenty-seven-year-old hairdresser Rita, decides to complete her basic education before having children as desired by her husband Denny. She joins a literature course in an open university and is tutored by the middle-aged Dr. Frank Bryant: he's an alcoholic and debauched professor from the upper-class whose life has left him emotionally drained and with very low self-esteem. Frank lives with Julia, who's also a professor, and they have a loveless marriage. Rivalry, humour and determination to improve herself is contagious; she gives motivation to Frank who helps prepare her for the entrance exams to join the university and be able to leave her husband. Will she succeed in the exams?

**Steel Magnolias, 1989 (Based on a play)** (Amazon, 2019)

Pivoting around the lively 'Truvy Jones' Louisiana, USA, beauty parlour, a tightly knit band of friends, confront griefs, loss, life's unforeseen tragedies and heartaches with what they do best: gossiping and sharing. The spirited diabetic and bride-to-be, Shelby; her always supportive mother, Mai-Lynn; Truvy's awkward, gawky assistant, Annelle; the city's curmudgeon, "Ouiser"; and the town's former first lady, Clairee, are the warm Southern women who know how to survive life's challenges with their unwavering friendship. But, when Shelby decides to have a baby, things will turn upside down. Shelby is a diabetic and has been advised on medical grounds not to have children naturally. She decides to get pregnant but suffers the consequences and dies.

**Appendix G – Monologue of Gender****When I Grow Up!****A Monologue written and performed by Brian Grainger**

Context: Boys like Lego and trucks. Girls like skipping and teaset

Appearance : One shoe off and sock on other foot half off. A black eye.

Props: Carrying a skipping rope and a stuffed toy, a unicorn. Hidden in a bag is a stuffed monkey and a child's teaset.

(Monologue)

Of course I'm a boy !!! I am 6 and seven eights, I'm very good at sums.

I like skipping, coz when I grow up, I'm going to be a boxer

I have a best friend, her name is Mary, I like her a lot coz she has a tea-set

One day she didn't want to play with her tea-set, she wanted to play tennis. I didn't want to play tennis, so we had a fight, and she hit me with the racquet, that's why I have a black eye

The best day of my life was when I sneaked into me sister's bedroom and found her teaset, I had a great time under the bed with the teaset, and I had me two friends, monkey and unicorn.

I had to put it back, coz it wasn't mine to keep. It was a great day !

But that's ok, coz I still like skipping, (grasping the skipping rope), coz you know, when I grow up, I'm going to be a boxer!!!

The End