SECTION: ARTICLES

Is it possible to compose and educate interculturally? Experiences from the Spanish educational system*

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Abstract

Education in Spain is undergoing a needed revision to adapt the didactic methodologies in the educational system to the needs of a pluricultural, 21st century student body. This pluriculturalism has led educators to rethink how they teach, as they belong to a generation that has not directly experienced the causes and effects of a pluricultural situation, beyond the obvious fact that our country's territory was shaped by migratory movements from different parts of the world. In other words, Spanish educators need training in the different educational options available for pluricultural contexts, including multicultural and intercultural education. These approaches can equip them to participate in the teaching/learning process using educational lines that are characterised by multi- or interculturalism (according to preferences, although current legislation establishes interculturalism as the model to follow in the classroom). In that sense, primary school music classes can exemplify the principles of intercultural education; the processes of interpreting music —either through improvisation or in a more controlled way— allow students to put communication between cultures into practice. This paper describes some lessons for working on composition at this educational level and reviews the different reasons for using musical composition as a model tool for intercultural music education.

Keywords

Interculturalism – Composition – Primary – Multiculturalism.

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Introduction: contemporary Spanish society

Between 1990 and 2010, there were a number of important legislative changes in education related to the incoming migratory waves to Spain, including the Basic Law on Education of 2006 (LOE, in its Spanish abbreviation) and the Basic Law on Improving Educational Quality of 2013 (LOMCE, in its Spanish abbreviation). These laws provided for attending to the cultural diversity of the student body through the so called *measures of attention to diversity*, for example in cases of late entry to the school system (SPAIN, 2013, p. 97898), as the cultural diversity of these students could not be ignored (RODRÍGUEZ, 2010).

The educational situation in Spain has always differed from that of other European countries, especially prior to the transition to democracy. This occurred later in Spain than in other European countries because the Franco dictatorship extended beyond the end of World War II. The Transition was a period characterised by activism to demand respect for the cultural diversity across Spanish populations, as captured in documents like the Basic General Law on the Educational System of 1990 (LOGSE, in its Spanish abbreviation). However, considerations for the possible presence of other European and non-European cultures in the same national space were largely omitted, as the intent was primarily to assert Spain's own diverse cultural identities.

In line with Larraín (2003), discussions of culture must precede those on cultural identity, although this paper will only briefly touch on this aspect because it is not the main study objective. The concept of culture has evolved constantly since the earliest experiences in domesticating animals and farming for subsistence, through the refinement of the Enlightenment in the 18th century, and into the fully positive values imbued by symbolic meanings, expression and objects. Fernández (2013) defines culture as a way of interpreting reality in a given social context.

These definitions allow delineating cultural identity as the set of constructed arrangements that define individuals in the context of their interaction with others (LARRAÍN, 2003). Regarding the interaction that characterises cultural identity, Molano (2007) points out that this is not a fixed concept, as human interaction, among both individuals identifying with the culture and people from outside it, constantly feeds identity.

Robledo-Martínez (2015) defines cultural identity as the ties holding a group together within a specific historical and territorial context. Thus, the same interaction that helps to build society will also lead to the recognition of other cultural identities. These, in turn, are understood as the ties binding their own groups together as well as catalysts of changes in other identities.

The recognition of these other cultures and cultural identities emerged in Spain after consecrating the recognition of the pluricultural nature of the national territory, starting with the 1990 LOGSE. Larraín (2003) linked the affirmation of one cultural identity with the necessary existence of other identities with different customs. With this legislative support, Spain thus began to consider other cultural identities and otherness in the educational curriculum in order to guarantee quality and equality in education for all cultural groups. This was a small but foundational step, although Barrera (2013) considers that these institutions filter their acceptance of diversity through one specific cultural perspective.

State of play

Concepts related to cultural diversity: pluriculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism

Adding to the cultural diversity intrinsic to Spanish territory, a migratory boom started at the end of the 20th century and extended well into the start of the 21st. Banks (2014) spoke about how this migration challenged traditional assimilationist conceptions among the citizenry, eventually leading to intentional measures to favour inclusion and equality in education, which were finally captured in amendments to the LOGSE, the subsequent approval of the LOE and finally the LOMCE.

The economic crisis beginning in 2008 halted the wave of immigration, but the insecurity arising from political instability and conflict in the Middle East reversed this trend once again. This situation has compelled lawmakers to respond by adjusting educational legislation to the needs of students with late entry into the Spanish educational system. This student body is considered pluricultural, defined as a multiplicity of forms of cultural expression among different groups and societies (UNESCO, 2005).

Given the above, it is curious that Spain has not always made provisions for its pluricultural nature, at least since the ratification of its democratic constitution. This is not only because of the State's attempts at centralisation, which have obviated Spanish plurality, but also because of the enormous influence of European and US political actions, characterised by multicultural approaches to eliminate racist positions. These do little to favour the intercultural dialogue and exchanges that are so necessary for a shared cultural construction.

In this multicultural line of action, which was dominant until the 1990s, the cognizant legislation promoted educational content meant to share knowledge of other cultures that were (or were not) present in the territory. These concepts were based on the ethnomusicological interest that these cultures could spark among students. But, is conceptual knowledge of a culture enough to guarantee respect for it? Is knowledge of a cultural element as specific as music what inspires respect for the culture? Is memorisation following a lecture on theory a better way to generate knowledge than practice and exchange? Rodríguez (2010) considered that educational content should encompass cross-sectional subject matter and aspire to an education in values, and based on this approach, the answer to the above questions would be a resounding 'no'. Rather, respect for different cultures (and the possible appreciation for other cultural realities) comes from reflective practice with related transversal elements.

Banks's (2014) observations should not be forgotten: pluricultural societies, even if they are in conflict due to the differences among their citizenry, still share and commit to many common values, ideals and goals. This inevitably leads to at least a certain degree of esteem.

Anglo countries do not differentiate between pluriculturalism and multiculturalism, but Spain does: Banks (2014) discusses multicultural societies, while authors like García-Martínez (2002) establish a clear difference: multiculturalism refers to the relatively peaceful co-existence of cultures sharing the same territory (BERNABÉ, 2012), although this does not necessarily imply real exchange, shared community or the accompanying

efforts for mutual enrichment. The approach that the LOMCE promotes is not one of multiculturalism, but interculturalism (see below).

In our experience teaching students at different educational stages both in Spain and in Latin America, joint practice and the process of shared musical construction are what cultivate understanding, knowledge and recognition for other cultural realities, whether these originate from within or outside students' own territory. We can speak about recognising the existence of others and also rediscovering the characteristics of one's own culture from a different perspective: Pérez (2012b) describes this as knowing one's culture through an outsider's gaze. Thus, the study of music must be considered as more than the mere practice of theoretical concepts in order to promote the practice of shared values. This process will culminate in the prized interculturalism cited in current Spanish legislation, the oft-criticised LOMCE.

For all members of Spanish society to live together, and not simply co-exist, the educational process should be seen through the lens of exchange, that is, from an intercultural viewpoint. For UNESCO (2005), this concept depends on the equitable presence and interaction, which provides space for generating cultural expressions that are shared and acquired through dialogue and mutual respect. As García-Canclini (2014) argues, this communicative process will ultimately guarantee a constructive exchange.

Using this educational approach, which is not only the one favoured by current legislation (LOMCE) but also the one that makes the most sense in terms of compositional practice and musical improvisation, cooperative and collaborative group activity will be fundamental because it fosters positive interactions between the different agents involved in the educational process (PLIEGO, 2011). Furthermore, music is the epitome of cooperative, collaborative, artistic group activity, which facilitates a joint focus on societal values and intercultural education.

Given the above, it is legitimate to regard it as indispensable to follow the principles of intercultural education in order to respect the cultural pluralism present in Spain. García-Canclini (2014) considers that the most innovative countries offer training in and for interculturalism rather than simply multiculturalism. This occurs in Canada (also a pioneer in multicultural educational principles). In this way, possible cultural differences become an enriching instrument of the teaching/learning process, understood as the integrated educational process of both the student and the teacher. The key to this process may be in seeing the teacher as an educator rather than simply the deliverer of information (LEIVA, 2010), as only educators can transform the microsociety of the classroom into a force capable of improving macrosociety off campus.

In summary, the principles of intercultural education can promote shared community, acceptance, esteem and respect for cultural diversity, resolving the adventure of an intercultural society in a positive way (CÁMARA, 2010). This challenge has followed us from the previous century and remains a dilemma today.

Music class as a space for intercultural working

In Spanish primary schools, the areas of artistic education (made up of classes in Music and Art) and physical education (PE) have traditionally been considered the most

appropriate settings for work in interculturalism. These spaces are not only seen as centres for work in intercultural content, but also for introducing material related to other profiles included in the measures for *attention to diversity* (e.g. learning and physical disabilities). In these classes, the students who are separated because they need extra support in core academic subjects (language arts, mathematics, etc.) join artistic and PE classes on equal grounds; they do not receive any support from the therapeutic pedagogist in charge of the attention to diversity in Spain. This specialist attends not only the students who enter the educational system late, but also gifted students and those with cognitive difficulties or visual, physical and/or auditory problems.

We can say that this fact, with legislative support from the LOMCE, justifies the inclusive nature of these courses on different levels. The premise of learning to live together (LEIVA, 2010), which is vital for shared community between cultures, is a perfectly workable element in the music classroom, as described below.

Thanks to music, it is possible to develop a sense of cultural belonging (PÉREZ, 2008) as well as of unity within a new, shared culture, using creative resources such as improvisation (BERNABÉ, 2014a) and composition. Music, as a cultural product of a country, becomes a reflection of its cultural reality and a way to approach other cultural realities, whether these are nested in other countries or within the same national territory. Therefore, listening, composing and improvising in music allow students to find out about other cultures, the similarities between them, and the concept of the debt that they owe each other.

Musical artistic activity also represents an escape from the process of homogenisation (FREGA, 2009), which globalisation has tended to impose and which has so (negatively) influenced education in the 21st century. Daza (2012) has argued that the process of globalisation is a homogenising force, leading to the dissolution of personal identity. Identity is usually coupled with the concept of a sovereign nation. A corollary to this is that identities that do not correspond to a particular sovereign nation are oppressed: for example, an immigrant (with their cultural identity) is subjected to the identity of the receiving country. One reality that cannot be ignored is that like culture, globalisation is a process of continuous change, highlighting the inequalities and irregularities in employment in a country, where the power of the market is total (BERNABÉ, 2013).

All of this reinforces the consideration of music education spaces as settings for intercultural education, in which music has an important social function (ESPEJO, 2011). So, how should this musical education process be focused so that it meets the expectations for interculturalism? In our teaching experience, we consider that the priority should be on achieving specific objectives that can be easily extrapolated to other levels: respect for other musical characteristics, the merging of one's own musical elements with others, and the appreciation of difference as an element that enriches one's own musical work. To develop methodologies from an intercultural perspective, these should emphasis interpretive practices that raise awareness of the equality of cultures in terms of musical features, that is: musical language understood as rhythmic, melodic and harmonic elements that characterise the material.

Of course, the process of musical interpretation should also be fostered as a shared experience, made possible by the knowledge of the cultural characteristics that underpin it. This will ensure an enthusiastic interpretation by the class.

Above all, teaching methodologies should focus on promoting dialogue and community through activities of improvisation and composition, which guarantee the exchange (mentioned above as a key characteristic of the intercultural educational process) and respect for the contributions of others (a feature of both multicultural and intercultural educational models).

Music will thus be understood as a communicative act, a facilitator of mutual understanding (PÉREZ, 2008) and a guarantor of successful musical interpretation (an objective of primary level musical education). And, as communicating is an interaction between two or more people, in the music classroom the promotion of the most characteristic activities of joint interpretation already enable that dialogue and exchange: Vidal, Durán and Vilar (2010) consider these types of cooperative musical activities to be essential to achieving social objectives. Ultimately, any educational act is destined to develop socially competent citizens who know how to take advantage of the cultural characteristics of their surroundings, wherever these may be.

It is crucial to note that intercultural work in the music classroom does not necessarily have to be based on the traditional music of the cultures that are represented in the classroom. It also need not be based on urban pop music, which is closer to current student bodies, as shown in interventions proposed by Bernabé (2014b), which analysed the social criticisms made in the lyrics of this genre. Students are not usually familiar with folk music (ARÉVALO, 2009), and they must work to discover new worlds (FREGA, 2009) with creative activities such as musical composition, proposed and developed here. This activity allows students to construct other realities using elements from their own cultural experience, and if this compositional experience is approached in a cooperative way, using the cultural contributions of others, this will be much better for the intercultural objectives pursued through Spanish legislation.

In the same line, Conejo (2012) considers that music class should become a point of training in intercultural values and skills; that intercultural training would not be at the expense of classic training associated with music class, but the most important aspect would be the promotion of respect for cultural otherness among the student body. But why? According to Andreu and Godall (2012), musical learning fosters the acquisition of key skills for the human development of students. Building on this idea, would there be any reason why it couldn't also focus on imparting values in order to develop a more competent social citizenry? This is the central goal of the Spanish educational system.

Education in intercultural values would need to be established to avoid aggravating the current problems of shared communities. The present situation is one of dodging responsibility: teachers do not consider that they have to educate their students in values but only to teach their material, while parents seem to think that the faculty should assume these duties – don't they spend more time with the children? Families are the first socialisers and educators, but schools also have a fundamental role that complements the family's (CONEJO, 2012). However, until these two agents in the teaching/learning process understand the need for their interaction, the disciplinary and learning problems that manifest in the third agent (the student) will persist and spread into society. The conclusion of all this is that the student body is stranded in a no man's

land, and disruptive and problematic behaviours in the classroom multiply. Music could help to solve these problems.

Musical education can contribute to developing competent citizens thanks to the eminently cooperative nature of the process for teaching/learning its precepts. This process enables work on interculturalism as a concept stemming from the interaction and exchange it implies and which also characterises music. As discussed above, music is a universal product that owes a debt to the whole world, as all cultures have contributed their part at some time or another to musical language. It is precisely this fact which makes the music classroom the main axis of the intercultural educational process: music is a language shared by innumerable countries that communicate through it. Despite the centrality of music in the intercultural endeavour, scheduling cuts have disproportionately targeted music classes (OLARTE et al., 2011), contravening the stated desire to guarantee spaces for interculturalism in schools.

Practical proposal: musical composition as a tool for intercultural work

Music education offers a multitude of intercultural possibilities at the stage of primary education (students aged 6 to 12 years), secondary education (aged 12 to 18 years) and even pre-school (< 6 years). Totoricagüena and Riaño (2016) have proposed using composition to work on interculturalism in the first two years of secondary school, similarly to how they did so in primary school education. Likewise, Rusinek (2005) put into practice activities of musical composition as a form of social interaction among pupils.

The LOMCE establishes different types of curricular blocks that should be covered, and within these, we can discuss ways and/or tools to work on them: improvisation, vocal and instrumental interpretation, listening, movement and composition. Each of these can contribute to building respect for pluriculturalism in a different, but equally effective, way. Pérez (2013) analysed the film *Drumline* in this sense, demonstrating how group composition can function as a form of bringing cultures together.

Vocal and instrumental interpretation involves the possibility of working on respect through the appreciation of another's interpretation, especially in the case of a group interpretation with several voices. Sirera (2016) defends that use of group vocal interpretation to work on interculturalism, as does Pérez (2012a), who argues for this inclusion thanks to/through the use of musical rhythm. This would also imply the achievement of a fusion of two interpretations of the same musical reality, as this would be the only way to achieve a joint, shared interpretation.

For its part, musical improvisation is considered decisive in the attainment of interculturalism because it implies the joint, shared construction that requires the musical contributions of the other, the partner. This can be interpreted as the fact that musical activity facilitates the integration of the group/class, respect for its diversity, and the discovery of new modes of expression and communication (CONEJO, 2012). This resource or tool (however we want to consider it), is used quite frequently in both primary and secondary school with greater or lesser intercultural intention.

Moreover (and despite being closely related), if we base activities on a rigorous musical interpretation of the concepts, composition would be relegated to a secondary plane (HERNÁNDEZ; HERNÁNDEZ; MILÁN, 2010), even if it shares just as many nexuses with improvisation. When we improvise, we compose *in situ*, but composition is usually considered too complex an activity, with many rules that make it impossible for younger students. We cannot deny the evident difficulty of working on composition at the primary level, but it is not impossible provided the activities are based on simplified and basic principles, with the primary aim of promoting interculturalism and the secondary aim of initiating students in the creative process of musical composition. Segovia, Casas and Luengo's (2010) proposals have demonstrated the accessibility of compositional tasks for primary school students, thanks to digital writing boards. While this technology was not available to us, the tasks were equally accessible because of the simplicity of the proposed materials. Giráldez (2010) described some useful technological resources to work on musical composition in the classroom, but their lack of availability should not impede work in this area in the classroom.

Above all, we must consider the music room as an ideal creative space for pupils to express their inner world (HERNÁNDEZ; HERNÁNDEZ; MILÁN, 2010). And what better way to achieve that, at the same time as interculturalism, than creative musical composition activities? This was exactly the focus used in our experiences in different Spanish educational centres, characterised by a high proportion of students with late entry into the educational system or Spanish-born children with immigrant parents.

Below, we present some of the composition activities undertaken with children aged 6 to 7 years old. These had the primary aim of working on intercultural values of respect for others' contributions, shared constructions and exchanges of ideas. At the musical level, the pupils also had to understand the mechanisms of musical composition, as adapted to their skills and capabilities.

In light of all the considerations described, we planned group activities to favour the interrelation and exchange of ideas, emotions, etc. Pérez (2013) has defended group composition as the way of working on creativity and partnership as well as on shared group and cultural identity. Sánchez and Epelde (2013) have also supported group work as an easy form of developing creativity, confidence, freedom, and the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Thus, for the first activity, we created groups of three (or another odd number to avoid ties in decision-making that would have to be broken by the teacher, who should be impartial in group decisions). The decision to work in groups for this activity was consistent with the ideas expressed above: at a musical level, individual work only allows the student to learn music; however, at the intercultural musical level, working collectively it is possible to learn music plus respect for partners and group members.

Five measures with musical motifs were handed out so the pupils could fill them in with their favourite colours: prepared stems and note heads to fill in. On the classroom cork board, we hung a pentagram of an appropriate thickness to accommodate the prepared figures of notes and silences; we also fastened the clef and the 2/4 measure. Pupils had to attach the notes to the pentagram in the order that the group had decided together. But

one more detail was also required: under each bar in the pentagram, there was a degree of the C Major scale (we worked only with that key), and the pupils had to decide which note of the chord they were using. Prior to that, the class had worked on the concept of chords and the degrees of the scale, so they only had to count by threes for the notes of the chord, based on the degree of the scale that was indicated. This was a very simple way of introducing the most basic rules of musical composition: beginning I (C), end V-I (G-C).

The students counted the notes from the C Major scale and looked for the notes of the chord that coincided with that degree: if they were given the II, it was the D note, and from there they counted three notes and then another three to obtain the F and A notes. They had to work as a team to decipher the different degrees and notes of the triad chord to find out how to arrange their sheets to create the final composition.

Each group had five measures that were different from the rest of the groups along with two more with other possible combinations. The composition task was simplified by using pre-prepared cards, although the students were still getting used to the rules of musical composition, and of course they were also working on developing their creative capacity, as set out in the cognizant legislation for this educational stage.

On finalising the process of interpreting the chords required in each group, and once the sheets of measures were arranged, the students had to pin them to the cork board. During this process, they had to take turns so everyone could participate and, if necessary, help each other. The last step was to interpret the resulting score, which had very easy rhythmic-melodic combinations (quarter notes and eighth notes, 2nd and 3rd intervals, to assimilate the articulation of singing to the articulation of oral language). The piano accompanied them to make their interpretation process more fun. The aim was to show them the value of their partners' contributions, but this went even further: another classmate was needed to obtain the end product; it couldn't be done alone because more musicians made it better. To finish, the groups were mixed together to show that the final results can never sound the same, because the creativity of the group varies with the composition of its members.

Another activity consisted of preparing an improvisation, which was captured in a musicogram. New groups were created and tasked with preparing a piece using only body parts, which they then interpreted in front of the class so that everyone could join in. Although we have said that this was an improvisation, it had to be shown in a score using alternative graphs that were easily legible for the rest of the class.

Composing as a group entails listening to what others have to contribute, which can be different from or similar to what we have prepared ourselves. This process implies gaining awareness of the existing similarities and differences between one's own and others' contributions, as well as of the enrichment that this process implies.

For this activity, the children were given small clues about the forms and elements that they could use: for example, to show clapping, they could use two hands together with stars to express the effect of the sound. But above all, the aim was to develop their own creativity and to show them how this could be stimulated and strengthened by working with team members who had different –but no less appropriate – ideas.

Results of the experience

The compositional process proposed did not only focus on creativity; it also aimed to stimulate reflection on the cultural characteristics that go into our musical compositions. In other words, compositional activities like the one described had to allow the students to understand an exemplary intercultural product – creating, mixing, fusing, and in short, producing new and shared possibilities. Thus, we followed Sánchez and Epelde's (2013) guidelines, which pointed to musical creativity as one of the main educational resources for fostering tolerance and respect for cultural diversity.

The students willingly took part in the activity because it also represented a departure from the interpretive routine and theoretical explanation: they participated actively, respecting their classmates' turns, and they were very proud of the final products they created.

Activities like the ones proposed are always a more positive option for teaching students respect for diversity than not applying any intervention at all. Even multicultural educational activities that consist only of listening to and/or interpreting other music from different parts of the world is more positive than neither listening nor interpreting them. The use of the musical score as a tool for comparing and studying different styles can contribute to better understanding of cultural otherness, which at a musical level is not as out-of-reach as in other areas of study due to the old adage of the universality of musical language. This entails the conception of music as an element to use when teaching students about cultural differences (SÁNCHEZ; EPELDE, 2013).

The interpretation of musical works opens a world of possibilities for intercultural education. On the one hand, the fact that musical interpretation is an activity with an eminently group-based nature fosters respect for others' (interpretive) turns and (musical) contributions. On the other hand, students' creating music for themselves and taking into consideration others' contributions and tastes fosters a respect based within the student's personal musical feeling. As can be seen, the cooperative nature of this activity helps to ensure knowledge of cultural otherness and recognition of the importance of others' contributions for the development of one's own cultural knowledge.

Yet, despite all the intercultural considerations discussed above, interpretation of a piece does not work on the learner's creativity, and this is a mandatory element of the current legislation for artistic education classes. If music class works on creativity, as we did with our students in the experience described here, a whole system of positive values for change and innovation (DÍEZ, 2009) and peaceful communities (SÁNCHEZ; EPELDE, 2013) could be simultaneously integrated. Thus, the activities of composition and improvisation proposed could develop creativity among students, which would be very positive for the process of intercultural education. At the same time, the intercultural potential of interpretive work should not be forgotten because it articulates that cooperative work and the increased capacities for socialisation and work (TEMPRADO, 2009).

Vidal, Durán and Vilar (2010) have also described the great potential of the music classroom for cooperative learning, which in turn helps to ensure comprehension of the concepts of musical language. Likewise, these collaborative activities favour cultural

exchange because music is the most intercultural product that exists (the result of contributions from many musicians from different parts of the world, coming together to contribute to new advances). It is therefore an essential subject to achieve the prized goal of interculturalism mentioned in Spanish legislation.

Through collective compositional activities, it is possible to initiate a joint cultural construction. If we promote cooperative activities that require the collaboration of the entire student body to achieve a common result, they will be set on a path towards an intercultural situation – the goal of any pluricultural society that aspires to harmonious and mutually enriching shared communities. Having converted this cultural construction into a cooperative group activity, we helped to ensure interest in others' learning process (VIDAL; DURÁN; VILAR, 2010). It was this interest that fostered an approach to otherness from a perspective of baseline respect.

Discussion and conclusions

Céspedes (2009) discussed the usefulness of the composition process for educating a pluricultural society, considering that this favoured tolerance, openness and acceptance of otherness. However, we still consider that there are many pending experiments and benefits to discover if we concentrate that usefulness in the line of interculturalism. Our final conclusions focus on this question.

Based on the existing literature, some of which has been cited in the theoretical foundation of this paper, we can see the appropriateness of using music from other parts of the world in the classroom, as a way to educate students to respect cultural diversity. However, from a musicological perspective and at a theoretical level, that education is multicultural, that is, it imparts knowledge of other cultures. But, does this also imply respect? Can these cultures really live together or will they just co-exist without mutually disturbing each other? In that sense, this paper aims to share an intercultural vision of education, as we consider that the multicultural perspective of music education does not ensure a shared community but only a relatively peaceful co-existence, with some unresolved tensions due to the lack of cultural dialogue (exchange).

Focusing on more technical interpretive questions, we can say that the interpreter's accuracy implies their comprehension of the piece's compositional features, the elements that characterise it, and the intentions of its structure and organisation. This entails the interpreter knowing other cultural realities that are reflected in the scores in order to accurately interpret the piece. All of this will lead them to rethink the elements from their own musical culture to achieve a far more correct interpretation.

Group improvisation involves working out of respect for the other, as it represents a completely free approach to music. Through improvisation, the learner can show their own musical and cultural influences. This tool/resource enables working on respect for otherness through appreciation for each student's musical contributions. It can also contribute to bringing together different approaches to music, facilitating a shared, joint construction of new musical and cultural products, and fostering understanding of the concept of freedom as a right, limited only by the need to not impinge on the freedom of others.

With regard to composition, this musical activity can contribute to establishing an intercultural situation in the music classroom. As commented above, the activities we developed enabled work that was very interculturally enriching for the class, even if it was also slow, patient and very adapted. However, this activity should never be considered one that is only for secondary school students: Hernández, Hernández and Milán (2010) have also worked on composition with 5th and 6th graders, while Sánchez and Epelde (2013) have worked with primary school students in the autonomous city of Melilla, which has a very specific pluricultural context.

Composition becomes more interculturally (as well as more musically) important if we do not forget that composing small, simple pieces favours knowledge of different elements that are characteristic of musical language. Activities like this, which stimulate students' creativity and facilitate their reflection (EPELDE, 2009), are quite important for fostering self-awareness, self-concept, and self-esteem.

For primary school students, composition implies an approach to music from a creative and interactive perspective. It is the beginning of the road to cultural self-knowledge, the revision of one's own cultural characteristics, which are never uniquely 'mine' or 'yours' but rather 'ours'. This is a lesson that music teaches students, especially when they are taught to create their own music. If this creation emerges from group working, cooperation, dialogue among different agents and the pertinent exchange of ideas, then these cooperative composition activities can enable comprehension, respect, interaction, dialogue, and the shared (re)construction of culture in the classroom.

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