

CHAPTER 4

GROUP/ENSEMBLE IN A GENERAL MUSIC APPRAISAL PROGRAMME

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this chapter is to share the researcher's findings of the possibilities of the MEUSSA model in a General Music Appraisal Programme (GMAP). The research was carried out in a secondary school situation, because the researcher is mainly involved in music education from Grades 8–12. The author also explored the concept of incorporating musical creativity in the classroom, and includes a means of assessment.

The importance of music creativity is underlined by the following statement made by John Finney, a lecturer in music education at Homerton College Cambridge, UK, with special responsibility for the training of music teachers. He addressed creativity in regard to singing in *Music Teacher* (Finney 2000:24):

If developed consistently, singing provides a central resource in performing and composing at every level. It will, for most pupils, strengthen aural perception and aural memory, which may lead to the learning of written notation.

Research was done with group/ensemble by using the voice and available instruments such as percussion, recorders, self-made instruments and the electronic keyboard. Conclusions reached concurred with Finney, namely that, if developed consistently, group/ensemble provides a resource in performing and composing at every level. It will, for most pupils,

- strengthen aural perception and aural memory, which may lead to knowledge, developing of skills, and making individuals feel valued within a group

- contribute to the creation of a productive classroom climate.

Interviewing the six schools mentioned in Chapter 2.6 gave a good indication of the current state of music education in South African schools. Also by communicating with facilitators from other schools in various provinces during her research, the author came to the conclusion that schools in South Africa have more or less the same difficulties:

- no/not enough facilities
- no/not enough instruments
- no/not enough qualified music teachers
- big classes (38+ children in a group)
- time restrictions (periods are too short)
- discipline problems.

How are South African facilitators responding to group/ensemble in general music? The author finds this question difficult to answer simply because facilitators responded differently. By means of informal discussions with the facilitators mentioned in Chapter 2.6, the following statements were made that revealed different responses. A music facilitator interviewed from Centurion High School in Gauteng stated:

It is impossible. Student numbers in classes are too large (36-40 learners in a class) to manage.

A facilitator at Philena Middle School in Centurion stated:

We prefer ensemble activities to formal class music education. We have too many learners in the music class. We prefer improvised and creative singing and dancing, because our facilitators are not trained to teach Culture and Arts.

Diana van Aarde at Wonderboom High School in Pretoria was positive about group work, and stated:

Group work is essential in the teaching of music. It is important to have a suitable classroom and instruments of good quality. At Wonderboom High school we are lucky to have recorders and melodic percussion instruments to support us in the music class. We recommend group activities for all learners.

Marethe King, Head of Music at Sir Pierre van Rhyneveld High School, wrote the following in their Extracurricular Music Policy Document (2001:3): "Teachers will encourage learners to get involved in different combinations".

Apart from the negative statements made by some of the mentioned facilitators, the researcher is confident that the problems can be overcome by means of teacher training, well-prepared lessons, self-made instruments and an enthusiastic facilitator, because every facilitator articulated the importance of group creativity in a general music programme, which is important for the future of Music in South Africa.

However, it is not only in South Africa that facilitators complain about their classroom situation. Finney writes in *Music Teacher* (2000:25):

Music teachers' beliefs are daily acted out with commitment and enthusiasm. They come to know what works but they are usually on their own when things don't work; they rarely have an in-school forum for solving curriculum problems or for considering imposed initiatives in the way teachers of most other subjects do.

While reading an article by Charles Leonhard, a distinguished teacher, lecturer and author in music education for over six decades in America (1999:40), the author came to the conclusion that the article could just as well have been written about South African schools. In this article Leonhard looks back at successes and failures of past attempts to improve music education and makes suggestions for future developments. Many of the problems and facts mentioned by Leonhard were experienced by the author of this thesis in music education in South Africa since 1965, for example (1999:41):

- We have some excellent bands and orchestras, superb marching bands and impressive choruses, but music in school is no longer for all children, it is for those students who choose to specialise and perform
- The above situation contributes to the “elitist virus”, an attitude that leads conductors to concentrate mainly on difficult music or music contests. [In South Africa, teachers concentrate mostly on the practical and theoretical examinations of the University of South Africa (UNISA).]
- Competition contributes to the development of students who learn only to perform and rarely develop the broad understanding of music that constitutes music literacy. [In South Africa, the practical and theoretical music examinations of UNISA contribute to the development of performing and theory exercises with no other practical experience to broaden students’ music literacy.]

4.2 PURPOSE OF ENSEMBLE AS FOUNDATION IN THE GMAP

Leonhard (1999:42) writes the following in his article:

The primary goal should be to develop musical literacy in all students by using performance, listening, improvisation, and composing as the means to that goal – not, as is commonly the case, as ends in themselves. In order to meet this challenge, we must keep the performance program strong.

Ensemble in the GMAP is a way to give all learners the opportunity to play/sing/dance/perform in a group. Although they are not performers in the sense of soloists, they do perform in a class situation. Leonhard (1999:43) makes the following suggestions:

- Offer beginning instrumental instruction all through the middle school and high school years for students who have been passed over under the current “one time only” offering
- Make instruction available in non-traditional instruments, including guitar and synthesiser
- Organise performance groups from beginning to advanced levels at every grade level
- Involve students in the selection of repertory, in serving as critics during rehearsals, in researching significant information about the music they perform and hear, and in thinking about the music, and expressing those thoughts
- Avoid the “elitist virus”
- Keep the jazz program strong by involving the players in improvisation – the heart of jazz

- If possible, develop an electronic piano laboratory and computer-assisted music instruction, taking advantage of software of increasing quality.

Although it is not possible to react in all South African schools to the developments suggested by Leonhard, everybody can explore group/ensemble playing according to their own needs. The classroom is a place where ample opportunity is given for musical experience. It not only surrounds the learners with a musical atmosphere, but also animates its learners with the desire to be able to enjoy this atmosphere. Where no instruments are available, the voice is the primary agent that can be used for providing musical experience in a group, and in addition, it is the most natural avenue of the expression of the emotions.

Since 1984 the author has been actively involved with group/ensemble for Music as a subject. Although she taught at a school with more than 1000 learners, there were never more than 10 learners in her class, which emphasises Leonhard's remark about "elitist virus" in music education. With the implementation of Culture and Arts in January 2001, experimentation was done with music as a subfield for NSB 02. For the first time in her teaching career the author experienced group teaching of 35-40 learners in a class.

The differences between the two groups are clearly seen in Table 4.1. The possible percentages for Further education are derived from discussions with Grade 8 and 9 learners at Centurion High School.

Table 4.1: Difference between groups for Music as a Subject, Grade 8 and General Music, Grade 8

Subject	General Music	Music as a Subject
Number of learners	40 learners in a class	10 learners
Instruments	Any instrumental skills are the result of in-class provision.	Benefit from one-to-one instrumental tuition.
Notation	Not musically literate.	Musically literate.
Are learners interested in taking the subject?	Often demotivated and fail to see the point of school music.	Most learners are interested in music
Facilities	Not enough facilities available to accommodate all learners.	Enough facilities to accommodate all learners.
Further education	±30% likely to opt for a General Music Appraisal Programme for NQF levels 2-4.	± 90% opt to drop Music during school hours. ±10% prefer specialisation in a specific unit standard for NQF levels 2-4.

During the research it was found that the attitude of the group of 40 learners changed during the course of the year. Bringing them into contact with instruments and giving them the opportunity to explore with sound made them more interested in the subject. Singing and playing on instruments provides learners with the means of developing musical knowledge and skills. Practical experience of the concepts of music enables learners to:

- attain individual and group goals
- exercise diverse problem-solving skills
- gain more confidence
- develop particular qualities of musicianship, including rhythmic sensitivity, attention to tonal balance and sympathetic listening
- listen, both to one's own playing and to that of one's fellow learners.

In an article by Elizabeth Bray, Head of Music at William Parker School, Daventry, Northampton, UK, she writes (1997:11):

We seek to provide meaningful musical experiences inside the classroom, and to concentrate the talent of instrumentalists in a separate arena. The needs of all children are thus met.

Bray offers a series of comparisons between the general music learner and the instrumentalist (music as a subject) learner in Table 4.2 (1997:12).

Table 4.2: A comparison between the general music learner and the instrumentalist (Bray 1997:12)

INSTRUMENTALIST	GENERALIST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually musically literate • Is familiar through direct experience with a wide range of musical styles • Has benefited from one-to-one tuition on an instrument, often from an early age • Has accumulated wide-ranging skills, including aural awareness, interpretation, sight reading, performing, etc. • Perceive themselves a musical and as musicians and are perceived by others in the same way • Have access to separate activities which take place outside the school timetable • Experience music in a live and real way • Have access to different quality of relationships with music staff, and experiences which reinforce and reward the sense of themselves as talented and set apart from the average pupil • As a result of this external system they are further motivated • Likely to opt for GCSE and A-level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not proficient in literacy • Most familiar with styles drawn from popular culture. Experience of music is informal, social and personal • Any instrumental skills are the result of in-class provision • Skills may not have been accumulated in a systematic way. May be patchy and irregularly assessed. Pupils may have tried many classroom instruments but not become proficient on any • Do not regard themselves musical in the same way as their peers who play instruments • In theory have access to separate activities, but with the exception of the choir, all these usually require instrumental skills • May not participate in performances • Have more formal relationships with music staff and sparse opportunities to produce work of the same quality as the instrumentalist • Often demotivated and fail to see the point of school music, although maybe involved actively outside school • More students drop music after the age of 14 than any other subject.

Looking at Table 4.2 above, it is evident that instrumentalists have more opportunities to develop their music talent than the generalists, who are only involved in the general music programme. It is therefore advisable for learners in

the UK to specialise from an early age in an instrument if they want to gain a GCSE and/or A-level certificate as part of their curriculum.

4.3 THE ROLE OF GROUP/ENSEMBLE IN THE GMAP

The author of this thesis feels very strongly that group/ensemble should form an integral part of all unit standards of the GMAP. Every unit standard should be supported by group/ensemble as seen in Diagram 4.1:

Diagram 4.1: Modeling the General Music Appraisal Programme with addition of an integrated group/ensemble

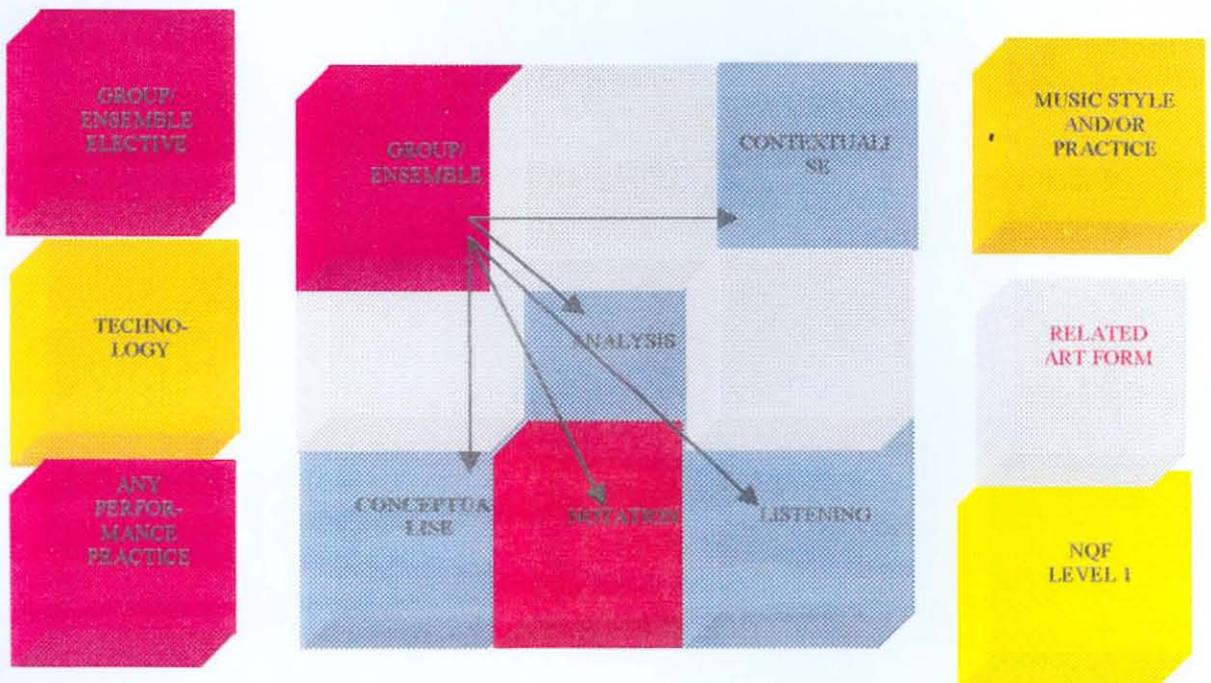


Diagram 4.1 above, illustrates the integration of group/ensemble in the GMAP level 1. The same strategy should be used in the GMAP levels 2-4, with the addition of Music Technology (see Diagram 3.2).

The word “ensemble” tends to frighten music educators. It suggests a high level of craftsmanship and control and demands an ability to improvise, create and perform. Many educators are themselves unclear about ensemble and lack vital

practical experience. Therefore, a study of the research outcomes of the National Association of Music Educators (NAME) was made regarding group work in the general music programme of schools in the UK, to support the writing of unit standards for the GMAP levels 2-4 (Chapter 3) and the ESP levels 2-4 (Chapter 5).

To incorporate group/ensemble in the GMAP, the author suggests the following:

- Music lessons should be practical. Facilitators must aim to give at least one truly musical experience at some point in every lesson.
- A facilitator needs to be a practical musician in the classroom to demonstrate and enhance learners' work, and be prepared to take risks to accommodate all learners.
- Facilitators should experiment with a "mixed economy approach". In this approach, different groups work with different equipment while some work individually on other tasks.

Group work can present the following problems:

- Some learners can hide their lack of experience more easily.
- Learners are often out of direct supervision of the facilitator.
- Facilitators often have difficulty in assessing individual effort within the group.
- Some learners take advantage of the situation by talking or walking around.

Group work can, however, be effective:

- Where everybody has the opportunity to play on an instrument
- When the group knows exactly "what to do" and "how to do it"
- When instruments are quickly available

- When projects are set over a very short time span with a requirement to share ideas with each other, so that they have to involve everybody in the group
- If the facilitator sorts the groups so that the key issue for them all is the task in hand, not friendship
- Where the learners know exactly what is going to be assessed.

4.4 SOUND RESOURCES

During 1999 and 2000 an extensive research project was carried out at Bath Spa University into group work in the composition class. The research project concentrated mainly on the secondary school curriculum of the UK. The outcomes of the research were published in collaboration between Bath Spa University College in the UK, and the National Association of Music Educators (NAME).

Reading the document, *Composing in the Classroom – The Creative Dream* (NAME 2000:1-41), the researcher found that the research of NAME is directly relevant to her own research on group/ensemble in the GMAP. The following is a quotation from the mentioned document, and can be adopted for group/ensemble in the GMAP. NAME made a study of what teachers have to say about sound resources in general music education, and published the following statements made by some of the teachers:

Teachers say (NAME 2000:30-32)

- All instruments must be of good quality; if you stick a tin pot in front of them you will get a tin pot quality response.
- Keyboards are a practical survival choice when you're under pressure, a means to an end but they can be very limited aesthetically.
- The keyboard excites all pupils; it is accepted as the modern instrument to play. If we don't use the cultural influences that children have had before they come to us we are bound to be counterproductive and we will lose them.

- We need a workhorse of a keyboard with a few simple functions. However, I know lots of people in the UK want demo buttons to go but they don't bother me; it's another sound for a child to use if they want to.
- We used to use sets of guitars or recorders to learn instrumental skills but recorders particularly don't have any street cred; it's a shame because recorder consort music is so playable.
- Percussion becomes less attractive and keyboards more, but if they could all play orchestral percussion they would be far better stimulated by it.
- It hasn't yet dawned on the ICT department of the value of what children are learning through keyboards and computers; when they do catch on, we'll have to guard against them pre-empting some of our music time.
- The most effective teaching integrates the teaching of performing, composing, listening and appraising.

Although not all schools in South Africa are equipped with instruments, it should not be an insuperable problem to accommodate instrumental work:

- Portable tape/CD players are available in many households in South Africa. Where there is no electricity in rural areas, batteries can be used for the keyboard and CD player
- Using the voice or body as an instrument should often be the starting point
- Tins, sticks, etc. can be used for sound sources.

Effort should be made to use any available instrument of quality, for example keyboards, percussion, acoustic instruments and computers.

4.4.1 The keyboard

It was found in NAME's research that the keyboard is the most ubiquitous instrument in British schools. This may not be the case in South Africa, but where keyboards are available, the researcher recommends facilitators to make more use of them, and she also agrees with NAME (2000:31) that the keyboard allows learners to:

- produce something worthwhile and development skills whatever their ability level
- visualise and feel how music works, developing an understanding of pitch relationships and harmony
- sequence melody and accompaniment on one instrument
- record their own work including their early improvisations and see their own progress or provide recording for assessment
- use the sounds of a variety of instruments through using different voices/timbres
- progress from simple to advanced, from single finger chords to their own figurations of chords with both hands
- make arrangements of music they know
- play sociably in ensemble
- develop notation reading skills
- play with other acoustic instruments
- use keyboards in percussion work as well as melodic and harmonic work
- work independently without being disturbed, using headphones
- be motivated by them, if they are of sufficient quality, as many children identify culturally with the instrument.

The author found that the above quotation is relevant to her research on ensembles for available instruments. The keyboard is adaptable, and can be used by generalists as well as specialists in the proposed GMAP and ESP, NQF levels 2–4.

4.4.2 Acoustic instruments

This research found that percussion instruments are the most ubiquitous in South African schools. Percussion instruments provide a flexibility of options, from body percussion and self-made instruments to high quality percussion such as orchestral metallophones, African drums, marimbas, mbiras and other relevant instruments.

Other acoustic instruments than percussion instruments can be used where they are available at schools. Learners who study instruments outside the classroom should be encouraged to bring their instruments to school. NAME found (2000:32):

By doing this, they learn new ways of thinking about their own instrument, developing skills in it in different ways. Using their class also benefits other pupils who hear the instruments live and develop their understanding of the instrument's potential. An acoustic instrument played well can also lift a group performance in ways, which cannot always be planned for.

The author agrees with the above statement. Learners should play their acoustic instruments not only for individual performances and ensemble playing, but also during the general music programme that will give other learners the opportunity to gain first hand information about the instrument.

4.4.3 Voice

The voice is the one natural musical instrument that is universally available and that most learners can use reasonably well. It should be used in group work chiefly for developing musical experience which is a much more important project than mere vocalising. The researcher's vision is to develop an appreciation of music among the majority of learners, and not merely the technique of voice training.

Where no instruments are available at schools, the voice is an option that cannot be ignored. NAME discovered in their research (2000:31) that many teachers use the voice very little for composing, and that the voice is an infinitely flexible instrument to try out sounds and ideas. The author finds that the voice is the primary agent we can use for providing musical experience and development, and in addition, it is the most natural avenue of the expression of the emotions. All music should start with singing.

While facilitators are concerned with the human voice in general terms as a part of the musical equipment of all learners, and not immediately concerned with the specialised product, it is wise to give attention to the intelligent use of what vocal ability there is. The main object should be the practical experience of music, not the training of vocalists.

4.4.4 Computers

Computers are still an 'elitist' component in South African schools. They are mainly used for administration, and specialised computer literacy. In England's schools, computers are widely used in their general music programme. Learners have the opportunity to experiment with sound.

The composition by the learner Mary Partington (see Appendix B, p. B.2–B.9), is the result of action research done with a Year 11, GCSE learner by Annalize Hoek, facilitator at St Angela's Ursuline school in London. Mary Partington composed *All in a Day's Work*, using the Sibelius Software Music Notation Programme. The author asked Annalize Hoek if the composition could be used as a group activity. She stated (A.A. Hoek 2001):

No, learners were not able to play the composition, because the rhythmic and melodic standard of the composition was too high for them to play. Yet, learners experienced the excitement of listening, evaluating, and criticising compositions done by their classmates. Improvising, creating and listening was the main issue of the lesson.

In the case of Mary Partington the task was done by one learner only, but could also be given as a group activity. The advantage of this project is that learners can listen to their own compositions critically, change the instrumentation, and discuss the outcomes of the activity with their classmates. The end result can be recorded on a CD.

The author feels very strongly that Music Technology should be incorporated in most class activities, and that facilitators should be trained to use it properly. Jeanet Domingues (2001), one of the MEUSSA members, is currently working on a Music Technology Software Programme for facilitators that will open a new era in South Africa's music education system.

The National Association of Music Educators (NAME) did the following case study with computers and keyboards in a Year 11 composition class of 15 learners (2000:34):

Context: 11-16 learners in a small town school with technology college status. Department of 1.7 staff; music room set out with 15 computer and keyboard work stations with Cubase; only two practice rooms at a distance from the main classroom; 60 minute lessons; plenty of good quality percussion including African drums and steel pans.

Task: to compose an imitative piece with some elements of fugato writing. Write four short melodies which work together and which naturally form an interesting chord progression; develop compatible counter melodies based on a fragment of one of the melodies, patch each fragment in imitatively to build a lengthy structure; complete with introduction and coda.

Methodology: the teacher uses his computer briefly as a white board to show all learners the next stage of the writing needed. All pupils individually on the computers access their own work from the previous lesson and work on the next stage. The teacher circulates and uses additional headphones to listen and discuss work on an individual basis.

NAME came to the following conclusions:

Good features of the lesson

- Pupils use professional quality sound which compares well with sound they hear every day

- Pupils can record several strands of music together, patch in ideas, imitations, repeats, inversions
- They are able to check accuracy, listen to their work as often as they wish and refine it easily
- They develop their musicianship through the process of constant listening and refining
- Pupils write music which is more complex than that they could play themselves live
- Pupils can visualise chunks and patterns in music, relating closely to our now more visual culture
- The teacher uses the computer screen as the equivalent to a white board around which the whole class can be involved in a class discussion
- The teacher demonstrates clearly by improvising an example of what he is asking them to do
- The software enables easy access to the composing process for all abilities
- Pupils reinforce their learning of notation while not being dependent on the ability to read
- Pupils can gain access to the equipment at all times outside lesson time with minimal supervision; several pupils stayed on after the lesson to continue their work
- The use of headphones makes for a quiet, easy to manage room
- Pupils' achievement has been raised since the new equipment was installed.

Problems to be solved

- Not all pupils know what their music sounds like live or whether it is playable by acoustic instruments
- Some pupils do not share what they write with others. Is there any function for a composition if it is not performed to others?
- The pupils' aesthetic and cultural education may be limited by the too frequent use of keyboards and computer
- There is a tendency for the boys to dominate
- Long term planning for replacement of this resource is essential and expensive.

The researcher found in her investigations that there are facilitators in South African schools with the expertise to incorporate computers and technology in the GMAP, but facilities are not available. Schools still struggle with basic facilities such as electricity and writing utensils, etc. It is therefore necessary that unit

standards for Music technology should be compiled for the GMAP, NQF levels 2-4 for the generalist learners, with the option to specialise in Music Technology.

4.5 ASSESSING GROUP/ENSEMBLE IN THE GMAP

Assessment of pupils' learning and achievements in group/ensemble is embedded in the cyclical process of listening and observing their work, making judgements, feeding back with pointers for development, and keeping records. Assessment and practical experience of music for big classes are time-based, therefore it is important to be realistic about the amount of assessment needed and the time available to assess learners' competence and understanding.

NAME gives four processes to assess group/ensemble and make judgements (2000:18):

- Listening to pupils' work can be done during the lesson, at the end of a lesson or on tape or disk at a later date.
- Making judgements is done all the time, whenever there is an interaction with a pupil. More formal judgements are made when ideas are heard in the whole class context. Pupils will also be making judgements, though they may not always be able to express it at a level which is illuminating. Lengthy evaluation sessions at the end of lessons are rarely as effective as a musical closure to the lesson in terms of increasing motivation and intuitive learning.
- Feedback about their work is essential for pupils in order to progress.
- Regular and systematic record keeping is needed to record what pupils are doing, any judgements made, and to ensure feedback given is acted upon. This is best done little and often so that a profile begins to emerge for each pupil over the year. On the spot observations can be simply coded and made when the need arises.

Where outcomes-based education is a reality in the South African Education system, learning is based on end-results and is learner-driven (Olivier 2000:6).

Assessment of the practical experience of music in group work can be related to outcomes-based education by means of formative and summative assessment. According to Olivier (2000:68),

Formative assessment takes place during the process of learning and its main purpose is to provide feedback to learners on strengths and weaknesses that were identified during the learning. Summative assessment is done to make judgements about achievements.

When dealing with the two types of assessment in group work, the process is transparent and learners are informed beforehand about the impact it will have on their learning and progress.

Those involved in the assessment process are the:

- learners assessing themselves
- learners assessing their classmates
- learners assessed by the facilitator.

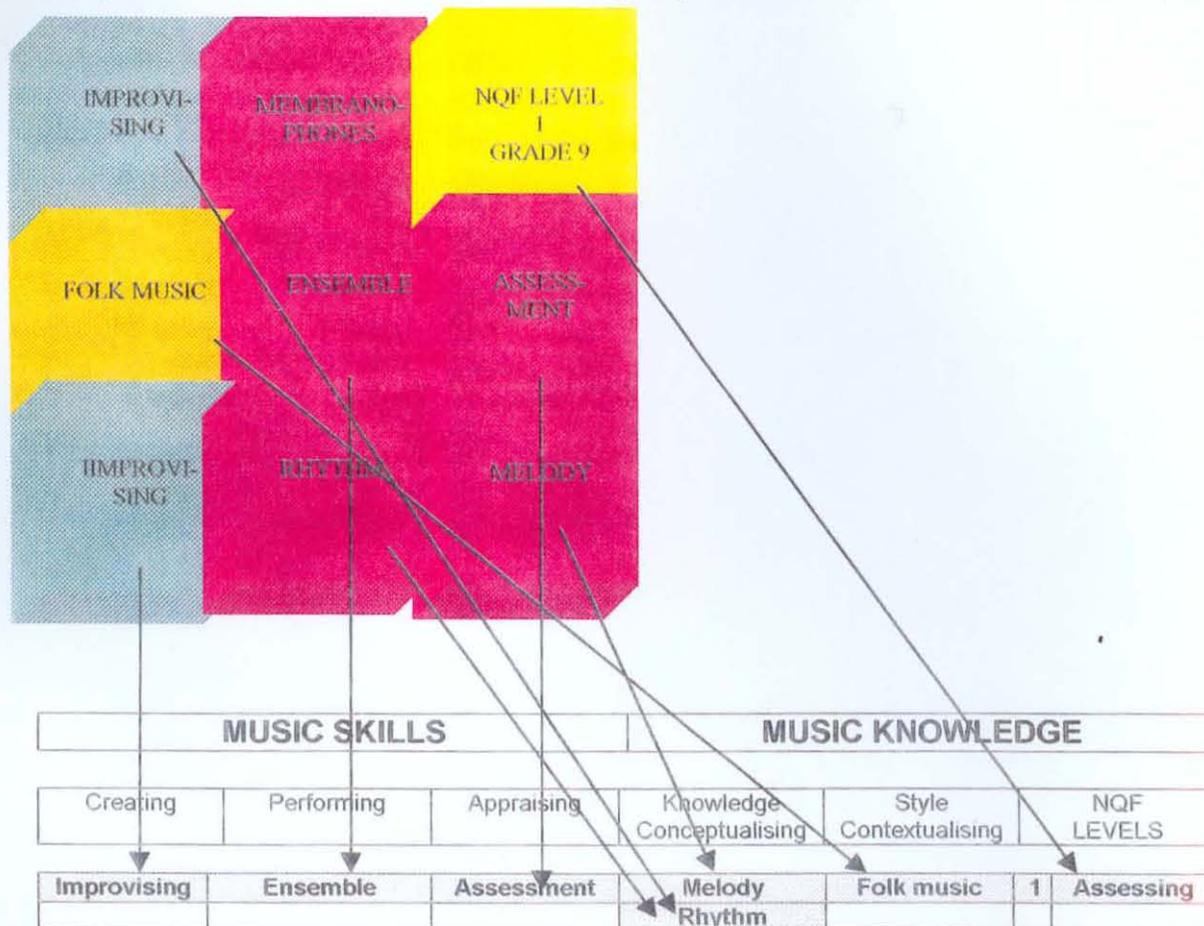
4.6 IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP/ENSEMBLE IN THE MEUSSA MODEL

The author explored two options to implement the MEUSSA model in the GMAP.

4.6.1 Option 1: Folk music

The following mapping can be used for Folk music. In this mapping African music is incorporated in the lesson.

Diagram 4.2: Possible combinations for group/ensemble, NQF level 1 (Grade 9)



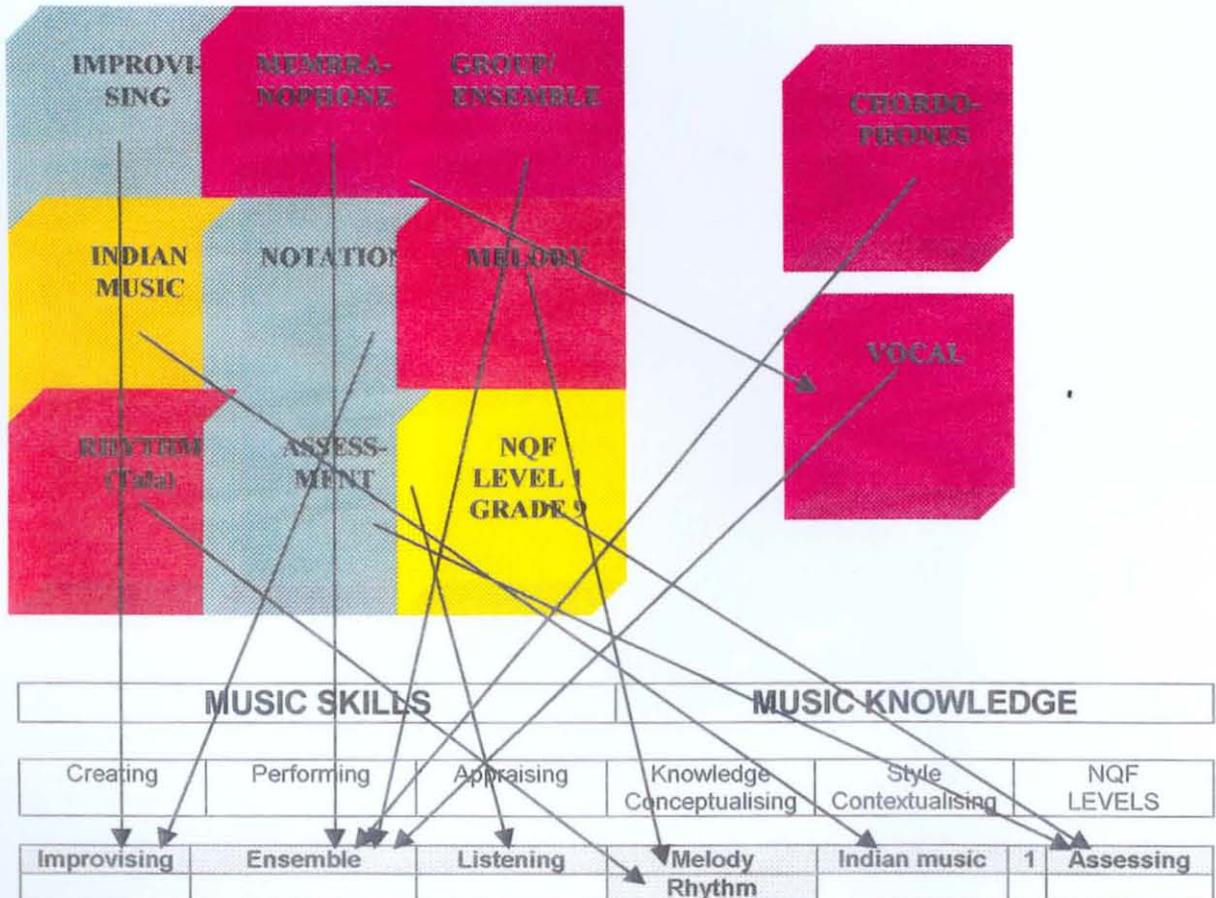
- **GROUP/ENSEMBLE:** Membranophones (drums or any handmade instrument, for example, tins, etc.)
- **FOLK MUSIC:** According to every school's culture and needs
- **MELODY/RHYTHM:** Improvisation
- **IMPROVISING:** Rhythmic patterns
- **IMPROVISING:** Movement (dance)
- **ASSESSMENT:** Group assessment by facilitator and self-assessment.

In Diagram 4.2 above the learners concerned are involved with a group activity in African music. The concepts of group/ensemble, folk music, melody/rhythm (melorhythm is a new concept articulated by Meki Nzewi, Professor of African Music at the University of Pretoria), improvising and assessment are joined together.

4.6.2 Option 2: Classical music of India

The following mapping was used for a music lesson concerning classical music of India.

Diagram 4.3: Mapping Indian music in the MEUSSA model, NQF level 1 (Grade 9)



In Diagram 4.3 the learners are involved with classical music of India. The summary on the next page illustrates the concepts, activities and instruments used for the lesson.

INSTRUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocal: songs performed by singer with instrumentalists imitating vocal styles • Available drone instrument that plays the tonic and dominant (or subdominant) notes throughout • Chordophones: tambura – a long-necked lute with four metal strings that are plucked in succession continually. If not available, use other available instrument, for example imitation on an electronic keyboard • Membranophones (drums): maintain rhythmic structure, and may also perform rhythmic improvisations.
IMPROVISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Songs used as a springboard for improvisation • Generally performed and improvised by a soloist and a drummer.
MELODY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly embellished melody – both vocal and instrumental • Melodic lines embellished by microtonal ornaments • Raga: pattern of notes.
RHYTHM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tālā: rhythm organised into cycles.
NOTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and write the notes that form a tālā • Improvise on the tālā notes • Perform on instruments or the voice • Tones, semitones, microtones (intervals smaller than a half step) • Tonic, subdominant and dominant notes • Assess.

4.7 LESSON CONCERNING CLASSICAL INDIAN MUSIC

To gain information regarding the teaching of classical Indian music by South African facilitators, the author made a study of a lesson suggested in *Music Matters, Year 8*, by Metcalfe & Hiscock (1995: 94-104).

4.7.1 Example lesson

The following lesson is a direct quotation of a lesson concerning classical Indian music, taken from *Music Matters, Year 8* (Metcalfe & Hiscock 1995: 94-104), which can be adapted to the MEUSSA model and GMAP.

TEACHER'S NOTES

Introduction

All modern Western societies are multi-cultural, some more than others. We are enriched and enlivened by the philosophies, cultures and artefacts of those whose backgrounds and whose ways of thinking are different from our own.

In what ways, therefore, should we include music from other cultures in the Key Stage 3 classroom? How can tokenism be avoided when many music teachers know so little about these musics themselves? Is it right, for example, to spend time teaching a different system of notation while many pupils at this stage are still struggling with staff notation? Or to buy a set of ethnic instruments when, perhaps, there are not enough Western classroom instruments to go round?

In a project like this, which is designed to last for six hours and to be taught by teachers unfamiliar with Indian music, an authentic style and sound is impossible to achieve. Indeed, an authentic sound in *any style* can hardly be expected in so short a time. There are, of necessity, many details and finer points omitted. What is intended, however, is that by investigating a few of the elements of Indian music, and by handling them in a very simple fashion to create short pieces of their own, pupils will gain some understanding of style and form - the spirit rather than the letter. They will build on their earlier experience of tones and semitones, and of the chromatic, major and pentatonic scales, to create a scale of their own. From here it is but a short step to the hundreds of ragas available to Indian musicians. And from improvising on their own "raga", people will perhaps come to realise that by "doing like" they are experiencing in a small way "being like".

PROJECT AIMS

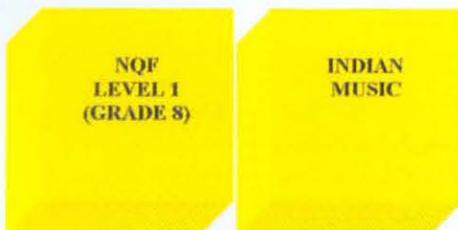
- Through listening, pupils will become aware of the sounds of selected Indian music, and learn about some of its components such as raga, drone and tālā
- Through aural discrimination, be able to distinguish the influence of Indian music on a range of Western music
- Compose their own "ragas" and tālās, and combine them to make and perform their own group compositions.
- Pupils will build on previous experience of improvising and learn to improvise melodically on a raga and rhythmically on a tālā.

RESOURCES

Classroom instruments

Metcalfe & Hiscock suggest (1995: 94), "if authentic instruments are available they should of course be used, but this project was designed for, and has been used successfully, in classrooms where only Orff-type instruments and keyboards were available".

4.7.2 Mapping of the lesson according to the MEUSSA model



- Compose an original scale or raga.
- Notate the raga.



- The notes of the raga are used to improvise the melody of a composition.



- Other parts of the composition will be a drone and a tālā (rhythm). A tālā is based on a repeated rhythm, which is clapped. The drone is based on the home note and one other note which sounds right.



- Use the raga to make a melody. In Indian music the melody is called a raga. Unlike Western melody the raga will be improvised (made up as you go along). Only notes in the original raga can be used. The improvisation will sound different each time.



Final project



- Pupil A: Improvise on a raga. Use own raga
- Pupil B: Play the drone belonging to pupil A
- Pupil C: Clap the tālā absolutely rock steady
- Pupil D: Improvise a rhythm on the tālā.

By the end of the project pupils should, according to their abilities and with varying degrees of success, be able to

- Understand the terms “raga” and “tālā”, know how ragas and tālās are constructed
- Construct a raga, determine its drone, and improvise melodically on it whilst another pupil plays the drone, construct a tālā and improvise rhythmically whilst another pupil claps it.



- Learners assess their classmates
- Learners assess themselves
- Facilitator assesses learners.

4.8 CASE STUDIES BY THE AUTHOR, INTEGRATING GROUP/ENSEMBLE IN THE GMAP

During the research, three group/ensemble lessons were given at Centurion High School, which has approximately 1300 Afrikaans speaking learners. The research was carried out with two groups of learners:

- Grade 8 learners (10 learners), specialising in Music (Music as a subject)

- Grade 8 learners (34-38 learners) in the General music class for Culture and Arts, NQF level 1.

4.8.1 Case study no. 1

The lesson on Classical music of India by Metcalfe & Hiscock (1995: 94-104) was given by the researcher to a class of 36 Grade 8 learners in a 45 minute lesson in General Music which forms part of Culture and Arts, which is compulsory for all learners.

The study set out to investigate the application of the MEUSSA model in a lesson concerning Classical Indian music. The following outcomes were reached:

- The learners discriminated between Indian music, Art music and South African folk music.
- The learners composed their own ragas, discovered their mood and select suitable drones.
- Learners worked in a group and improvised upon their own raga whilst learners of another group played their drone on Orff instruments, melodicas, keyboards, drums and the electronic music laboratory.
- Learners clapped a tālā, which went with the raga.

The following sound resources were used:

- Xylophone
- Melodica
- Keyboard
- Drums
- Electronic music laboratory.

4.8.1.1 Methodology

- The facilitator introduced the topic of music from another culture.
- Learners meet the concept of raga.
- The raga is compared with the major and pentatonic scales, all of which the learners have already met in previous lessons.
- An excerpt from a raga is played to the learners.
- Pupils compose their own ragas, select their mood and select a suitable drone.
- Learners work in pairs. One learner improvises his/her own raga whilst the partner plays its drone.
- Divide the class in two groups. Each learner of Group 1 improvises upon his/her own raga, whilst Group 2 plays a drone chosen by the learners them-selves.

4.8.1.2 Good features of the lesson

The researcher experienced that most learners:

- made progress, either by consolidating, acquiring a new skill, understanding a new concept, or bringing something to conclusion
- were interested in Indian music
- worked together as a group
- were able to compose their own raga
- understood the drone
- were involved together musically at least once in the lesson
- who did not manage to compose their own raga had the opportunity to experience a raga with a partner or as a group
- were very clear about what a raga and a drone are.

4.8.1.3 Problems to be solved

- There were not enough instruments available for all learners.
- The facilitator could not give attention to all learners.
- The class of 36 learners presented considerable problems for the practical experience of music on instruments, for example:
 - Learners were often out of the direct supervision of the facilitator.
 - The facilitator had difficulty in helping individual learners within the group.
 - Some learners took advantage of the situation by talking or walking around, doing no work.
- There was not enough space in the class for the learners to work undisturbed by the activities of other learners.
- The large number of learners made it almost impossible to give adequate attention to individuals of different abilities, and it was a real problem when the learners' practical experience had to be assessed in a group, for example:
 - Some learners can hide their lack of experience more easily, and then receive more credits than they deserve.
 - The facilitator had difficulty assessing individual effort within the group.

4.8.2 Case study no. 2

In the following lesson, learners were involved with notation. Although different music notation systems should be incorporated in the new outcomes-based education system, the researcher experimented in this case with traditional western notation. She is nevertheless aware of the fact that non-western music is most often transmitted orally from parents to child or from teacher to learner. Music notation is less important in non-western than in western culture. Even

when notation exists, as in India, written music traditionally only serves as a record and is rarely used in teaching or performance.

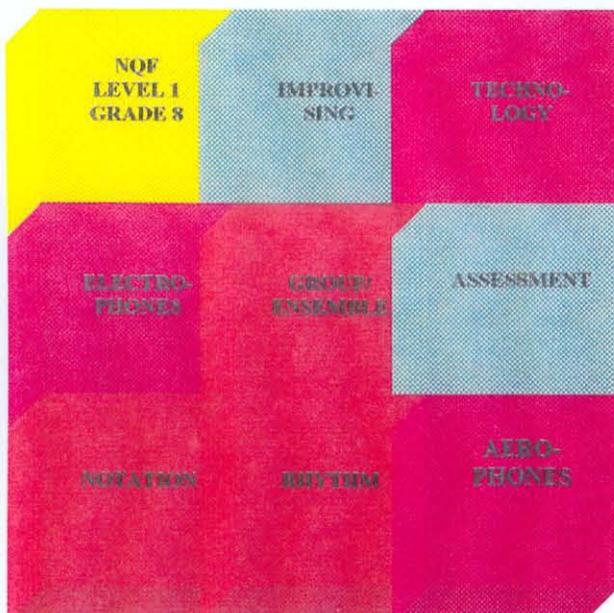
The author gave 10 Grade 8 learners specialising in Music as a subject at Centurion High School, the following lesson on Primary triads (I, IV and V) in a major key during November 2000.

4.8.2.1 Task

- Write and play primary triads in a major key with not more than four sharps or flats for music specialisation, and with no sharps and flats for general music as part of Culture and Arts.
- Practical experience on available instruments, playing *Improvisation alla C, F, G triads* (Hoek 1987:56-57).

4.8.2.2 Mapping of the lesson according to the MEUSSA model

Diagram 4.4: Mapping of Case study no. 2: Music as a specialised subject



Learners have to demonstrate the concepts in the model by means of group/ensemble.

4.8.2.3 Resources

- Electronic music laboratory
- Piano
- Electronic keyboard
- Recorder.

4.8.2.4 Methodology

- **NOTATION:** The facilitator demonstrates primary triads, using sound resources.
- **AEROPHONES:** Learners play the triads on their instruments.
- **ELECTROPHONES:** Learners play on the electronic keyboard.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Learners record their performance.
- **IMPROVISING:** Learners improvise, using various rhythmic patterns.
- **ASSESSMENT:** Learners assess their own work by listening to their own performance on tape.

4.8.2.5 Music used by the facilitator

Improvisation on C, F, G triads (Appendix B:B10) was used as a basis, and the following steps were taken to give learners the opportunity to experience triads practically and aurally:

- The facilitator or a learner can play the melody, on any available instrument.
- Learners play only the root note of the triad C, F, or G.
- Learners improvise a rhythmic pattern while playing C, F, and G.
- Learners play the triads on C, F, and G.
- Learners improvise a rhythmic pattern while playing triads on C, F, and G.
- Learners transpose triads to other keys.

4.8.2.6 Good features of the lesson

- All learners had the opportunity to play on an instrument.
- The facilitator expected understanding and a high level of work rate from learners.
- The facilitator had time to help individual learners.
- Learners were encouraged to bring their own instruments that they are learning outside the classroom.
- Learners had the opportunity to improvise.
- Learners listened to each other. They improvised additional material during their playing because of things they had heard others play.
- The facilitator managed a very efficient sharing of responses at the end of the lesson, which did not dissipate the musical feeling of the lesson.
- Learners were very reluctant to leave at the end because of the short lesson combined with the motivation created.
- Every learner could be observed during the lesson.

4.8.2.7 Problems to be solved

- Not enough time means cramming in activity very fast.
- Different levels of learners need attention.
- Some learners' unrhythmical or nervous responses can hinder the whole, although the longer the practical experience, the better the learner was playing in time.

4.8.3 Case study no. 3

The same lesson was given to a class of 40 learners in a general music class as part of Culture and Arts in March 2001. The following was observed:

4.8.3.1 Good features of the lesson

- There was a great deal of playing during the lesson. The very short time to think about the improvisation resulted in whole class ensemble playing.
- The facilitator had good class control by dividing the class in groups of six.
- The facilitator managed a very efficient sharing of responses at the end of the lesson, which did not disturb the musical experience of the lesson.
- Learners were reluctant to leave at the end because of the short lesson.

4.8.3.2 Problems to be solved

- Getting out and putting away equipment is time-consuming.
- Constant musical activity for a group of 40 learners is very stressful for the facilitator to sustain over time.
- The “noise” level is quite high at times.
- Some learners try to be funny by, for example, hammering any note on the keyboard, and making horrible sounds.
- All learners cannot be assessed individually during the allocated lesson time.
- Some learners rely on their partners to do all the work.

4.8.4 Case study no. 4

In the following lesson, learners are involved with the improvisation of additional parts for a given pentatonic melody on C, D, E, G and A. The researcher gave 38 Grade 8 learners in General music (as part of the Culture and Arts programme) a 45-minute lesson at Centurion High School during May 2001.

4.8.4.1 Task

The learners must

- know and demonstrate what a pentatonic scale is

- clap a rhythm given by the facilitator
- improvise with the notes C, D, E, G and A on given rhythms
- choose as a group of six learners one of the improvisations as a basic melody
- play/sing their parts alone and in class/group/ensemble with the chosen melody.

4.8.4.2 Mapping of the lesson according to the MEUSSA model

Diagram 4.5 maps the different concepts that are used in Case study no. 4.

Diagram 4.5: Mapping of Case study no. 4: Improvisation in a General music class



Learners create in a group and demonstrate the ability to play on the electronic music laboratory, electronic keyboard, xylophones, glockenspiels or any other available instrument.

4.8.4.3 Methodology

- **NOTATION:** The facilitator demonstrates the pentatonic scale on C, D, E, G and A using the music staff and sound resources.

- **AEROPHONES:** Learners play their improvisations on their instruments.
- **ELECTROPHONES:** Learners play their improvisations on the electronic keyboard.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Learners record their performance.
- **IMPROVISING:** Learners improvise, using various notes of the pentatonic scale.
- **ASSESSMENT:** Learners assess their own work by listening to their improvisations, and discussing how they think it tones in with the rest of the class. They assess their classmates by listening to groups playing their improvisations. The facilitator assesses the class and group performance.

4.8.4.4 Good features of the lesson

- The given rhythms and notes made it easy for the learners to react quickly and confidently.
- The option to choose one of the learners' improvisations as a melody resulted in spontaneous competitive playing which stimulated the learners to do their best.
- All learners were actively involved in every aspect of the lesson.
- Keyboard players played in twos to give more learners the chance to play on an instrument.
- The facilitator spent a lot of time with each group and with the class improvisation.
- Learners were very reluctant to leave at the end because they enjoyed the lesson and wanted their improvisations also to be the main melody of the ensemble.

4.8.4.5 Problems to be solved

- Not enough time means cramming in activity very fast.
- Some learners play unrhythmically which hinders the whole.

- The facilitator has no help from other facilitators. Although student monitors were available, she had to organize the instruments, fix an electrical fault during the lesson and take responsibility for tape performances.
- There were not enough instruments for all learners, although this can be dealt with by using the voice.
- There was not enough time to record and assess all the groups.
- The lesson had to be completed during the next period, when the enthusiasm of the learners was less than during the previous lesson.

4.8.5 The author's observation

The author finds it interesting that the same good features and lesson problems occur in England and in South Africa. She advises future researchers to make case studies of various countries and cultures about the reactions of learners, good features and problems in a general music programme to assist South African music facilitators with group work in Culture and Arts.

NAME (2000:23) gives, in their research document, the following (sometimes humorous) features of a noisy classroom, which could be found in any similar general music class situation in South Africa:

- Drum beats dominating completely at times.
- A girl "doodling" on drum/boy doodling with woodblock – very dominating.
- The most strident timbre wins.
- Children have to talk louder to be heard by their peers.
- One boy wandering across the room banging drum indiscriminately.
- Very little teacher control on volume of groups – as long as it's to a purpose.
- 2 boys supposedly working together sitting opposite each other but not actually working together at all – they have to get up to talk to each other because they can't hear each other.
- Can they hear anything in their heads?
- Group of girls in practice room were very cross if the door opened onto the class noise – they are guarding their "silence" fiercely.

- High level of visual communication.
- Some individuals work with concentration on their own.
- One girl “hitting” one note lots of times with her ear pressed to the keyboard’s speaker.
- 3 boys with keyboards and drum use eyeballing a lot about when to stop and start.
- Group of 7 in ensemble room says they have “escaped” there.

4.9 SUMMARY

Although there are many problems to resolve concerning group/ensemble in the GMAP, facilitators should nevertheless experiment with various options for handling a big class (36–40 learners). Suggestions made by the researcher regarding group/ensemble in the GMAP can be read in the final chapter of this thesis.

During this research the researcher observed that learners specialising in an instrument need additional stimulation in the GMAP. For this reason she found it necessary to write unit standards for Ensemble specialisation as part of the GMAP in Chapter 5.