

Oficina de Composição: Opposing productive music learning to reproductive music learning and relating it to the learning context of philharmonic bands in Portugal

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It is known and well documented that children do compose, are motivated by and take much pleasure in doing so, which is also true for students in the beginning stages of their music education, regardless of their age or music proficiency. Some authors have speculated that music creation can be an effective means of music learning, referred in this paper as *productive music education* (PME), even more than the approaches known as *reproductive music education* (RME), which comprehends teaching practices based on the reproduction of precomposed materials. From the research on PME, we learn that it: 1) engages students deeply with musical concepts; 2) promotes more engagement and motivation than RME; 3) constitutes a great opportunity for formative evaluation and scaffolding; 4) helps in the acquisition of tools for text comprehension and creation; 5) has positive impact on the individual and social development of students. For those reasons, PME is a teaching tool worth of being considered.

This paper describes a study that took place with five children aged from seven to nine studying in the Music School (*Escola de Música*) of Sociedade Filarmónica União Mouroense “Os Amarelos” (Moura, Portugal) for about one year. Bearing in mind the fact that philharmonic music schools are a big part of music teaching in Portugal and that their teaching is heavily based on reproduction and orientated towards performance, the aim of this study was to understand the possible applicability of PME as soon as the first stages of the Portuguese music learning context by observing how students used to a reproductive approach of music would respond to PME.

The study was conducted during July 2021. In the first phase, many conversations and interviews with the teachers took place, as a means of understanding the teaching approaches of the school and selecting the participants. The second phase happened in three moments: 1) before the *experiment*, the participants underwent an initial interview; 2) during the experiment, the selected students participated in *sessions* composed of creative tasks and put together a concert with the created pieces for their families; at the same time, notes were taken about the ways they related to PME; 3) after the experiment, the students participated in the final interviews. After this, the collected data was analysed.

The findings of this study were not contradictory to what literature describes, but rather complementary. We learned that students used to RME can rapidly adapt to PME, even if some resistance at first is normal. The study suggests that the level of resistance can be bigger in students that have been involved in RME for a longer period, what demands for more investigation on the subject. The students also related positively to the concept of form, which was debated and applied during the sessions.

In conclusion, PME results in learning and can be claimed from early in the Portuguese music teaching context, even if that context has performance as its goal.