

6. Reflecting on LISTENING AS PART OF THE COMPOSING PROCESS (coded LIGHT BLUE in the 2014 report)

	Pedagogical Issues/Learning Issues (<i>numbers in the left hand column correspond to the 2014 report</i>)	Question	Suggestions/Discussion
25	Listening is crucial to success as a composer and is a complex activity.	What does it mean to listen to a piece of music? Is this a learned skill? If so, how? How can we support effective listening from pupils?	Plan for ways of teaching <i>about</i> listening, as well as for lessons <i>involving</i> listening
22	Listening activity is frequently undertaken by pupils without their understanding of what the purpose might be.	Do we make clear what kind of listening we are expecting from pupils?	There are different kinds of listening: dreamy listening, listening for detail, listening for inspiration, listening for imagery. Make explicit the different kinds.
4	Listening material related to composing activity can often be limited to that immediately suggested by the curriculum.	How do you choose listening material to use support pupil's composing?	Listen widely yourself and contextualize pupils composing within a broad range of listening material. Include challenging music. Choose listening examples of music, from the outset, which challenge pupil views of music and use this listening to encourage discussion of 'what is music?'
23	Pupils are often put off engaging with unfamiliar music because they don't know how to listen to it or have any context for it.	How can we support pupils listening to unfamiliar music and how does this support their composing?	Take pupils inside a composer's way of thinking, their values and aesthetic commitments through intensive musical workshopping using the language and syntax of composers. This is a critical part of the process of opening of minds to the unfamiliar and making it relevant to pupil's learning. Pupils learn how to think inside musical processes as part of their developing composing practice. <i>'Everybody in our class can now listen to Gadget (by composer Fraser Trainer) and get their head around it and get into the music. Once you have got your head around the language, once you have done this then you enjoy it.'</i> Pupil

20	Listening in the context of preparatory group improvisation is a useful way for pupils to hear and refine musical ideas and to understand how these ideas work with those of others.	How do we develop pupil's listening skills in order to support their composing?	Demand musical precision in individual and ensemble musicianship. Insist that musical gestures are given intention by being imagined, sculpted and attended to in their execution. Establish a listening thinking ethos where pupils give attention to the placing of sounds in relation to each other and support them understanding their place in the architectural whole. Teacher: <i>'All the students were treated as musicians, equal to the composer, and were told that 'every sound matters'. The students spent considerable time on 'simple' activities, such as clapping and listening, and there was a very high level of concentration in spite of the amount of repetition.'</i>
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