Chapter 20: Working With and In Small Groups

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Abstract
This chapter examines two kinds of small group work: "supervised", that is guided by a supervisor, such as a teacher or facilitator; and "unsupervised", that is self-managed or without supervisory input. In the first context, theoretical insight into supervisory work is provided through discussion of leadership styles and the practice of facilitation. Empirical evidence is examined according to three principal areas of research: composing and songwriting with young people; singing and performing with students and adults; and general music-making with older people. In the second context, the functioning of small unsupervised groups is addressed with emphasis on issues of leadership, teamwork, communication and peer-to-peer learning. The discussion focuses on research about small performing ensembles, such as string quartets, as examples of self-managed groups. Six key points about working with and in small groups are highlighted across the chapter: leading and facilitating needs to be flexible; time (including time management) is an important factor; ownership and independence are critical; non-verbal discourse is an effective mode of communication; individuals will assume one or more team roles in unsupervised groups; and peer interactions will allow individuals to develop shared knowledge and experiences as well as other skills.

Keywords: Group work; Facilitation; Leadership; Peer learning

This chapter provides insight into two kinds of small group work: "supervised", that is guided by a supervisor, such as a teacher or facilitator; and, "unsupervised", that is self-managed or without supervisory input. Evidence about group work is discussed by drawing upon research across a range of educational and community contexts, including the ways in which teachers guide students in the activity of composing or performing music together and how facilitators work with community musicians in therapeutic settings. Studies of small groups working without an official leader or supervisor, such as when musicians rehearse in chamber ensembles, will provide alternative insights into learning, including the ways in which individuals acquire experience, knowledge and valuable life skills through peer interactions and teamwork.

The chapter begins with a definition of "small" group work along with discussion of characteristics and assumptions about group work. Next, theoretical and empirical research is reviewed in relation to the two main areas of focus: first, working *with* small groups

(supervised); and second, working *in* small groups (unsupervised). Finally, issues for further research and implications for education and music in the community are identified.

Defining "Small" Group Work

By definition, a group involves two or more individuals who come together intentionally with shared needs and aims (Jacques & Salmon, 2007). A transition in psychological functioning takes place when individuals move into a group setting: personal-identity processes shift to social-identity processes. According to Brown (2000), social identification can be recognised when the behaviours of individuals become "rather uniform" and their treatment of one another becomes "stereotyped" (p. 20). There is, however, no specific number that determines the size of a group as "small" or "large" – this will depend on the set of circumstances and context about which a group is operating. A "chamber" music ensemble, for example, is typically regarded as "small" because of its historical and practical function in Western performance practice – the group was intended to play in a palace chamber – yet, within this context, the string octet is "large" in comparison to the string trio. Similarly, a Western "chamber" orchestra with 25 or so musicians is "small" relative to a full-scale "symphony" orchestra comprising upwards of 50 players. For the purpose of this chapter, "small" will be regarded as a highly flexible description of group size (two or more members) to allow for the varying kinds of group work to which it may typically refer within a particular music-cultural context.

In general, group work, regardless of size and supervisory input, involves some form of task-related activity. One of the first steps to be taken by a group is to establish the nature of the task and how it will be achieved, which often involves setting short- and long-term goals. Working together on a task necessarily involves interaction among group members, including listening to, giving or asking for information, putting forward ideas, making suggestions, and helping one another. Interactions may involve verbal and non-verbal exchanges, including bodily gestures, hand signals, facial actions and eye contact (e.g. King & Ginsborg, 2011).

Although these interactions may be about the task at hand, they will be interpreted within the social context of the group and according to the emotional states and behaviours of individual members. As such, interactions in group work reflect *both* task activity and socio-emotional behaviour. These two aspects of group work are categorised in early research on the analysis of small group interactions (see Bales, 1950).

As noted above, this chapter will focus on two kinds of small group work: "supervised" and "unsupervised". The first is characterised by the presence of a designated authority figure, such as a teacher, conductor, leader, mentor or facilitator, who is responsible for overseeing the activity of the group. Some supervisors will participate in the group work, such as when a conductor directs a music ensemble, while others will monitor from outside, like a teacher who provides guidance to young pupils as they compose a song together. The degree of involvement of a supervisor will vary. The second is characterised by the absence of an authority figure: there is no designated group director or official leader, so the group is effectively unregulated. By definition, self-managed teams are groups that have total responsibility for a defined project (Gilboa & Tal-Schmotkin, 2012; also see Wellins, Byham & Wilson, 1991). This is not to say, however, that the group is without a person(s) in charge.

Four key assumptions can be made about groups based on research evidence. First, *every group needs a leader*. There are debates about the roles of leaders, especially in relation to their impact upon group success (Hackman, 1990), although the general consensus is that groups function better with someone in charge. For unsupervised groups, the establishment of a leader-type figure(s) is critical in shaping task activity (Butterworth, 1990; King, 2006).

Second, *every group is unique*. Even though there are similar kinds of groups in a society or culture, such as "girl bands" or "boy bands" in the Western popular tradition, the individual members define its identity (Brown, 2000). A change of personnel will alter the functioning and socio-emotional relationships among the members of an established group.

This is perhaps most noticeable in smaller-sized unsupervised groups where members have specific musical parts, such as lead singer or bassist, so replacing one player will result in the formation of a completely new ensemble.

Third, *groups change over time*. Evidence suggests that groups are evolving organisms in a "constant state of flux" (Blum, 1986; Douglas, 1970). The "lifespan" of a group is marked by its formation (beginning) and disbandment (ending), wherein there are phases of working out, growth, stability and progression (Levinger, 1983; Tuckman, 1965).

Fourth, *a group is greater than the sum of the individuals in it*. In other words, a group is capable of achieving more than the combined output of its individual members (Brown, 2000). Even though group work is shaped (if not limited) by the skills, knowledge, ideas and experiences of its members, evidence suggests that individuals can produce more when working together than independently (Forsyth, 1983). However, social facilitation theory indicates that while positive relationships can bring about cooperation, cohesion and enhanced performance, negative relationships can lead to competition, reduced liking and lower performance (Brown, 2000).

Working With Small Groups (Supervised)

Different types of supervisors can be employed in the context of small group work, including facilitators, teachers, mentors, coaches, artists, conductors and directors. Even though specific duties and responsibilities may be associated with these different kinds of supervisor, there are crucial overlaps. Broadly speaking, supervisors assist others by assuming some level of leadership responsibility, giving guidance, offering support and advice to help people work together efficiently and effectively as well as helping them to achieve goals. The ensuing section will discuss leadership styles as well as the practice of facilitating, both of which provide theoretical insight into supervisory work.

Leading and Facilitating

Research in the domain of organizational management provides insight into the nature and effects of different styles of leadership. Seminal research by Lewin and colleagues (1939) defined three main styles:

1) Autocratic (or authoritarian): leaders determine decisions, goals, methods and outcomes. This style allows rapid decisions to be made and affords control in high-risk situations. There is likely to be a lack of creative input by group members.
2) Democratic (or participative): leaders determine decisions based on discussion of goals, methods and outcomes with group members. This style encourages creative and innovative solutions in competitive situations. It is most applicable in non-emergency contexts.
3) Laissez-faire (or delegative): leaders allow group members to determine decisions, goals, methods and outcomes. This style allows members to have ownership of their work and entails high levels of trust. It may be ineffective if everyone has different intentions.

Despite a proliferation of other leadership styles emerging in recent research (e.g. charismatic, innovative, strategic, transformative, transactional), the above three are widely applicable in a range of contexts. The situational model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), however, articulates leadership as flexible and dependent upon the capabilities and experiences of the "followers" (group members), which is important for supervisors in education and community settings (discussed below).

Conductors and band directors merit specific attention as supervisors. Faulkner (1973) describes a conductor as a "focal superior", implying that the rest of the ensemble is somehow inferior. Nevertheless, as with the above model, he argues that the "system of authority" should be flexible: he urges conductors to build trust, respect and reciprocity among musicians, so

leadership becomes adaptive (or "transformative", Atik, 1994). Recent research on choral conducting in educational contexts highlights adaptability as a core competency alongside practical experience (Jansson et al., 2019).

Facilitators, as leaders, will use different styles and strategies to work with groups. A widespread philosophy is to encourage independence (e.g. of thinking, of creating) in group work: there is a difference between telling people what to do and letting people think and do for themselves. In a recent discussion of facilitating learning in small groups, Creech and Hallam (2017) argued that there is a continuum of leadership strategies between facilitation (learner-centred) and transmission (directive, top-down, teacher-centred) and there are two important points. First, it is necessary to shift strategy (or style) from "teacher-centred" to "learner-centred" to enable a group to take "ownership" of its learning and creativity. Second, from a practical viewpoint, strategies can be divided into "task-based" and "support" (i.e. socio-emotional): task-based strategies include setting agenda, promoting development of deep learning, clarifying ideas, refocusing attention, challenging and evaluating; support strategies include supporting, encouraging inclusive participation and releasing tension (p. 70).

There are numerous examples of music-based programmes taking place in education and community settings around the world for people of different age ranges that involve facilitators. Empirical evidence is discussed below according to three principal areas of research: composing and songwriting with young people; singing and performing with students and adults; general music-making with older people.

Composing and Songwriting with Young People

In the last few decades, a growing number of youth-based music programmes have emerged with composing, especially songwriting, as the core focus. A preliminary study by Hogg (1994) involved extensive observation of music-composition activity in small group

teaching in secondary schools across England and Australia. Hogg identified sixteen facilitation strategies, the majority "task-based" (preparatory, logistical, managerial) and the rest "supportive" (to promote independent thinking and trust) in line with Creech and Hallam (2017). Hogg noticed that teachers shifted between three approaches in their lessons: *music as knowledge* (playing or singing to learn about music); *music as accomplishment* (learning about music in order to play or sing well); and *music as empowering agent* (using music to enrich and empower students). In the latter, considered the most effective approach, children were encouraged to develop expressive ideas, musical outcomes and personal meanings. The recognition of creative and personal development through music engagement, especially to foster independence and ownership, underpins later studies in the domain.

Songwriting, which involves composing both music and lyrics, has been incorporated into a range of programmes about positive youth development, some of which have a wellbeing or therapeutic focus (e.g. increasing "connectedness"; Barratt & Bond, 2015) as well as educational emphasis (e.g. Baker & Wigram, 2005; Baker, 2016). Clennon and Boehm (2014) provided a range of insights into facilitating small-sized youth groups in songwriting activities as part of a large-scale heritage project in Cheshire (UK). Interestingly, they reported on time as a crucial factor: they described an "extended period of relationship building" (p. 318) as necessary to allow different youth groups to establish ownership of the project and to develop knowledge about each other's competencies. Furthermore, they found that time enabled them to update and continually revise the project aims.

Researchers have highlighted other contextual factors in achieving positive wellbeing outcomes in youth-based songwriting programmes, including using high-quality resources (McFerron & Teggelove, 2011), ensuring the feeling of safety via physical spaces (Baker, 2013) or group size (Baker et al., 2018), and using well-established professionals to lead sessions (e.g. the SongMakers programme in Australia; see Hunter et al., 2015). On group size,

it was found that larger groups can promote feelings of safety because quieter individuals are more easily able to "blend in". Successful facilitation strategies included giving clear structure and positive feedback to group participants (Barrett & Bond, 2015), creating a fun, playful, chaotic or even "party-like" atmosphere (MacDonald & Viega, 2012; Baker et al., 2018), and enabling participants to "push beyond" typical boundaries through hard work (Baker et al., 2018).

In the Musomagic programme in Victoria (Australia), which targeted adolescents facing barriers to mainstream education settings, Baker et al. (2018) explored the effectiveness of artist-leaders as facilitators. They observed tension between artist-influence and participant-autonomy as youth members seemed less engaged when the artists decided upon the lyrics for the songs. As discussed previously, independence and learner-centred approaches seem to be associated with successful facilitation because they promote ownership of a task and co-creativity as well as adaptability among teachers, leaders and group participants (also see McGillen & McMillan, 2005).

Performing and Singing with Students and Adults

The focus of research on supervisors working with students and adults in small performing groups, including community choirs, has been on rehearsal activity. There are three key issues: rehearsal structure; group communication; and group bonding. The way in which conductors organise rehearsal activity has been scrutinised (e.g. Cox, 1989; Goolsby, 1999; Weeks, 1996). Cox (1989) reported on three different kinds of rehearsal structure according to the alternation of fast- and slow-paced activity in choir rehearsals with secondary school directors. Even though the majority preferred one approach, all were deemed to be effective. Cox asserted that the important point was for conductors to have an organizational strategy in place so that there was awareness about the pace of activity and management of time in rehearsal.

In his observations of communication between band directors and ensemble members, Goolsby (1999) reported differences in the styles of communication between experienced and novice leaders or teachers. Experienced band directors talked less and used more non-verbal modelling (e.g. singing or playing parts to illustrate how to perform) than inexperienced directors. Likewise, experienced leaders allocated their time more effectively when working on different pieces and managed to engage the ensemble more quickly on a set task than the less experienced directors. These findings point towards the importance of "scaffolding" techniques, such as modelling and goal-setting, in leading small groups in educational contexts (also see Creech et al. 2014).

It is well-known that music-making results in released endorphins akin to that experienced in social bonding (Dunbar et al., 2012). There is a wealth of research on the health and wellbeing benefits of singing in choirs, especially community groups (e.g. Launay & Pearce, 2015). Weinstein et al. (2016) looked at the effect of group size on social bonding in small (20 to 80 singers) and large ("megachoir"; over 200 singers) pop choirs. Singing led to increased positivity and social bonding regardless of group size (even in a "megachoir", participants experienced heightened levels of closeness). What is not clear, however, is the impact of facilitation on these experiences and this is an area for further research.

Music-making with Older People

According to Creech and colleagues (2014), there is an accepted need for initiatives to support older people's wellbeing. While some studies have looked at how such activities may be facilitated (e.g. Baker & Ballantyne, 2013), others have derived insights about wellbeing outcomes based on facilitators' perspectives (e.g. Schiavio et al., 2019). As part of the large-scale Music for Life (UK) project, Creech and colleagues (2014) observed scaffolding techniques, organizational structures and interactions used by facilitators working with older people in community music activities. Facilitators spent the majority of their time scaffolding,

yet were highly variable in their approaches: they adopted different styles of interaction, adapted the pace of their work and used their time differently depending on the type of group and group context.

Creech et al. (2014) suggest that facilitators may develop their practice with older participants in the following four ways: a) by making more extensive use of non-verbal modelling and encouraging this as a form of peer support; b) by creating space for open questioning and discussion to encourage people to offer their own insights and goals; c) by making more extensive use of attributional feedback (that is, related to specific outcomes) to empower learners to understand and control their learning; and d) by varying the organizational structure and style in order to meet different needs.

In a related community music-making project entitled Meet for Meet (M4M) in Graz (Austria), Schiavio et al. (2019) reported on facilitators' experiences of providing weekly workshops to a range of participants, including elderly members of the population. The three facilitators were each responsible for different activities, namely singing, improvisatory drumming and dance. Interviews with facilitators highlighted three points: the need for a shared sense of leadership (to work as a "collaborating team"); the use of non-verbal language to communicate with the group (especially non-native speakers); and the importance of recognising the needs of individuals and the group as a whole. Experienced co-facilitators, therefore, may seek "connectedness" as leaders and rely on non-verbal language.

In an earlier study, Baker and Ballantyne (2012) investigated the therapeutic benefits for elderly participants in a group songwriting project in Brisbane (Australia) using inexperienced (student) facilitators. For the retirees, the activities provided possibilities for three wellbeing features: a "pleasant" life (they were stimulated by the activity), an "engaged" life (they looked forward to sessions) and a "meaningful" life (they gained a sense of satisfaction from the activity). The researchers commented that the student facilitators, who

matched the number of elderly participants, offered "significant attention and support" which may have biased the positive findings. They also indicated that a more skilled leader may have offered the retirees a greater sense of "ownership" about the songs. This study raises two interesting questions: first, do experienced facilitators offer greater autonomy for participants than inexperienced facilitators; second, do participants experience greater positive effects with one-to-one support within the small group context?

Ballantyne (2013) subsequently reported that this project offered the students opportunities to reflect upon learning about facilitating and, in so doing, learning about the self, musical processes and ageing. As further opportunities for music-making projects with the ageing population are developed, greater understanding of the best ways to facilitate such work, particularly for younger students, is afforded. Related research on teaching older learners indicates that interpersonal qualities, such as enthusiasm, respect for participants, clarity and organization, as well as teaching strategies are more important than the session content itself (see Creech et al. 2014). Facilitating groups, then, is as much about interpersonal communication and time management as it is about musical outcomes. Ownership of the music-making process is important: it potentially yields high levels of engagement and positivity from group participants. The skill required in empowering group members may reflect upon levels of experience of facilitators. The issue of ownership, of course, is entirely different in the context of unsupervised small groups where there is no designated authority figure.

Working In Small Groups (Unsupervised)

Unsupervised small groups can be regarded as self-managed teams (SMTs; see Cohern 1994; Cohen et al., 1996). To date, the majority of studies on small group music-making have focussed on the organizational, social and musical functioning of string quartet ensembles (e.g. Young & Colman, 1979; Blum, 1986; Butterworth, 1990; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991;

Tovstiga et al., 2005; Gilboa & Shmotkin 2012; also see Lim, 2014 on vocal ensembles). Gilboa and Tal-Shmotkin (2012) hypothesized that the string quartet ensemble would reflect higher levels of self-managed characteristics than other (comparable) music ensembles: "the smaller the unit, the more likely it will function as a SMT" (p. 32). To this end, the main focus of discussion in the ensuing section is on quartet-sized and smaller ensembles, specifically to explore research about their functionality in terms of leadership, teamwork and communication. Following this, research about unsupervised small group work in other contexts, notably educational, is reviewed with particular consideration of peer learning.

Leading and Teamworking

The establishment of a leader and the appearance of supervisory behaviour is integral to the functioning of a small group. Research indicates that there are two main factors influencing the emergence of leaders in such contexts: stereotypes and personality.

Socio-cultural and musical stereotypes underpin small self-managed music groups. In the Western classical tradition, the string quartet typically comprises four musicians (first violinist, second violinist, violist and cellist) arranged in a semicircle. Much of the repertoire assigns the main melody to the first violinist; over time, this player has become established as the musical leader of the ensemble. The first violinist typically sits in the first chair (on the left edge of the semicircle) and leads the ensemble by providing relevant cues to coordinate the group. By extension, this player is expected to oversee the direction of rehearsal activity. Other quartet and chamber ensembles mirror the string-quartet model as well as the stereotypical relationships between chairs, players and parts. Research has indicated, however, that the collaboration among musicians in small ensembles is far more complex than the stereotype suggests.

In one of the earliest reports on string quartets, Young and Colman (1979) suggested that two complementary leaders exist in string quartets, specifically the "task specialist" (the

most competent player, but not especially likeable) and the "socio emotional specialist" (very likeable, but not particularly competent). In a later study of British string quartets, Murnighan and Conlon (1991) claimed that the most "successful" groups had strong first violinists who acted as leaders, but advocated democracy; the unsuccessful groups sought stronger leadership and less democracy. Tovstiga et al. (2005), however, argued that leadership can and should be flexible, hence "situational" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977): in their case study of the Carmina String Quartet, they noticed that players assumed the role of leader on an "as needed basis". Similarly, Butterworth (1990) described the management of the Detroit String Quartet as "invisible" even though the players remarked that they worked on their group process "constantly", like the "constant working-out process" alluded to by the Guarneri String Quartet (Blum, 1986). The issue of time and pace (discussed previously) influenced the invisibility of the Detroit's work ethic: it was harmonious because it was "unhurried" and "slow-moving".

The influence of personality on the leadership of self-managed groups plays alongside socio-cultural and musical stereotypes. Murnighan and Conlon (1991) reported that first violinists described themselves as extraverted or naturally dictatorial; moreover, those in more successful quartets attributed their position first to personality and, less importantly, ability. Likewise, successful second violinists were "content" or "resigned" to their position. In a case study of collaboration in a British student string quartet, Davidson and Good (2002) highlighted the potential challenges that might surround the paradoxical position of a second violinist in a student-level ensemble when that player manifests a dominant personality.

Research in the field of organizational management indicates that extraverted individuals may appear to "lead" groups by dominating in the following ways: they will talk more than others; they will assert their opinions more forcefully than others; and they will build strong relationships with other members so that they can access their support when needed (Ashton et al., 2002). However, not all leaders are extraverted. Recent research indicates that

extraverted leaders may be more or less effective depending on the proactivity of other group members: if others are highly proactive, extraverted leaders are less effective (mainly due to perceptions of threat); conversely, introverted leaders may be more successful if others are proactive (Grant et al., 2011).

Related research on team-role theory provides insight into the roles of leaders and other members in small, unsupervised groups. In his seminal research on successful teamwork in managerial organisations, Belbin (1993) distinguished between the tasks that people fulfil ("functional roles") and the ways in which they behave when working together ("team roles"). He defined nine team roles and argued that there is a finite range of "useful behaviours" for effective teamwork. He asserted that successful teams are "well balanced" (all team roles are represented), contain a nucleus pairing of "plant" and "coordinator", and evidence stable and versatile behaviour. In an observational and interview study with three British student quartets, King (2006) identified eight team roles in the ensembles: "leader", "deputy-leader", "contributor", "inquirer", "fidget", "joker", "distractor" and "quiet one". Students shifted roles across rehearsals to create equilibrium in group dynamic, but the quartet with the strongest leader exhibited the most stable team-role behaviour (and the most successful performance).

Communicating

Numerous studies have focussed on the modes of communication used between musicians in small performing ensembles. The type, function and frequency of verbal and non-verbal discourse, especially in rehearsal contexts, has revealed that musicians rely heavily on non-verbal utterances to communicate technical and expressive information, such as through having "conversations with the eyes" (Davidson & Good, 2002), or "acting rather than talking" (Murnighan & Conlon, 1991; also see King & Ginsborg, 2011). Research indicates that levels of expertise and familiarity impact upon the nature of communication in small group rehearsals. King (2013) found that unfamiliar musicians in duo ensembles exhibited longer periods of

hesitancy in their communication (e.g. broken-up dialogue, rapid verbal exchanges) in the early stages of a single rehearsal than familiar musicians. By the later stages of rehearsal, all of the musicians started to produce *flowing* dialogue (e.g. long utterances with sustained focus).

Evidence also shows that the proximity of performance impacts upon co-performer communication: in a quantitative analysis of non-verbal gestures between piano duo performers, an increase in "significant" non-verbal behaviour was found as rehearsals progressed towards performance (Williamon & Davidson, 2002). In related studies, the influence of expertise on the amount of talking and playing in rehearsal has been debated: in general, it has been found that student musicians talk more than professional musicians (see Goodman, 2000; Williamon & Davidson, 2002; King & Ginsborg 2011), although it is acknowledged that amounts of verbal communication will depend upon whether or not there are talkative members in a group (Davidson & Good, 2002).

The analysis of non-verbal communication in small music ensembles has provided insight into the function of facial expressions, eye contact and physical gestures. In an observational study of performers' gestures using quantitative coding, King and Ginsborg (2011) found that singers and pianists rehearsing together in duo combinations on new songs from the Western classical tradition used physical gestures to a *greater extent* when working with familiar and same-expertise partners than unfamiliar and different-expertise partners. Non-verbal communication was used primarily for task-related activity (e.g. to consolidate technical details, establish tempo, convey musical information, coordinate entries). Interestingly, this study also showed that musicians who have not worked together before can synchronise their body movements relatively quickly in new partnerships as they *anticipate*, *attend* and *adapt* to their own and each other's playing. These cognitive processing abilities (Keller, 2008) underpin group music-making. King and Ginsborg suggest that performers in

familiar partnerships produced more frequent and varied non-verbal gestures because they had more efficient and effective (that is, superior) cognitive processing abilities.

Evidence suggests, therefore, that talking is not the only way to communicate in small groups; rather, non-verbal discourse is vital in enabling people to work together. As noted previously about facilitation, supervisors may use non-verbal communication in their interactions with group members, especially if they are experienced; the same is true for musicians working in performing ensembles, particularly those who are experienced and familiar with one another. Technology, however, has been found to impact upon communication in learning environments. In a recent study of children's collaborative creative musical activity using tablets (ipads) versus traditional acoustic instruments, Huovinen and Rautanen (2019) found that group "flow" was inhibited in the former (tablet) context as solitary planning processes and abstract, conceptual interplay took place. They suggested that acoustic instruments offer richer possibilities for gestural and tactile qualities, visual cues and concrete musical interaction.

Peer-to-peer Learning

The importance of ownership of a task was discussed above in relation to facilitators working with small groups. In unsupervised groups, where the members of a group already effectively "own" the task and automatically assume independence, there is opportunity for peer-to-peer learning. In an educational context, peer learning takes place when students learn with and from each other by sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences: it is described as a way of moving beyond independent learning to interdependent or mutual learning (Boud, 1988; 2001). Typical developmental aspects of peer learning include increasing information and understanding about a task as well as socio-emotional skills, such as explaining ideas to peers, leadership, confidence, organisation and collaboration (Boud, 2001). There are two key issues about peer-to-peer learning via music-making in small groups: mentoring and friendship.

In the heritage youth music project described above, it was observed that older members of groups developed mentoring skills in co-creating songs with younger peers through passing on information and knowledge to younger members (Clennon & Boehm, 2014). Aspects of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) were also evident as older members acquired new leadership and social skills, including enhanced self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness and emotional awareness. By extension, older members used their new social skills to mentor others in the group about their developing social identities. Likewise, a peer-to-peer approach was observed when youth mentors worked with new members of a group to create lyrics together in a songwriting programme (Baker et al., 2018).

The issue of friendship is an important aspect of small group work. In an observational study of children's musical interactions in a composition task where pupils were divided into groups comprising random, friendship and non-friendship configurations, Burland and Davidson (2001) found that social groupings did not influence the standard of the creative product, but they did influence the social interaction, notably their personal sense of achievement and enjoyment about the set task. Similarly, in a study of bonding in small singing groups using "friendship cliques", Pearce et al. (2016) found that University students experienced increased levels of closeness when singing cooperatively (that is, trying to get the whole group to sing loudly together), but reduced levels of closeness when singing competitively (that is, trying to sing louder than other people in the group).

Finally, related research on shared understanding in free improvisatory jazz practice provides an interesting comparison with research on peer-to-peer learning as these players construct musical pieces in live contexts via peer-to-peer performing. In a qualitative enquiry involving interviews with professional jazz improvisers working in trios, Wilson and MacDonald (2017) found that familiarity between musicians was important in building trust during uncertain musical moments. They indicated that shared understanding is not a pre-

requisite for participation in this kind of music-making, but shared experience enriches the possibilities for interaction in these groups. It is plausible to suggest that shared experiences may also enhance peer-to-peer interactions in other kinds of group work involving musical creativity.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided insight into supervised and unsupervised small group work involving music-based activities, specifically drawing on evidence about leadership, facilitation, teamwork, communication and peer-to-peer learning in educational and community contexts across the life course. General assumptions about group work were established at the outset and it was noted that small groups can vary in size depending on their cultural context. The following six key points emerged across the discussion.

First, leading and facilitating needs to be flexible and adaptable depending on the situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977; Atik, 1994). Different styles and strategies were identified (Creech & Hallam, 2017). Second, time is an important factor. Long-term projects have been described as particularly rewarding because they allow for group relationships to build and goals to be reviewed (Clennon & Boehm, 2014). Time is also vital in the management and organisation of rehearsals, sessions and programmes: evidence suggests that the way in which group work is organized can and should vary across different contexts depending on the nature of music activity, the target age group and the group's goals (Cox, 1989; Creech et al., 2014).

Third, ownership and independence are critical in small group work. When working with groups, supervisors should allow space for people to contribute their own ideas as well as provide appropriate feedback to empower learners to take ownership of what they are doing (Baker & Ballantyne, 2012; Creech & Hallam, 2017). A level of independence is assumed in self-managed groups (Cohen, 1994; Gilboa & Schmotkin, 2012). Fourth, non-verbal discourse

is an effective mode of communication in small group work. Researchers have found that experienced facilitators, conductors and ensemble co-performers use more non-verbal behaviour than those with less experience (King & Ginsborg, 2011). In certain contexts, such as music-making with older people, non-verbal modelling can be particularly helpful as a scaffolding technique for enhancing communication in everyday life (Creech et al., 2014).

Fifth, in unsupervised groups, individuals will assume one or more team roles (that is, behavioural attributes) and certain combinations will work better together than others in enabling successful task production (Belbin, 1993). Research has shown that music ensembles work most effectively when there is strong leadership and stable patterns of behaviour (King, 2006). Finally, peer-to-peer interactions in unsupervised groups can allow individuals to develop valuable shared knowledge and experiences as well as social skills, such as the ability for older youths to mentor younger youths (Clennon & Boehm, 2014; Baker, Jeanneret & Clarkson, 2018). Friendship can impact upon these social interactions and influence people's sense of enjoyment about them (Burland & Davidson, 2001; Pearce et al., 2016).

Issues for Further Research

There is scope to develop research on small group work in relation to the six key points identified above. It would be helpful to examine more closely how leaders and facilitators become flexible and adaptable in their work as well as to scrutinise how shifts of ownership are achieved in different contexts. The role of non-verbal behaviour in this process merits further consideration. Comparisons between music-based programmes that run with similar goals across different time scales (short-, medium- and long-term) will provide further insight into the influence (and management) of time on task activity and socio-emotional behaviour. There is potential to develop the preliminary research on team role behaviour in chamber music ensembles further, particularly to examine performers at different levels of expertise and in different music-making contexts (beyond the Western art tradition). Research could also

usefully focus on the training and experiences of facilitators, leaders and group members, such as to identify preferred styles and strategies for working together.

Fresh perspectives could be developed in future research by challenging whether or not our assumptions about group work – largely drawn from theoretical and empirical research in the domain of organizational management – are appropriate, especially given technological developments in recent decades. Other insights could be gained by encouraging self-reflective and experimental enquiry alongside the more typical survey and observational approaches evidenced to date. Case study research has provided a wealth of insight into small group music-making practices in education and community settings, although it would be interesting (albeit challenging) to roll out a global programme involving multiple related projects targeted at people of different ages and in different contexts so as increase our understanding of how people from across the life course experience and make music together around the world.

Implications for Education and Music in the Community

Small group work involving music-making provides vital creative and social experiences for individuals of all ages. Most importantly, research indicates that valuable life skills can be acquired through participation in such endeavour, including leadership and team skills, independence, confidence, non-verbal communication and, perhaps most importantly, friendships. There are several implications for education and music in the community arising from this research:

1) To develop training in non-verbal communication to enhance interactions among facilitators, teachers, leaders and other group members.
2) To increase opportunities for mixed-age small group work, such as older youths working with younger youths, students facilitating older people; professional performers working with amateur or student performers; older school-age children working with younger school-age children and so on.

3) To deliver long-term community and education programmes (e.g. twelve months or more) to enable small musical groups to have time to build up working relationships and to experience working together over a lengthy period of time;

4) To explore different kinds of music-making activities across all ages and stages in educational and community settings, including instrumental performing, rhythm-building, listening, composing, songwriting, free improvisation, composing, and singing. Free improvisation, for instance, could allow group members to develop call-and-response interactions through musical signals along the lines of early human communication (Mithen, 2006), while composing with traditional acoustic instruments allows rich possibilities for gestural communication (Huovinen & Rautanen, 2019).

For practitioners working with groups, they should be prepared to be flexible in their practice, to change and know that groups will evolve. They should be encouraged to use self-reflection to critically evaluate their team role in group work and to consider group evaluation sessions to allow members to discuss their group practice. It would be helpful for them to identify different people's roles in a small group, to respect and challenge them. An appreciation of different styles and strategies of leadership and facilitation would be beneficial, especially to recognise differences between teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches as well as the value of peer-to-peer learning in unsupervised contexts. Above all, the sense of achievement gained from working with and in small groups should be recognised.

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Brown; R. (2000). *Group processes: Dynamics within and between groups*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Creech, A., & Hallam; S. (2017). Facilitating learning in small groups: Interpersonal dynamics and task dimensions. In J. Rink, H. Gaunt & A. Williamon (eds.), *Musicians*

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Reflective Questions

1. What is the relationship between our personal identity and our social identity?
2. What strategies and insights about effective small group work should be taught?
3. How do supervisors transfer from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach?
4. What styles of leadership and facilitation are evident in different music-making contexts? Which ones are effective and why?
5. What practices can supervised groups learn from unsupervised groups, and vice versa?
6. How do experienced and inexperienced groups differ in their work?

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