"Can we play *Lucy Locket?*"

How Singing Games Can Influence Learning in the Music Classroom

Elizabeth Morris Innset

Master's Thesis in Music Education

Spring, 2023

Preface

It has been a joy to develop this master's thesis over the past three years, which for me personally has also included the birth of a new baby, as well as working full-time as a classroom music teacher. So, I have had my hands full! It has been interesting to reflect on that when I started researching this thesis, the world was still in the grips of the covid-19 pandemic. At the time, this influenced my ability to conduct face-to-face interviews as well as classroom observations, and limited my physical meetings with my colleagues and supervisor. The pandemic also challenged us to think about how we as music teachers could conduct classroom music in a way that remained meaningful, while at the same time covid-19 safe. Singing games were a particularly unsafe activity for classroom music at that time, combining as they do singing with physical contact. It was a thrill to be able to play singing games with students again once the pandemic was over.

In the time since I started this thesis, there has been a greater focus on the importance of play in schooling in Norway, and a growing concern that there is not as much room for play in school as there once was. There appears to be a renewed interest for finding ways to incorporate different types of play into the school day. I hope that in some small way this thesis can demonstrate how musical play, in this case in the form of singing games, can be meaningful and useful for a classroom music teacher. Having said this, I believe the majority of classroom music teachers already know that singing games are wonderful pedagogical tools, and I am quite sure I am preaching to the converted. Perhaps it is more interesting for teachers and educational researchers outside of classroom music to learn about the potential of singing games to influence not only the music classroom, but a child's experience of schooling.

This thesis would not have been possible without the considered responses from my esteemed interviewees, who each gave me an hour of their busy schedules to talk about their experiences of using singing games. I am very grateful to them for their time and their insights, upon which this research depends. I am also grateful to my supervisor, Jon Helge Sætre, for his considered feedback and gentle direction regarding theoretical perspectives in particular. Finally, I would like to think my supporter-in-chief and sometime editor, Ola Morris Innset, for his generous feedback, as well as his never-ending patience in listening to me talk about singing games for longer than any mere mortal can endure. I'm very lucky to have you.

Oppsummering

Denne masteroppgaven undersøker hvorvidt broken av sangleker kan påvirke læring i musikk-klasserommet. Forfatteren har gjennomført semi-strukturerte intervjuer med seks musikklærere i Australia, som alle har bakgrunn fra Kodály-pedagogikk, for å undersøke deres erfaringer med bruken av sangleker i musikk-klasserom og hvorvidt de tror at sangleker kan påvirke elevenes læring. Dataene fra intervjuene er blitt transkribert tematisk, og undersøkt i lys av teoretiske perspektiver knyttet til sosiokulturell læring og motivasjonsteori. Oppgaven fokuserer spesielt på deltagende teorier om læring, slik de blir holdt frem av Rogoff (1995, 2003) og Lave og Wenger (1991). Tidligere forskning relatert til studiet av sangleker og den pedagogiske bruken av lek, samt ulike forståelser av lek i skolen er også blitt undersøkt.

Forfatteren har funnet at lærerene som ble intervjuet mener at sangleker kan påvirke elevenes læring på fire ulike måter. For det første fører sangleker til glede hos elevene, noe som videre kan føre til kjærlighet for musikk, skapelse av lykkelige minner og kan være en kilde til trøst for elevene. For det andre engasjerer bruken av sangleker elevene og fører til deltakelse. Lærerne diskuterte spesielt hvordan lekene kan kanalisere elevenes energi og hjelpe dem å fokusere; at de er en mulighet for fysisk aktivitet; at de gir en mulighet for korte «hjernepauser»; og at sangleker passer med såkalt «gamification» i dagens klasserom. For det tredje mener lærerne at bruken av sangleker kan føre til sosial læring i elevgruppen. Dette blir diskutert i form av undervisning i «myke ferdigheter», demokratisering av klasserommet, undervisning i viktigheten av regler, bygging av fellesskap og opprettelsen av fysisk kontakt med andre elever og læreren. For det fjerde mener lærerne at sangleker kan være nyttige for å lære konseptuelle ferdigheter så vel som å øve på ferdigheter. Dette blir diskutert i form av undervisning av musikalske konsepter og ferdigheter, bredere utdanningskonsepter- og ferdigheter, hjelp med formativ vurdering, ubevisst lek gjennom læring og gjøring og praktisering av motoriske ferdigheter.

Forfatteren finner at sangleker kan forstås som en særlig nyttig metode for å oppnå elevdeltakelse i musikk som et klasseromsfag. I Rogoffs (1995, 2003) terminologi kan deltakelse forstås som faktisk læring. Forfatteren finner også at sangleker er et særlig godt eksempel på hva Bentsen og Håland (2021) kaller fag-spesifikk lek i skolen. Alt i alt finner forfatteren god støtte i datagrunnlaget for at sangleker kan påvirke læring i musikk-klasserommet.

Summary

This master's thesis investigates whether the use of singing games can influence learning in the music classroom. The author conducted semi-structured interviews with six music teachers in Australia who have a background in Kodály pedagogy, in order to investigate their experiences of using singing games in the music classroom, and whether they believed singing games could influence students' learning. The data from these interviews was then transcribed thematically and examined in light of theoretical perspectives relating to sociocultural learning, as well as motivation theory. The thesis has a particular focus on the *participatory* theories of learning as put forward by Rogoff (1995, 2003) and Lave and Wenger (1991). Previous research was also investigated relating to the study of singing games and the pedagogical use of games, as well as different understandings of play in schooling.

The author has found that the teachers interviewed believe singing games can influence their students' learning in four main ways. Firstly, that singing games spark joy in their students, which can further lead to fostering a love of music, the creation of happy memories and a source of comfort for the students. Secondly, that the use of singing games engages the students and leads to student participation. The teachers discussed how the games can channel the students' energy and help them focus; that they are an opportunity for a physical activity; that they offered the chance for a "brain break"; and how singing games fit with the gamification of today's classroom. Thirdly, the teachers believe that the use of singing games can lead to social learning in the student group. This is discussed in terms of teaching soft skills, democratising the classroom, teaching the importance of rules, community building, and creating a physical connection with other students and the teacher. Finally, the teachers believe that singing games can be useful for the learning of concepts as well as the learning and practice of skills. This is discussed in terms of teaching musical concepts and skills, broader educational concepts and skills, assisting with formative assessment, unconscious play through learning and doing, as well as practising motor skills.

The author finds that singing games can be understood as a particularly useful way for students to participate in classroom music. In Rogoff's (1995, 2003) terms, participation can be understood to actually *be* learning. The author also finds that singing games are a particularly good example of what Bentsen and Håland (2021) call *subject-specific play* in

schooling. Overall, the author finds that singing games are capable of influencing learning in the music classroom, at least in the opinion of the teachers interviewed.

Contents

Figures

1.0 Introduction

The inspiration for this master's project springs from an interview Professor Thomas Nordahl gave in 2019 about the use of games and play in school (Baraldnes, 2019). In the interview, Nordahl, a highly influential researcher in the field of education in Norway, warned teachers against incorporating too many games into the classroom. Nordahl states in the interview that research shows that if you want to learn something well, you need to work hard and specifically with it. Nordahl went on to say that there is little research to support the idea that using play and games can lead to improved learning outcomes for the students, and on the contrary, that too much play and games can lead to poorer results. Interestingly, and in contrast to Nordahl, a teacher in the interview stated that the children and teachers really enjoyed the games they played in lessons, and that the children retained the knowledge better when they were able to use all their senses and be active.

Nordahl`s claims about the effectiveness of play and games as a working method intrigued me, as in my own teaching I have seen how the use of them seemingly *enhances* classroom learning. His warning against the overuse of games in school therefore prompted me to consider my own pedagogical practice. I have trained in the so-called Kodály-method in Australia and use many of the pedagogical approaches common to that method in my own teaching practice here in Norway. Kodály-based pedagogy makes extensive use of singing games; in fact it is a cornerstone of the whole approach. The Orff-Schulwerk makes similarly extensive use of children`s musical games. Is it really true that there is little research to support the use of play and games in the classroom?

When I first read the interview with Nordahl, I immediately reflected on a particularly memorable instance where I felt the use of singing games had been influential in my own classroom. It was in 2016, a year in which many refugees fleeing the war in Syria had sought asylum in Norway. I had a class of Year 5 students, which now included a Syrian child, Aya[1], who couldn't speak either Norwegian or English. This made interacting with her fellow students, and me, a challenge. Not only was there a language barrier, but she had most certainly experienced trauma, both from the war and her family's journey to Norway. This trauma made connecting with her even more difficult.

---

[1] Not her real name

We started the lesson by playing the Israeli children's game *A Qua Qua*, a game well-known to teachers with a Kodály background in Queensland, Australia, where I come from. It's a fun elimination game where the goal is to practice keeping the beat, and often proves a hit with students. The words are nonsensical, so the language is new for all the students. What I immediately saw was that Aya was participating wholeheartedly in the game. I saw her laughing and connecting with the other students, perhaps for the first time. This seemed to me to be powerful. The singing game was a way for her to participate and connect with her fellow students, overcoming a substantial language and cultural barrier. Was this a breakthrough that could lead to her further participation in her new Norwegian school?

The gulf between my experience with Aya and the Year 5 class playing *A Qua Qua* and Nordahl's warnings about overusing games in the classroom intrigued me. In this way, the seeds for this master's project were sown. I wanted to find out whether the use of singing games *can* influence learning in the music classroom. And if indeed singing games can influence learning in the classroom, I wanted to find out how they did so.

1.1 Purpose and research question

Perhaps it's imprudent to attach such importance to some flippant comments in an interview like the one I have referred to. However, the opinion expressed by Nordahl seems to me to exemplify a wider debate in schools and education policy generally, and not only in Norway. Such as what do we mean by "learning outcomes"? Is that the same as learning? Has the primary aim of school today become the achievement of "good" learning outcomes, and if so, what implications does that have, not only for teaching practices, but for society as a whole?

In 2011, the Norwegian professor of education Gunn Imsen wrote an article which took up important questions about our understanding of learning as posed by the work of the globally influential educational researcher John Hattie's. In her article, Imsen discussed among other things, the multifaceted meaning and implications of the term "learning outcomes". Imsen explains how one meaning of the term learning outcomes is connected to a behaviouristic perspective that learning is something visible and measurable (interestingly, Hattie's most notable work is called *Visible Learning)*. Imsen argues that the pervasiveness of this understanding of learning outcomes has coincided with the rise of what she terms "socio-economic thinking" in the governance of schools in recent decades. This type of thinking

requires a measurable "outcome", which in the case of schooling, can be quantifiable test results. Imsen (2011) claims that for many who work in schooling today, learning is synonymous with learning outcomes, something which she finds questionable.

 At the same time, the issue of play in school has become a topic of debate in Norway in recent years, and many have expressed concern about the lack of play-based practices in school, as well as the impact of the six year's reform on children and teenagers (Bjørnestad et al, 2022; Flatås, 2022; Lunde & Brodal, 2022).

For example, a year before Nordahl warned against teachers using too many games in school, a report sanctioned by the Norwegian government was published by the Knowledge Centre for Education about what types of working methods and class environments lead to good "learning outcomes" for the youngest children in school (Lillejord et al, 2018). The report included an analysis of 23 studies from around the world concerning learning methods and environments for this age group. There appeared to be a broad agreement amongst researchers that the youngest children in school thrive in a play-based learning environment. The report found, amongst other things, that more research is needed into how different types of play can lead to different types of learning, and that further research should also be done into how play and learning can be united into a play-based pedagogy for the youngest children in school. The report also calls for experimental, randomised-controlled studies to research the relationship between teaching methods and learning outcomes (Lillejord et al, 2018, p. 53).

With these issues in mind, the purpose of this master's project is to shed light on whether singing games can influence learning in the music classroom. It is my hope to find out whether singing games, as a type of play, can lead to learning. The research question for this master's thesis is therefore ***how can singing games influence learning in the music classroom***.

In my attempt to answer the research question, I have conducted an interview study with six teachers based in Australia who utilise singing games in their pedagogical practice. I have transcribed the interviews and analysed them thematically, employing the approach to thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). In addition, I have used previous research relating to games, as well as theories of motivation and learning, to deepen my understanding of the issues arising from the research question.

1.2 Clarification of key concepts

At this point it seems prudent to briefly define the key concepts which arise from the research question, namely *singing games*, *learning* and *the music classroom.* I discuss the pedagogical use of singing games in greater depth in Chapter 2, however for the sake of clarity, I define *singing games* here to be traditional singing games, which originate from many different cultures and have typically been played by children. To be more precise, the singing games discussed in this thesis are those that are used in Kodály-informed teaching practices in Australia. There is no curriculum of games, and many teachers find their own games through their own research, although the same popular games will be employed by many teachers. Additionally, many Kodály teachers attend professional development courses and workshops where new games will be taught and shared. It is the use of these singing games that I refer to primarily in this thesis.

Another key concept arising from the research question is *learning*. Again, I go into much greater detail in Chapter 2, but how we define learning is a critical point. Is learning the same as a "learning outcome", as discussed above? Is learning something we can always measure? Is there only one type of learning, and if not, do different types of learning have the same worth? How one understands learning is crucial to how one views the outcome of this research project. In this case, I take learning to mean *all* types and understandings of learning. Put simply, this means that I consider learning to be something which is both measurable and immeasurable.

The final key concept arising from the research question in need of definition is that of the *music classroom*. In this instance, I define the music classroom to be the place where music lessons take place in any school, from years 1-12. I do not explicitly include kindergarten or university classrooms here, although I believe the insights from the project would be of interest to those who work in those contexts as well.

1.3 Different understandings of play in school

At this stage of the introduction, I would like to distinguish between different conceptions of play as it is seen in school. It is important to make clear the distinction between these different understandings of play, as this affects how we further consider the use of play and games in education.

1.3.1 Free play

Bentsen and Håland (2021) discuss *free play* as a fundamental way that children understand and relate to the world. Free play is characterised by its spontaneity, and it is completely controlled by the children who are playing. There is no relation to "learning outcomes" or goals: the point of the game is the game itself. Another important characteristic of free play is that it springs purely from intrinsic motivation (Lillemyr, 2014; Pellegrini, 2009).

In school, free play is what we see happening when the children run out to recess and into the playground. They organise themselves into play, and they control the play themselves. Make-believe is a clear example of free play we often see in the school yard. Much of the theoretical understanding we have of play, from Vygotsky, Piaget, and others, is based on this *free play* conception of play.

1.3.2 Structured play

Bentsen and Håland (2021) describe a second type of play that we see in schools as *structured play*, which is a type of play that connected to a learning outcome or didactic purpose. This is the type of play we sometimes see utilised in the classroom, where the students, under guidance of their teacher, imitate grown-up roles, for example, a scientist, or an author. According to Scully and Roberts (2002), this type of play builds a bridge between an increasingly more abstract curriculum and children's preferred method of learning (play). While there is some disagreement as to whether this constitutes *real play* or not, Bentsen and Håland (2021) make the argument that should be room for this type of play, which has a specific learning aim, in the modern classroom.

1.3.3 Subject-specific play

Building upon their understanding of structured play, Bentsen and Håland (2021) discuss their idea of *subject-specific play* as a learning approach in school. For them, it is possible for play to have specific learning goals. Subject-specific play is teacher-initiated, and considers the uniqueness of the different subjects at school. This type of activity can clearly be linked to the different competence goals as outlined in *LK20,* the Norwegian school curriculum.

According to Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), different school subjects have different ways of constructing knowledge. In science, for example, students will ask questions and make hypotheses, whereas in Norwegian or English they investigate and analyse texts. Therefore,

Bentsen and Håland (2021) propose that different types of play could be utilised to achieve the very different learning goals of these subjects at school.

As we will see from the results and the discussion chapters, singing games could potentially present an opportunity for subject-specific play in classroom music.

1.4 The structure of the master's thesis

The thesis is organised into six chapters. The first chapter, the introduction, has presented the research question, as well as the background for and purpose of the research. The second chapter discusses previous research and theoretical perspectives connected to the research question. The third chapter presents the research methods and methodology used to conduct the research. The fourth chapter shows the results of the research, and the fifth chapter is a discussion of those results in light of previous research and theoretical perspectives presented in chapter two. The sixth and final chapter suggests areas of further research into the topic, and some concluding remarks about the project. It should be noted that all translations from Norwegian to English are my own.

2.0 Previous research and theoretical perspectives

This chapter will highlight and consider relevant theoretical perspectives and previous research connected to my research question *how can singing games influence learning in the music classroom?* When considering which previous research and theoretical perspectives to examine, I elected to investigate research on the pedagogical use of games generally, as well as research connected to the pedagogical use of *singing games.* I will also highlight theoretical perspectives connected to *learning* as well as *motivation*.

The section on previous research was mostly determined by specific responses from interviewees, which I deemed relevant enough to investigate further.

2.1 Previous research

In this section, I will look at previous research which I believe to be relevant to my research question, as well as elaborating on some concepts which were highlighted by some interviewees as relevant. I will briefly present research which is connected to the broader pedagogical use of games, as well as the concepts of "gamification" and "brain breaks".

2.1.1 The pedagogical use of games

It has previously been pointed out that "play for which there is no obvious "product" in the form of measurable learning is thus seen as trivial and unworthy of serious study" (Marsh & Young, 2006, p. 291). The flipside of this is that research into how certain types of games can be used in a pedagogical context does exist, with the proviso that the "product" elicited is measurable learning. The idea of using games in the classroom is not at all new. Likewise, the discussion around the use, or overuse, of games in the classroom is not new either. In 1971, the psychologist and play expert Brian Sutton-Smith, together with Elliott M. Avedon, published *The Study of Games*, a comprehensive study of different types of games, their history, meaning and usage. In a chapter entitled *Games in Education*, Sutton-Smith and Avedon write that:

> The usual justification (*for the pedagogical use of games*) is given that the students learn by playing games. A closer reading suggests, however, that the most important features of the games may be that the students enjoy themselves more while they are playing than when they are not. So that whatever they learn (whether it be as much as usual, or less), is learned with enjoyment. This in turn perhaps contributes to the ease with which teachers can manage their students. Games may be so acceptable because they solve motivation problems for the

> students and management problems for the teachers, not unimportant
> considerations in an age of "drop outs". (1971, p. 315)

Avedon and Sutton-Smith highlight that we don't know when games first came to be widely used as a learning tool in the classroom, however we do know that games for teaching literacy (crosswords, acrostics, anagrams and so forth) have been used for a long time, and that games for teaching arithmetic have existed since at least the 1890s. "Good" games, according to those who develop curriculum for the elementary and secondary school, are those that help the learner to learn. While critics of the pedagogical use of games claim that they don't do what they are supposed to do (namely help children learn), proponents of the use games in the classroom suggest what the authors call a "Mary Poppins type of argument – a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down!" (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971, p. 316).

Beyond the use of games in primary and secondary school, Avedon and Sutton-Smith discuss the introduction of games into university studies, so-called "simulations". Simulations were (and still are) used to teach problem-solving techniques within the fields of banking, business, politics, social studies and so forth. Research then followed to determine whether the students learned "more" with the help of games and simulations, testing the following hypotheses:

1. Games with simulated environments engender more student *interest* than by the more conventional classroom activities.
2. By participating in games students will *learn* more facts and principles than by studying in the conventional manner.
3. Students will *retain* information learned in games longer than information presented through conventional methods.
4. Students will acquire more *critical thinking* and *decision-making skills* by participating in games with simulated environments.
5. Students' *attitudes* will be significantly altered by taking part in games.

Interestingly, the only hypothesis to be completely accepted by the time *The Study of Games* was published in 1971 was the first one, *that students are more interested in games and simulation activities than in conventional classroom activities*. Avedon and Sutton-Smith summarised that "it may be said that what is now *known* about games and simulations as instructional media is this: *they are useful devices for getting and holding student interest and attention"* (1971, p. 321).

Research conducted in more recent decades has focused on the use of video games as a pedagogical tool, and a concept known as "gamification". Interestingly, despite an overwhelming amount of research on this topic, the answer still seems to be the same as it was in 1971. Namely, that video games and gamification are useful for motivating students, but that they don't necessarily lead to better "learning outcomes". I will briefly discuss this research further in the next section.

2.1.2 Gamification

In recent years there has been an enormous amount of research conducted on the potential and effectiveness of using video games as a learning tool in the classroom. This research is in part fuelled by the clear popularity of video games, with reports showing that 99% of boys and 94% of girls play video games in their free time (Plass et al, 2015). Studies also show that the number of hours children spend playing video games ranges from 7-10 hours a week, potentially much more. However, meta-analyses of the impact of games on learning in the classroom have produced conflicting findings, due in part to the various authors' conflicting theoretical approaches to learning. Some studies indicate a high learning outcome, others do not (Plass et al, 2015).

The concept of "gamification" has also been much discussed in recent years. While an exact definition of gamification is up for debate, an important quality is that it involves the use of game elements, such as incentive systems, to motivate players (or students) to engage in a task they would otherwise find boring or difficult (Plass et al, 2015). Other examples of gamification in the classroom include leaderboards, badges and points. Students are given "challenges", "quests" or "missions" instead of assignments, all with the aim of increasing engagement and motivation. The huge success of the free online quizmaker Kahoot, which according to its developers, is used by over 6 million teachers in 200 countries, can in part be explained by its positive effect on student motivation and engagement (Fuster-Guilló, et al 2019).

So, much like what Sutton-Smith and Avedon wrote in 1971, what we do know about the use of games, including video games, in the classroom, is that they are useful tools for creating student motivation, engagement and commitment. Whether they improve "measureable learning outcomes" is dependent on how one understands learning and learning outcomes.

2.1.3 Brain breaks

Another pedagogical tool which has been widely discussed in recent years is the idea of a "brain break". Put simply, a brain break is a planned activity to break up the monotony of a classroom lesson, to give brains a chance to be "revitalised", and therefore able to learn more. Proponents of brain breaks suggest as a general rule that ten to fifteen minutes of concentrated study should be followed by a three-to-five-minute break in primary school (Willis, 2016).

What constitutes a "brain break" could vary from singing a song, stretching and other physical activities, mindfulness practice, playing a game, a classroom discussion or being read-aloud to. However, research into the effectiveness of brain breaks on "learning outcomes" has given varying and inconsistent results (Müller et al, 2021). While proponents of the effectiveness of brain breaks use neuroscience to back-up their claims, detractors of brain breaks claim that the evidence is not consistent and of poor quality (Müller et al, 2021). An interesting yet small-scale study from Australia compared different types of brain breaks, and the length of time it took students to refocus afterwards (Weslake and Christian, 2015). The researchers found that while the majority of students preferred highly physical activities as a brain-break, the average length of time it took them to refocus afterwards was around five minutes. In contrast, mental games resulted in shorter refocusing time, and the students still enjoyed them. However, the researchers do point out that the research time may not have been long enough to establish a classroom routine of brain breaks, thus impacting the results (Weslake and Christian, 2015).

What does seem to be clear about the use of brain breaks in the classroom is that they, like games, are engaging for students and help with motivation, particularly for difficult or monotonous subjects. Whether this leads to an increase in measurable learning outcomes is disputed.

2.2 The study of singing games

Singing games can be seen as a form of *musical play* (Marsh & Young, 2006). A singing game can be defined as a game in which the players accompany their actions with the singing of a song, often one containing a narrative. Singing games are found in cultures all over the world, and some have existed in varying forms for many hundreds of years. Folklorists and ethnomusicologists have researched and written about singing games since the nineteenth century, and they are generally, but not always, seen as belonging to the culture of childhood. There are many different types of singing games, but some broad categories include circle

games, partner games, catching games, clapping games, rope-skipping games, matchmaking games, wedding games and elimination games (Opie & Opie, 1985).

Some notable ethnomusicologists in the field of singing games studies include the couple Peter and Iona Opie, who studied children's singing games in England over many decades and wrote such books as *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (1959), *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book* (1963) and *The Singing Game* (1985). In the United States, the ethnomusicologist Bess Lomax Hawes and the educationalist Bessie Jones published a book together called *Step It Down* (1987), which is partly an instruction manual and partly a cultural history of the singing games Jones played while growing up in the American South. Other notable ethnomusicological studies of singing games include Lady Alice Gomme's *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1894), and Herbert and Mary Knapp's *One Potato, Two Potato: the Secret Education of American Children* (1976).

Singing games in their natural playground environment have been studied with interest in recent times, as well as more naturally occurring musical play that takes place in the lives of children (Marsh & Dieckmann, 2017). In their seminal work *The Singing Game* (1985), Peter and Iona Opie postulated that singing games were in their "final flowering" and were being abandoned by children to television and other forms of entertainment. The Opies questioned whether singing games would survive at all into the twenty-first century. However, ethnomusicologists such as Patricia Campbell and Kathryn Marsh have not found this to be the case. Campbell (1998, p. 20) writes that "there is little evidence of its (*singing games*) fading from prominence". Additionally, despite the perception that singing games, clapping games and other forms of musical play are practised only by girls, Marsh has found that boys are active participants in such types of musical play well into the school years, particularly in games that include elimination or counting out (Marsh & Young, 2006).

2.1.1. Pedagogical use of singing games in the music classroom

Children's singing games are foundational in two widespread pedagogical traditions of Western music education from the twentieth century, namely the "Kodály method", as well as the "Orff-Schulwerk".

The Orff-Schulwerk grew out of the philosophical framework for children's musical education developed by the German composer Carl Orff during the first half of the twentieth century (Marsh, 2008). Orff believed that the musical potential of children could be fostered

by providing them with musical materials which resembled their own musical vocabulary, something Orff believed was demonstrated in their play (Marsh, 2008).

Children's singing games from Orff's native Bavaria thus became integrated into his musical philosophy for children, as part of a child-centred, play-based approach to learning. From a Scandinavian perspective, Sætre (2014) has found what appear to be internal conflicts in Orff–Schulwerk, especially when one considers ontological conceptions of music and the views on musical actions.

Around the same time that Carl Orff was developing his musical philosophy for children's education in Germany, the composer and ethnomusicologist Zoltán Kodály was doing something similar in Hungary. For Kodály, music education, and particularly musical literacy, was emancipatory, and he believed strongly that all children had the right to learn to read and write music. Kodály wrote:

> In 1690 (the) idea that everybody could learn to read and write their own language was at least as bold as the idea today that everybody should learn to read music. Nevertheless, it is something no less possible. It is the right of every citizen to be taught the basic elements of music, to be handed the key with which he can enter the locked world of music. (Kodály, cited in Choksy, 1999, p. x)

Like Orff, Kodály adhered to "musical evolutionism", which is to say that he believed that small children were only capable of performing simple rhythms and melodies, gradually being able to progress to more complex rhythm, metre, melody and harmony as they grew older (Marsh, 2008). Again, like Orff, Kodály employed children's songs and singing games that used primarily the pentatonic scale, at least in the beginning of a child's musical education. Kodály believed that pentatonic tunes were more *developmentally appropriate* for children (Marsh, 2008). Once the child had mastered the intonation of the pentatonic scale, they could then progress to singing semitones and the diatonic scale. Additionally, as a musical nationalist, Kodály proposed using only the music that came from the child's "musical mother tongue", and in his analysis of the folk songs and singing games of Hungarian village children, he found that much of this music was also pentatonic. Kodály's use of singing games was also a way to link the classroom and the playground, in the sense that children could practice their musical repertoire from the classroom in their own free time. But perhaps most importantly, Kodály used singing games in his pedagogical practice because the children liked them. According to Kodály, singing games are "the music that belongs to children; it is their own. It rarely goes beyond the range of the children's own voices and it is never too

difficult for them, so they participate with great energy (Kodály cited in Farkas, 1990, p. 103-4).

2.1.2 Criticism of the pedagogical use of singing games in the music classroom

It is almost one hundred years since Orff and Kodály began developing their pedagogical philosophies for children's musical education, and much has changed in terms of pedagogical theory, as well as the musical environment children are exposed to, and not least, technology. It is therefore not surprising that there is criticism today of how practitioners of both the Kodály method and Orff-Schulwerk employ "play like" practices. This criticism can broadly be said to pertain to both the rationale behind the use of singing games in the music classroom, and the repertoire of singing games used.

First of all, ethnomusicologists have found in recent decades that the singing games played by children in school playgrounds are vastly more complex than the singing games commonly used in the classroom repertoire (Marsh, 2008). For example, Campbell (1998) found that rhythms used by children in the playground are often syncopated, and there can be a polymetric relationship between the singing and the movements which accompany the songs. Furthermore, melodic analysis of contemporary singing games has found that diatonically-based melodies dominate (as opposed to pentatonic), and that the songs resemble styles of music made by adults (Riddell, 1990). This goes some way to show that the idea of "musical evolutionism" that Orff and Kodály prescribed to is at best inaccurate, and that even young children are in fact capable of performing sophisticated rhythms and melodies.

Kodály's ideas of musical nationalism and a "musical mother-tongue" are also seen to be outdated today. As Karlsen (2013) has pointed out, music classrooms in Norway today are representative of the demographic changes brought by immigration in recent decades. This multicultural diversity is similarly reflected in Western countries all over the world. Not only this, but changes to technology, particularly social media and the smartphone, have fundamentally impacted children's listening choices and habits, and consequently their awareness of musical styles. Children today are exposed to a much wider variety of music, and ways of listening to music, than what was the case for Orff and Kodály's students in the mid-twentieth century. As Nerland (2004) highlighted almost twenty years ago, music teachers need to be able to adapt to this changing musical landscape that children are exposed to. In other words, a typical music classroom in Norway in 2023 is a vastly different place than the typical music classroom in Hungary in 1948, in terms of the cultural diversity of the

student group, the exposure children have to different styles of music, and the prevailing pedagogical thought.

2.1.3 Singing games as an aid to social inclusion

Marsh and Dieckmann (2017) have researched how singing games in the playground can assist with the social inclusion of refugee and newly arrived migrant children in Sydney, Australia. They have also looked into the characteristics of the games themselves that contribute to their socially integrative potential. What Marsh and Dickmann (2017) have found is that singing games can be a mechanism for social inclusion within school environments for newly arrived migrant and refugee children, while at the same time keeping a connection to home countries.

> While many of the children from this school brought playground games from their homelands and continued to play them in the new location, this was mainly done in language-specific groups and, with few exceptions, such games were observed intermittently… However, the most frequently observed games, particularly performed by multi-ethnic groups of players, were those that had texts composed either entirely of vocables (non-meaningful syllables) or of vocables in combination with limited English vocabulary... All of these games were found throughout the playground. (Marsh & Dieckmann, 2017, p. 713-714)

Marsh and Dieckmann (2017) also investigated what it is about singing games in the playground that makes them such appropriate tools for social integration amongst the children. They found that the nonsensical vocabulary of many of the playground singing games enabled participation for non-English speakers. They also found that what they term "kinasthetic proficiency" highlighted by the playground games also elicited participation by non-English speakers. The formulaic movements of the games made it easier for non-English speaking students to participate, as many of the movements are similar in different global contexts. Finally, the repetition of words, alliteration and assonance also made it easier for non-English speakers to learn the words of the songs, enabling their participation.

2.3 Learning

In his book "*Læring i praksis*" (learning in practice) (2000), the Swedish professor of educational psychology Roger Säljö states that the mysteries of how people learn, and how they develop intellectual and manual skills, are never going to be solved in a way a that gives us a satisfactory answer. Nor will there ever be a final technical answer in the form of teaching methods or technologies which in a miraculous way can automate these processes.

According to him (p. 12), how people learn can never be reduced to a question on technique or method, like we sometimes see a tendency to within school and education.

While we know that learning definitely exists, we cannot observe it directly (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018). Despite this mystery, or perhaps precisely because of it, many different theories of learning exist and continue to be developed. With that in mind, in the following section I will broadly present some approaches to thinking about learning and some learning theories which I believe to be relevant to answering my research question.

2.3.1 Acquisition vs participation metaphors for learning

The educational researcher Anna Sfard discusses in depth two different metaphors for learning used by educators and researchers, namely the *acquisition* metaphor and the *participation* metaphor. While the acquisition metaphor is dominant in older texts on learning, the participation metaphor is more prominent in recent writings. By drawing attention to metaphors of learning, rather than individual theories of learning, Sfard manages to highlight some fundamental assumptions underpinning learning theories, and how these connect back to practice.

Looking firstly at the acquisition metaphor, Sfard states that human learning has been seen as the acquisition of something since the dawn of civilization. For example, the acquisition of knowledge or skills, or the acquisition and development of concepts. Linguistically, this depicts an image of the human brain as a container, waiting to be filled up with contents, and the learner as the owner of those contents. Sfard goes on to discuss how knowledge may be seen as a commodity and an instrument of power. For example, a scientist who makes a new discovery will be pressured to make their *contribution to knowledge* available to other scientists, and those other scientists will need to acknowledge the discoverer's right to their intellectual *property*.

Sfard writes that the acquisition metaphor is so firmly entrenched in our thinking about learning, that we almost wouldn't be aware of its existence if it wasn't for the emergence of another metaphor in recent years, namely the *participation* metaphor. In terms of language, there has been a change in recent decades, a shift from talking about knowledge or concepts, to instead talking about learning or knowing. She points out that this linguistic shift signals a change from the permanence of *having* to the constant flux of *doing*. Perhaps a simpler way of thinking about this may be considering the difference between an end-*product* and an on-going *process*. Sfard explains that:

> Learning a subject is now conceived of as a process of becoming a member of a certain community. This entails, above all, the ability to communicate in the language of this community, and to act according to its particular norms. The norms themselves are to be negotiated in the process of consolidating the community. While the learners are newcomers and potential reformers of the practice, the teachers are preservers of its continuity. (1998, p. 6)

While the acquisition metaphor stresses the *individual* mind, and what goes into it, the participation metaphor emphasises the growing relationship between the *individual and others.*

I consider Sfard's characterisation of these two metaphors to be both insightful and useful, mainly as she eloquently cuts through to the essence of the conflict between proponents of different theories of learning. Sfard goes on to discuss how *both* metaphors have their weaknesses and strengths, and that both can be useful:

> The relative advantages of each of the two metaphors make it difficult to give up either of them: Each has something to offer that the other cannot provide. Moreover, relinquishing either the acquisition metaphor or the participation metaphor may have grave consequences, whereas metaphorical pluralism embraces a promise of a better research and a more satisfactory practice. The basic tension between seemingly conflicting metaphors is our protection against theoretical excesses, and is a source of power. (Sfard, 1998, p. 10)

I will now look at two similar learning theories which could be characterised by the participation metaphor: Lave and Wenger's theory of legitimate peripheral participation, and Barbara Rogoff's theory of guided participation. I will further discuss how these theories are relevant to the research project in the discussion chapter.

2.3.2 Two theories of learning ascribed to the participation metaphor

The American psychologist Barbara Rogoff has developed a sociocultural theory of learning that builds upon the writings of Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey, and which clearly fits into Sfard's categorisation of the "participation" metaphor for learning. Rogoff's (2003) work has particularly concentrated on the *cultural* nature of human development, and has pointed to many anthropological studies to support her ideas.

Both Vygotsky's and Dewey's theories focus on learners participating with others in sociocultural activity. Rogoff (1995, p.7) explains how, for Vygotsky, a child's cognitive development needs to be understood as "taking place through their interaction with other members of the society who are more conversant with the society's intellectual practices and tools (especially language) for mediating intellectual activity".

For Rogoff (1995), "development" (or learning) can be seen through three levels of analysis, namely through personal, interpersonal and community processes. She refers to these three different planes as *participatory appropriation* (personal), *guided participation* (interpersonal), and *apprenticeship* (community). Rogoff suggests that when children take part in the activities of their community and engage with other children and adults in collaboration, the process of participating in these activities prepares them for further participation in future activities. She clarifies that it is also incomplete to assume that development occurs in one plane, and not in others. For example, that a child learns but that their partner or other students do not. While one plane may the object of focus, the others are constantly and simultaneously existing in the background.

Rogoff (1995) describes *apprenticeship* as when individuals participate with a community of others in a culturally organised activity, for example, learning a craft, a trade, other kinds of work, or schooling, and that part of the goal is the progression to mature participation in the activity by the novices. Moreover, the concept of *guided participation* refers to the processes and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and collaborate in a culturally valued activity. The *guidance* in guided participation involves the direction offered by cultural and social values, as well as social partners; whereas *participation* in guided participation refers to both observation and practical involvement in the activity. Finally, *participatory appropriation* refers to how individuals are transformed through their involvement in such an activity, and how they become prepared for further involvement in similar activities. Rogoff (1995) notes that this is a process of *becoming*, rather than *acquisition.* Or to put it in Sfard's terms, we could see this participatory appropriation and process of becoming as the constant flux of *doing*, rather than the permanence of *having*.

For Rogoff (2003, p. 36), "humans develop through their changing participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change". While much of Rogoff's work focuses on how children learn from their parents and wider communities in different global cultures, it is interesting to try and apply her idea of *learning as participation* to other learning situations, for example, a music classroom.

Other scholars have used Rogoff's concept of guided participation as a theoretical lens when looking at particular teaching and learning situations in music education. Johansen (2020) has conducted an ethnographic study of teaching and learning activities at Improbasen, a Norwegian jazz school for children, in light guided participation. Sætre and Zhukov (2021) have conducted a multiple case study to investigate the learning effectiveness of teachers and

students playing together in four different chamber music groups. By using this approach, the traditional master-apprentice model changed to a master-apprentice relationship of guided participation. Overall, Sætre and Zhukov (2021) found this approach to teaching and learning yielded encouraging results, despite the existence of some challenges relating to power relations.

Another influential theory of learning which can most certainly be categorized as belonging to Sfard's participation metaphor, is Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's (1991) theory of "legitimate peripheral participation". Developing originally from their study of learning through apprenticeships, they saw their theory of learning as a *dimension of social practice*. Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 47) argue against the idea of learning as *internalisation*, that is, that the learner internalises knowledge, whether it is "discovered", "transmitted" from others, or "experienced in interaction" with others. Instead, they see learning as *increasing participation in communities of practice*, something which concerns the whole person acting in the world, and places greater emphasis on the sociocultural transformation which occurs between newcomers and old-timers in a shared social practice (p. 49).

According to Lave and Wenger (p. 94), "the social relation of apprentices within a community change through their direct involvement in activities; in the process, the apprentices' understanding and knowledgeable skills develop". As opposed to thinking about such processes as *informal learning*, mainly brought about through observation, Lave and Wenger propose the idea of *legitimate peripheral participation*, which is something more than purely observing. Crucially, the newcomers are actively *participating* in the activities, and being absorbed in and absorbing the *culture of practice.* After some time, the newcomer's can make the practice their own (p. 95).

Other scholars have examined learning situations in music education by using Lave and Wenger's sociocultural theoretical perspectives as a lens. For instance, Stabell (2018) conducted a case study of three junior conservatories in order to examine pre-college music education, and combined Lave and Wenger's sociocultural learning theory with Bourdieu's ideas of habitus, capital and field in order to interpret her findings. Amongst other results, Stabell's research presented insights into what types of knowledge and learning are appreciated in junior conservatories.

2.4 Motivation

In this section I will discuss some theoretical perspectives relating to *motivation,* as it will become clear upon reading the results chapter that motivation is an important factor when considering how singing games influence learning in the music classroom.

Students' motivation is a fundamental theoretical concept in education, and theories of motivation try to explain motivation from many different perspectives (Hallam, 2002). Motivation is seen an important factor in determining students' academic success (Bjørnebekk, 2021). As well as this, students' motivation for an activity determines how much effort and attention they dedicate to it (Imsen, 2014).

According to Hallam (2002), theories of motivation can broadly be said to fall into three main categories: those which assert that motivation comes from within the individual, those which state that the individual is motivated by external factors, and those that see motivation as an interaction between the individual and external factors mediated by cognition.

2.4.1 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

When discussing motivation, one can differentiate between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. Intrinsic motivation means that an individual is motivated to do something because they find it personally rewarding, in and of itself. Most commonly because they enjoy it, or they think it is fun, but also because they find meaning or value in the activity (Imsen, 2014). Some theorists have suggested that intrinsic motivation is based on humans' innate need for competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2015). Others, such as Csikszentmihalyi (1990), have pointed out that activities which are intrinsically motivating share certain features. If an activity offers a level of challenge which is in balance with the individual's capabilities (not too easy, not too difficult), an individual derives pleasure from the task and will continue working on it. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls this optimal experience, or *flow*. Some researchers, such as van Veldhuisen (2017), have studied and described students' experiences of flow in music education on a small scale.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is when a task is carried out for an external reward (Hallam, 2002). Behaviourists such as Skinner (1950), saw motivation as being driven primarily by external factors, such as hunger, punishment or reward. According to Imsen (2014), in a learning situation, intrinsic motivation is seen to be superior to extrinsic

motivation. Not only that, but extrinsic motivation is also understood to be potentially damaging to a student's intrinsic motivation.

Hallam (2002) has explored research relating to motivation to actively participate in music. She has found that musical motivation is determined by a complex interaction between the individual and the environment in which they exist. She also notes that the role of peers, the school environment and the wider community in sustaining students' musical motivation has been little explored.

3.0 Method

In this chapter, I will explain the rationale behind the project's methodology and method. This will involve a clear and thorough explanation of how the project's methodology relates to my research question, and why the methods selected to implement the methodology are appropriate.

3.1 Epistemology

Epistemology offers us different theories to help us understand how we can obtain knowledge about reality. (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 45). When I first formulated my research question, "how can singing games influence learning in the music classroom", I was presented with a number of epistemological questions, the first and most important being *what is learning?* And secondly, *how do we know when learning is taking place?*

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are many different ideas about what learning is, and how it occurs, and these arise from different theories of learning.

Within epistemology, we find several different theories which can aid our understanding of how we obtain knowledge about reality. For example, positivism or constructivism.

A foundational principal of positivism is that we can obtain objective knowledge about reality through our senses – what we can see, hear, smell and touch – as long as we have the appropriate tools to measure these with. An example of an ideal research design based on the principles of positivism is the so-called gold standard, randomised-controlled experiment (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, pg. 47).

As opposed to a positivist, a constructionist would say that it is impossible to completely differentiate between the phenomenon which is being studied and the person who is conducting the study. We can only explain how we *understand* the phenomenon to be, or in other words, how we construct it to be. Our understanding of reality is therefore only that, not reality itself. This is relevant to methodology in a research project, as it provides the basis for our understanding of what the information collected is. Is it reality, or is it a way of understanding reality (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 49)?

Given the complexities of the phenomenon of learning, and the nature of the research question itself, I believed it was appropriate to take a constructivist approach to epistemology in this research project.

3.1.1 Hermeneutics

A positivist wants to explain, whereas a hermeneutician wants to understand - either people, their actions or the result of people's actions (Thurén, 2020, p. 113). The goal of my research project is also ultimately to *understand* how singing games can influence learning in a music classroom. Understanding in the hermeneutical sense means "knowledge in the deeper sense of grasping not just facts, but their integration into a meaningful whole" (Zimmerman, 2015, p. 2). It therefore seems appropriate for me to take a hermeneutical approach to the interpretation of data collected during my master's project.

In some ways, the use of play and games in the classroom is the perfect subject for hermeneutic understanding and interpretation. The meaning of play is multifaceted and endless. Play opens itself up to many possible truths, and hermeneutics questions the very nature of truth.

A research project using a positivistic approach, for example a randomised-controlled experiment, could be conducted on the impact of singing games on learning outcomes. This experiment could result in "hard data" on students' measurable learning outcomes, such as whether they had improvement on test scores. However, these "hard facts" cannot give us an *understanding* as to how singing games had influenced their learning. A hermeneutic interpretation of "soft data", such as interviews with teachers and students, and the reading and application of an appropriate theoretical framework, *can* give us an understanding of what *might* be going on. Thurén (2020, p.109) uses the metaphor of a detective's investigation into a murder: hard data can produce concrete evidence, but only a hermeneutic analysis of the soft data such as interviews material or possible motives can explain who might be responsible. It goes without saying that this approach is uncertain, and can produce the wrong explanation, as many overturned criminal convictions can attest to.

3.1.2 Integrating a hermeneutical approach

From my reading of the literature (Thurén, 2020; Zimmerman, 2015) I understand the core themes of hermeneutics to be:

a) the relationship between individual parts and the whole

b) the researcher's awareness and articulation of her own prejudices or pre-conceptions

c) the circular or spiral nature of hermeneutic interpretation

d) the importance of dialogue and shared perspectives when constructing an understanding of a phenomenon, and similarly when judging the reasonableness of a hermeneutic interpretation.

I will now discuss how each of these core themes will characterise the approach I have taken in my research project.

3.1.3 Relationship between the individual parts and the whole

By taking a hermeneutic approach, I have been aware of the interplay between the individual parts and the whole in my study of singing games in the classroom. In this case, individual parts can be represented by:

- Interview texts
- Theoretical perspectives
- Previous research

How do each of these parts relate back to the whole, which is how singing games can influence learning in the music classroom, and how does that whole relate back to the individual parts? This is a constant interplay which I have been aware of when constructing my understanding of how singing games influence learning in the classroom.

3.1.4 The circular or spiral nature of hermeneutic interpretations

In the diagram below I have illustrated the circular nature of the hermeneutic approach I have taken in my master's project. (See Figure 3.1). It is made up of Schleiermacher's original hermeneutic circle showing the relationship between the parts and the whole, as well as Heidegger's alternation between understanding and pre-conception. I have also added a Gadamerian perspective with the importance of dialogue in the construction of knowledge and shared perspectives, or what he called the *fusion of horizons* (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018).

All of the elements in the circle have equal weight, and there is constant alternation between them.
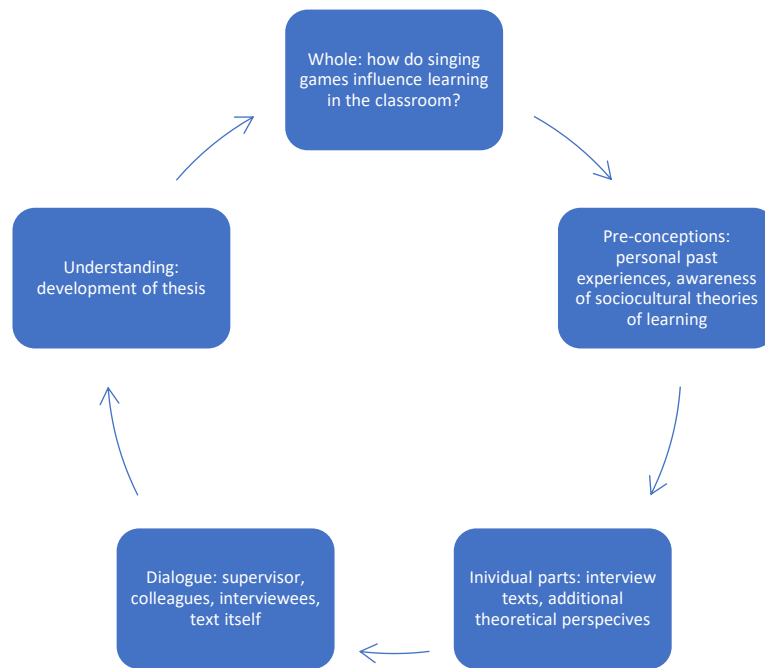
Figure 3.1: The hermeneutic circle I have employed in my approach to my master's project.

3.1.5 The importance of dialogue and shared perspectives

The last remaining principle in my outline of the central themes of hermeneutics is the importance of dialogue and shared perspectives. One can understand this in terms of the construction of an understanding during the work, but also when the work is finished, in order to criticise and discuss the interpretation.

When the research is ongoing, dialogue and the sharing of perspectives is important to create a new shared understanding, or as mentioned above, what Gadamer called a fusion of horizons. Dialogue in this sense could mean discussions with my supervisor and other colleagues, as well as with interviewees, and even a dialogue with theory or other relevant research.

Dialogue is also important following the research when discussing its results. A critical examination of the hermeneutic interpretations, as well as a dialogue about the perspectives, will help shape further perspectives.

I feel that this sharing of perspectives is so important that I wished to explicitly include it in my hermeneutic approach, although it is sometimes represented in other ways (see for example, Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018, p. 127). Particularly as a master's student, dialogue with others (and perhaps more knowledgeable others) and the exchange of ideas is a crucial element when making one's own interpretations.

3.1.6 Pre-conceptions

Perhaps most importantly, my personal experiences of using singing games in the classroom informed my pre-conceptions about how they influence learning. When I started this project, I was not at all clear about how singing games *actually* influenced learning in the music classroom, but I had an idea that their power lay in their ability to democratise the classroom and encourage participation from the whole group. I also had some pre-conceptions based around my awareness of the Kodály principles of why one should use singing games in the music classroom, which are connected to the teaching and practising musical concepts, such as beat and rhythm. However, I have tried my best to lay these pre-conceptions to the side when I have been conducting interviews and analysing the data. As it turns out, my pre-existing ideas have resulted to be only a very small part of a much richer whole after analysis of the interview data was completed.

Another pre-conception connected to participation was my awareness of for example Barbara Rogoff's (1995, 2003) theory of guided participation, and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning and peripheral participation. However, I have attempted to let these theoretical lenses be sensitizing, rather than definitive.

Lastly, a final yet significant pre-conception I had is that I felt that play was meaningful for learning, regardless of whether it had a "product" or not. I also clearly take a pedagogical humanist point of view. These pre-conceptions could have coloured my interpretation of the research data, and I have tried to be aware of this. This is also why I have included questions about the negatives or disadvantages of using singing games in my interviews.

3.2 Research design

In order to choose an appropriate research design for the project, I first needed to reflect deeply on my research question.

I was primarily interested in finding out *how* singing games can influence learning. If I was more interested in looking for indicators that a type of measurable learning has taken place as a result of singing games, I could have employed a quantitative research method, such as a randomised-controlled study. I could have performed tests on the students, before and after the introduction of singing games, to measure their learning effect. However, the validity and reliability using such a method seemed uncertain to me, not to mention difficult to carry-out given the limits of time and funding in a master's project like this one. It was also not overly

desirable, given our understanding of the complexities of learning, and the constructivist approach taken. It therefore became obvious to me, and after conversations with my supervisor, that the most appropriate research design in order answering my research question would be a small n-study, utilising data collected from semi-structured qualitative interviews with relevant expert teachers who employ singing games in their practice. Although it would have also been desirable to include classroom observation in my data collection, unfortunately the ongoing covid-19 epidemic in Australia, where my data collection was taking place, made that impossible. A thematic analysis of the interview data could then lead me to a possible understanding as to how singing games can influence learning in the music classroom.

3.2.1 Qualitative methods

Where quantitative methods utilise numbers to convey information, qualitative methods utilise language and words (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 89). Qualitative research is characterised by a close relationship between the researcher and those who are the focus of the research, in contrast to quantitative methods, where distance between the researcher and the research subjects is emphasised. Descriptions, understanding and meaning are central concepts in a text presenting a qualitative study (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 95).

3.2.2 Qualitative semi-structured research interviews

Semi-structured interviews aim to understand the perspective of the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has questions prepared, but is ultimately unconcerned as to whether those are the questions asked during the course of the interview; as opposed to a structured interview where interviewees are asked the same questions and cannot influence the interview process (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 120-121). The questions asked in a semi-structured interview are those which are natural to ask as part of the communication between the interviewer and the interviewee. The researcher is also open to the idea that interviewees can themselves introduce themes which the researcher hadn't thought of beforehand. In a semi-structured interview, the construction of knowledge between the interviewer and the interviewee may lead to the interviewer asking further questions which they hadn't prepared, reinforcing the abductive approach (Alvesson & Skøldberg, 2009). In a semi-structured interview, both the interviewer and the interviewee attempt to understand the meaning of what is said during the course of the interview (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 121).

3.2.3 Interview guide

I prepared an interview guide of questions, which I then showed and discussed with my supervisor. I attempted to ask questions that were open enough to allow the interviewee to respond freely, with the idea of asking follow-up questions to further establish the meaning of their responses.

The interview guide formed the basis for all of the interviews, and I have included the interview guide as an appendix to this thesis.

3.2.4 Selection of interviewees

I made the decision early in the research process to interview teachers loosely connected to the Kodály network of teachers in Queensland, Australia. My most compelling reason for limiting the study to teachers from this network was that it made the job of locating appropriate teachers easier, as I was aware that singing games are foundational in the Kodály approach as it is practiced in Queensland. I also am somewhat connected to that network myself and have some contacts there, having participated in two courses teaching Kodály music pedagogy in Brisbane in 2015 and 2016, which made first contact with potential interviewees easier.

Interviewees for the research project were selected according to the following criteria:

i)   They had at least 5 years' experience of teaching classroom music in either primary or secondary schools;
ii)   They included singing games as part of their teaching practice;
iii)   I wanted to include participants of different genders and ages;
iv)   I wanted to interview teachers from a range of different school contexts (primary, secondary, single-sex boy, single-sex girl, co-educational).

I initially had a list of three potential interviewees, and once I began conducting the interviews, the interviewees themselves suggested further contacts I could follow up to potentially interview.

The selection of interviewees can therefore be described as reputational case selection, (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), as the teachers were selected because they were considered "experts or key informants" (Miles & Hoberman, 1994, p. 28).

The gender and age breakdown of the interviewees was as follows:

a) Two women and four men;

b) Two in their 30s, two in their 40s, one in their 50s, one in their 60s.

I have used fictitious names to anonymise the interviewees and have redacted or changed the name of any school or organisation they are associated with.

The interviewees were:

1. Alex, male, 20 years' experience as a music teacher at mostly secondary level, female single-sex schools;

2. Geoffrey, male, 35 years' experience as a music teacher, from kindergarten to university levels, female single-sex and co-educational schools;

3. Alice, female, 8 years' experience as a music teacher. Her experience is exclusively from secondary school, and from both co-educational and female single-sex schools;

4. Caroline, female, 10 years' experience as a music teacher at both primary and secondary levels. Has experience from both female single-sex and co-educational settings;

5. Jack, male, 20 years' experience as a music teacher at both primary and secondary levels. His experience is mainly from working in male single-sex schools;

6. Adam, male, 30 years' experience as a music teacher at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. His experience is mainly from working in male single-sex schools, but he has also worked in co-educational settings.

3.2.5 Data collection

The first interview was carried out in person at the interviewee's school, and a sound recording was made of the interview. Subsequent interviews were carried out online via Zoom, as the covid-19 outbreak in Australia reached its peak during the time I was there for interviews, making in-person interviews impossible. The sound from the Zoom interviews was recorded, and the corresponding audio files were transcribed personally by me.

It was interesting to note the difference between conducting an in-person interview as opposed to online via Zoom. I could see advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. The first interview I conducted, which was an in-person, on location interview, obviously gave me a greater sense of that particular school's environment and student group. Being face-to-face, which on the one hand facilitated small-talk and helped the conversation flow better, also lead to increased nervousness on my part. I noticed that I was more focused on my

prepared questions, and asked better follow-up questions in the subsequent Zoom interviews. However, whether this was simply a result of being more practiced, or whether it was a side-effect of the "focusing" aspect of the video interviews, is difficult for me to judge. I would say that prolonged online learning experiences during the covid-19 epidemic contributed to both my own and the interviewees perceived comfortableness with the format of the Zoom interviews.

I was conscious of the types of questions that I was asking during the interviews, and tried my best to ask follow-up questions, probing and interpretative questions, direct and indirect questions and so forth, as outlined by Kvale and Brinkman (2015, p. 161) This was to better understand what the interviewee actually meant, and to articulate it as such. As much as possible, I tried to be a good *listener* during the interviews, something Kvale and Brinkman identify as being of crucial importance.

3.2.6 Transcription of interview data

Transcription from an oral to a written language is a form of initial analysis in itself (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, p. 206). I elected to transcribe the interview data myself, for a number of reasons. Firstly, as a means of familiarising myself with the material. Secondly, to be sure that the transcription was as accurate as possible, given that the interviewees at different times referred to concepts, songs, games and names that would have been difficult for an external transcriber to decipher, and some meaning may have been lost. Finally, I wanted to have a closeness to the material, and to re-experience and immerse myself in the interviews as much as possible.

There is no universal system for transcription, but a number of decisions need to be made regarding transcription of pauses, ums and ahs, laughter, sighing and so forth (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, p. 207). I elected to transcribe the interviews almost verbatim, and included laughter and pauses as they added character and life, and helped to re-create the interviews as they were conducted. I removed repetitions where I felt that they obstructed, rather than assisted, conveying the interviewee's responses and meaning.

3.2.7 Analysis and interpretation of the interview data

There are many different approaches to interview data analysis and interpretation. While some types of analysis focus on meaning, others focus on language or theoretical interpretations (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, p. 223). A type of analysis known as thematic analysis involves

searching across an entire data set in order to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 16).

I elected to adopt the thematic analysis approach described in depth by Braun and Clarke (2006) for a number of reasons. Firstly, it seemed to fit with the constructionist epistemological stance adopted in the project. Additionally, this method of thematic analysis matched the project's hermeneutical approach to qualitative research. Finally, I appreciated the clarity and conciseness of Braun and Clarke's description of how to actually carry out a thematic analysis.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 4), thematic analysis as a qualitative analytic method is poorly defined, despite its widespread use. The advantage of thematic analysis is that it's very flexible, and can be applied across a range of thematic and epistemological approaches. However, this flexibility and lack of concise guidelines can sometimes chime with the 'anything goes' critique of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5). For this reason, Braun and Clarke set out a concise set of guidelines for the researcher to follow when conducting a thematic analysis, which I have followed.

In order to conduct a thorough thematic analysis, a number of decisions need to be made explicit. Braun and Clarke (2006) identify these decisions to be:
- What counts as a theme and how prevalence will be determined;
- Whether the analysis will include a rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect;
- Whether to choose inductive or theoretical thematic analysis;
- Whether themes will be semantic or latent ;
- Whether an essentialist or constructionist thematic analysis will be conducted.

Braun and Clarke then describe in considerable detail the process of conducting a thematic analysis. The first step is to familiarise yourself with the data, by reading and re-reading the material in an active way, and looking for repeated patterns of meaning along the way. The second step involves producing initial "codes", which are features of data that appear interesting to the analyst (p. 18). This can either be done in a software program or manually. When I did this step myself, I elected to use the Nvivo software. I followed Braun and Clake's advice and coded for as many potential themes or patterns as possible. I coded the extracts of data inclusively, keeping a little of the relevant surrounding data for context. Sometimes the

same extract of data was coded several times as they might have fitted into several different themes. After the initial round of coding, I had a list of 43 potential codes.

Braun and Clarke's third phase of thematic analysis involves searching for themes. I read and re-read the codes, and tried to group them into overarching themes. At this stage I also had a set of codes that didn't seem to belong anywhere, which I labelled "miscellenous"; and a set of codes that related to categories of games, and another set of codes that related to potential pitfalls or negatives of using singing games in the classroom.

The fourth phase of thematic analysis is reviewing and refining themes. In this phase, it became obvious that some themes were not really themes, and others could be collapsed into each other.

The fifth phase involves further defining and name of themes, and the last phase of thematic analysis is actually writing the report.

3.2.8 Reliability

Reliability in research relates to the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings. In practice this often means whether a finding is capable of being reproduced by other researchers, an idea which is closely connected to positivist ideals (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, p. 281). In a qualitative study, the exact same results are very difficult to replicate for several reasons, the main ones being that people change and develop constantly, and that different researchers have different subjective viewpoints and theoretic ideas, which would be reflected in the research results. (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 224). As a result of this, in qualitative research, reliability is related to how the researcher reflects on how the research was carried out, and whether they make the process and decisions transparent; as well as how they themselves could have influenced the results.

In this report, I have tried my best to make clear how the research was conducted, in terms of the formulation of questions for the interview guide, the selection of interviewees, how the interviews were conducted and how the thematic analysis was carried out. I have also made clear the constructivist approach taken to the knowledge collected, and the hermeneutic approach to analysis. I have also made clear my own pre-conceptions, particularly in relation to my humanist pedagogical standpoint, which quite clearly have coloured the research design

and analysis (i.e., a semi-structured qualitative interview study, as opposed to a quantitative randomised-controlled experiment).

3.2.9 Internal validity and external validity

Validity can be discussed both in terms of internal and external validity. Internal validity asks to what extent the research questions and research design correlate to the concepts and theories we use to explain them. Another way of saying this is by asking if we are actually finding out what we claim we are (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 229). Another important question is how meaningful the abstract concepts and theories employed for both the interview participants are, and for the readers of the final report. For readers to understand whether the abstract theories are meaningful or not, a thick description of the data material can be presented, in a way that the readers can see situation as it was presented to the interviewer (Geertz, 1983). The interviewees can check whether the theories and concepts used are meaningful by being given the opportunity to read the report (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this project, I have attempted to include as thick a description as possible of the data material.

Internal validity can also be discussed in terms of causality, something which is difficult to prove in the fields of behavioural and social sciences (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 233). This project has not attempted to *prove* the effects of singing games in the music classroom. On the contrary, this project asked the question how *can* singing games influence learning in the music classroom. In other words, what are some possibilities of how learning can be affected by singing games. As discussed previously in this thesis, we can only test indicators of learning, not learning itself. In that respect, I have avoided making any claims as to causality in this project.

External validity is related to the transferability of the research findings to other situations or contexts, outside of that which was studied in the project (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 238).

In qualitative research, transferability can be seen in light of thick descriptions of the data presented, in such a way that the reader can recognise the situation as being either similar or dissimilar to their own (Stake & Trumbill, 1982). In this sense, it is up to the reader to determine whether the findings are relevant for their own context or not.

3.3 Limitations of the study

At this point it seems important to highlight the limitations of the study, of which there are several. Firstly, there were only a limited number of participants interviewed. While six participants is not an insignificant number, the results of the study would carry greater weight if more teachers had been interviewed. Secondly, in addition to interviewing more teachers, I would have liked to conduct interviews with students as well. This would have been to gain insights into how they experienced the use of singing games in the classroom, which is possibly different from how the teachers experience them. Students' perspectives could constitute a part of further research on this topic. Thirdly, due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, I was unable to conduct classroom observation where I could see the singing games in action, as was my original intention. Again, classroom observations could be conducted in any further research on the topic. Additionally, while not all the teachers would describe themselves as Kodály teachers (some might use the term "post-Kodály"), all of them do have an awareness of the principles and practices of Kodály-informed teaching. The focus on Kodály-informed teachers was essentially because these teachers use singing games as a part of their practice, making recruitment of suitable participants to the study easier. It also made it simpler to have a common language of concepts when conducting the interviews and analysis. However, the selection of solely Kodály-informed teachers for the study has its disadvantages too. For instance, the fact that all of the teachers included singing games as a part of their teaching practice suggests that they would automatically be positive to the use of singing games as a teaching tool. Does this make these teachers overly positive to the use of singing games as a teaching and learning tool? It is of course possible. Having said this, one of my interview questions concerned whether there are any disadvantages of using singing games in the classroom, and some of the teachers were able to highlight some difficulties with using them. Furthermore, it would be interesting to understand the perspectives of other, non-Kodály teachers who also utilise singing games as part of their teaching practice. This could also be a part of further research on this topic.

3.4 Ethics

An interview study is bound up with ethical issues. Kvale and Brinkman (2015) identify these ethical concerns at all stages of an interview study. In the thematizing stage, the purpose of the study should be considered with regards to improving the human situation investigated. At the designing stage, ethical issues concern obtaining the subject's informed consent, securing

confidentiality, and considering the possible consequences of the study for the subject. During the interview itself, the personal consequences of the interview interaction for the participants needs to be considered, for example stress or issues of power. During transcription, ethical issues relate to maintaining the confidentiality of the interviewees, and whether the resulting text is true to the interviewees' original statements. In analysis, questions of how deeply the statements can be analysed, as well as whether the interviewees can respond to how their statements are analysed. The researcher has the responsibility to report knowledge that is as verified as possible. Finally, when the report is published, there is again the issue of confidentiality and consequences for the interviewees (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, p. 86).

I have been aware of these ethical concerns during all stages of the research. In terms of confidentiality, I have used fictive names for the interviewees, as well as redacting the names of any schools or organisations to which they belong. The project was approved by NSD, and is included in this report as an appendix. I also received informed consent from all of the participants for their inclusion in the study, in accordance with the ethical guidelines from NESH (2022).

4.0 Results

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I interviewed six music teachers who utilise singing games in their practice. As a result of these interviews, I have gained their insights into how the use of singing games can influence learning in the music classroom. These results are discussed in detail in this chapter.

The findings have been organised into four different themes, and include underlying sub-themes, all of which were developed during the thematic analysis. The four main themes that I have developed are:

i) *Engagement and participation*; which includes the sub-themes brain breaks, gamification, physical activity and energy-channelling

ii) *Social learning*; which includes the sub-themes socialisation, democratisation, the importance of rules, community building and a physical connection

iii) *Joy*; which includes the sub-themes fostering a love of music, a source of comfort and memory-making

iv) *Conceptual learning and practising skills*; which includes the sub-themes teaching musical concepts and skills, teaching broader educational concepts and skills, unconscious learning through play and doing, practising motor skills and a way of conducting formative assessment.

A concept map showing the themes and sub-themes developed is illustrated in Figure 4.1 on the following page.
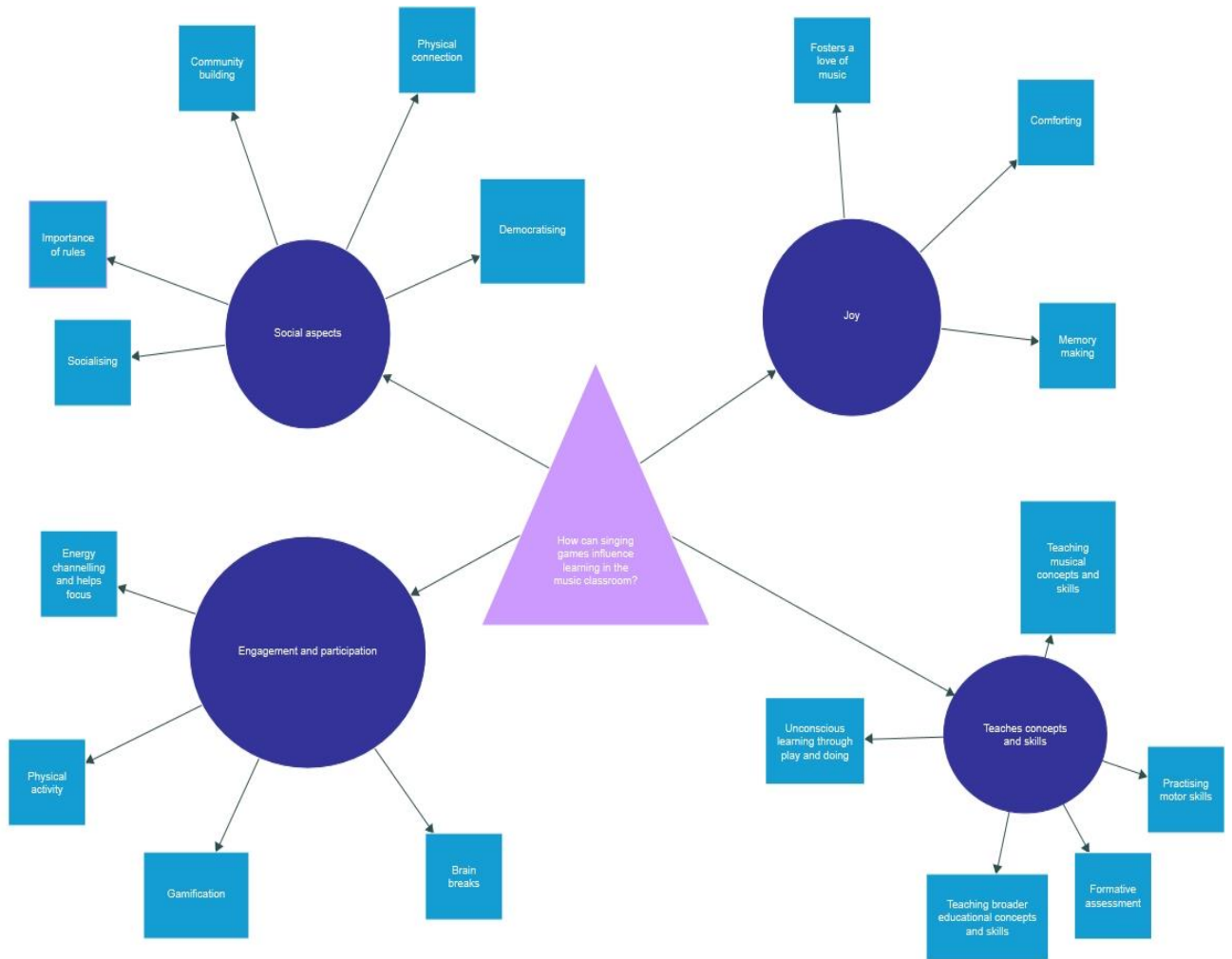
Figure 4.1 A concept map showing the themes and sub-themes developed in the research project

4.1 Engagement and participation

To begin with, all the teachers interviewed spoke at length about how singing games are *engaging* for students, and how this is conducive to further class *participation*. This chimes with what we know about intrinsic motivation, that if the activity is meaningful for the students, they will want to do it more (Lunde & Brodal, 2022). It also follows what Sutton-Smith and Avedon (1971, p. 321) wrote about games, in that "they are useful devices for getting and holding student interest and attention*."* One can also see clear parallels with Rogoff's (1995) idea that initial participation in a cultural activity can lead to further participation in that activity.

All of the teachers discussed how they typically begin a class with a singing game, for the purpose of sparking initial engagement and participation. For some of the teachers interviewed, the benefit of starting a lesson with a game carries into the rest of the lesson.

Alex discussed how he traditionally starts a class with a singing game, as it then sets up the class for continued participation:

> It *[the singing game]* sets it up. That's why I commonly start with a game…I think that sort of benefit carries on into whatever you do for the rest of the lesson. The danger for me can be if I've got a really wild and woolly class, and then you learn how to judge that. Like we're not going to start with that rowdy running game. You know? *(laughs)*

Geoffrey explained how he also starts his lessons with a singing game, and how he uses singing games throughout the lesson to maintain student engagement and enjoyment:

> How would I arrange a 30-minute lesson? There'll be something like a group game to begin. Then we'll sit down, and we'll do something quite intense for three minutes. Then we'll play a game and then we'll do...so the lesson is balanced between games and concentration, but what does the child remember? The child remembers the game. We got three minutes where we sat down and had to keep the beat and clap the rhythm or whatever we had to do. Well, that was just a little bit of an interruption to going back and playing another game, actually.

Alice also starts her lessons with a singing game, as she believes that they are engaging for her students and help to create a positive environment:

> There's kind of two things. There's that really kind of just fun, engagement factor that I think is really important, which is why I often start with a game. And so, as well as just them enjoying and creating a positive environment in the classroom, also, that kind of bonding with the group.

Caroline emphasises how total class participation is an important factor in her use of singing games:

> And then I will always start with a group game, and most of the time it's in a circle…and everyone has an important role to play in this game. This is music, we sing, we are all here. This is fun. So, without saying any of that, I just start singing the game, and the kids will walk into the circle or whatever it is. They'll make the formation for that game and it's very active.

Jack surmised concisely that "singing games are one aspect of my teaching that are one of the tools or tricks that I draw upon to ensure I have continuous engagement in my lessons." He elaborated further on this:

> It could be [*using the singing game*]for learning, as in teaching a particular concept through singing games, or reinforcement. It could be for relaxation or fun. It could be to break up the lesson...And it also might be for building social cohesion. I'm thinking particularly about year nines, who are not great at getting along with each other. And if you want them to form a band, for instance a rock band, or a pop band, they need to be able to have positive relationships with their peers, and trust and work together, and singing games are another really great way to get that. And I could go on, like physical coordination and motor coordination. There are all these benefits to singing games, that I think if I wasn't including them in my lesson, I actually wouldn't be giving a full music education to my students.

For Adam, who has the challenge of teaching music in a single-sex male high-school, the competitive, timed and kinaesthetic nature of the singing games fits with his students "mode of learning…and they engage really well". Adam said:

> And of course, in a boys' school it's easier because… they love to compete anyway, so it really fits in with their mode of learning. The earlier gender stuff from the mid to early 2000s says that if you're given timed activities, competitive activities, and kinaesthetic activities, they'll really engage well. Which is, of course what singing games are.

I will now look at the sub-themes which stem from this first central theme of *engagement and participation*.

4.1.1 Brain breaks

I have previously discussed the pedagogical concept and practice of *brain breaks*, as a way of breaking up the monotony of a lesson and refocusing students' attention. The idea of a brain break is the first sub-theme I have identified from the central theme of engagement and participation.

One teacher in particular, Jack, discussed singing games in terms of being a brain break for his students. Jack explained:

> I also use singing games as brain breaks at our school. We have other subjects that have extended periods of learning, like maybe an hour and a half of learning…that have boys sitting at desks for an hour and a half straight. Just constant content pushing. And it's like that. That's… that's not how the human body learns. That's not how anyone learns, and so in terms of trying to get my practice or lining up with other practices in the school I would say that I use singing games a lot of the time, in addition to learning as brain breaks. So, I'll use them as a relaxing, relaxation activity in disguise because the kids like it and enjoy it so much.

Jack explained further how the importance of brain breaks was taught as part professional development at his school, in terms of being trauma-informed practice. For Jack, singing games provide the perfect material for this:

> [*We have…*] quite a large number of boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, and often split families. Um, learning difficulties, low social economic status, so a whole range of things. And so, we have really jumped on board with trauma-informed practise. And part of that is, this idea of brain breaks, as in if you've got continued learning, break up the learning with a little bit of a reset, just to give kids that moment to you, you know, refocus essentially. But my colleagues and I are sitting there going, "this is just a game in our classroom". And it's funny, they have actually walked past our classroom before and into our classroom and said: "that's a fantastic brain break". And we're like, 'this is a normal game that we do.'

Jack also discussed how he particularly included more games at the start of term, "when there's typically lots of content, or new knowledge that I'm pushing out. And so, I'll break up the new knowledge with games."

Jack explained how he uses games as an alternative to a break in the middle of a double lesson:

> Every other class in the school has a drink break when the bell goes between the two lessons. We just play a game. And it's so funny, because the kids outside staring looking in the windows and going: "they're having lots of fun and they're still in the classroom."

4.1.2 Energy channelling and focus

Interestingly, while Jack spoke about singing games as offering the opportunity for a brain break, other teachers discussed how the games provide an outlet for *channelling their energy*, and how that helps the students to *focus*. Therefore, energy channelling and focus is my second sub-theme to stem from the central theme of engagement and participation.

Alex described a recent experience with one of his classes, who according to him were a particularly energetic group:

Yeah, I mean if I just think about this week… I've got a year seven class who are really great, but they're quite rowdy. You know, they're like really, beautifully energetic. [*And we'll play]* a game like *A Qua Qua*, which is, you know, a round-the-circle elimination game. And we'll play that game thirty times, to eliminate everyone, and they'll stick with it. Which is incredible, 'cause they're a pretty scatty class.

For Alex, the game became a tool to help the students focus:

Yeah, [*the students are*] totally in the zone. And it's not to say you don't have to tell them to stop... and to tell some kids to start singing more and whatever but...there's just this ongoing kind of relentless energy, you know, and that's good. That's good for a class like that who are prone to distraction.

Alice also believes the games helps her students focus:

[*The students are*] focused, it makes them better at taking in the material, if you embed that material in a song, obviously… also like it builds a positive relationship with you. Trust as a teacher is gonna save your behaviour management problems a huge way.

Interestingly, Geoffrey also discussed singing games in terms reminiscent of brain breaks, but with a twist. In Geoffrey's approach, games make up much of the content of a 30-minute lesson, with small 2-minute breaks in between for intensive concentration and learning. In his experience, as the children get older these periods of concentration can be extended:

Interviewer: OK, so in a 30-minute lesson you'd have how many games?

Geoffrey: Oh, of course, it depends. But let's say on average 5, 4 or 5, yeah? Interspersed with little concentrated activities. Now we know that more broadly in the literature, that's a really valuable way of teaching, that children will concentrate…and then we give them a break. The pause that refreshes so they can stand up, walk around, talk for two minutes and they sit back down at their computers and keep going. What if it was the other way? There's lots of pauses, lots of games, lots of other stuff, two minutes of intense work and get up and [*play]*... So the model that we have for the babies is this play -based model, and slowly the periods of concentration extend out a little. Yeah? But what that does is develop a great capacity in the children to focus, so I notice where there are children I've taught, brought up through the programme, they can easily work with me in a 90-minute lesson by year seven, and they can work 90 minutes. Children who haven't had it, I'm really pushed to do half an hour of serious work, so it builds a different capacity in terms of this broader educational approach, or readiness as well.

For Geoffrey, this games-heavy model is important because: "the majority of the child's experience is joyous, that's what I believe we want, and so that's what the child takes away."

In these ways, the teachers believed the singing games helped their students to focus in class.

4.1.3 Gamification

The third sub-theme which I have developed from the central theme of *engagement and participation* is *gamification.* As previously discussed, gamification is the idea of taking elements from games, such as competition, points and so forth, and incorporating them into the daily life or instruction in the classroom.

Alex discussed how as a society, we have become accustomed to the gamification of everyday life, and how this impacts students too. Gamification is something that students and their teachers have become accustomed to.

Jack explained how he uses gamification to bring enjoyment to otherwise tiresome musical drills, such as practising the chord chart. While Jack would not describe these types of "games" as singing games, the elements of a game are there:

> But if you start to call it a game…you know you do body ostinatos, and particularly as soon as you have partner engagement, the kids are just losing it. And they're more focused on the enjoyment, and they've forgotten that they're learning. So, the game in a way, is learning through stealth….games are just learning in disguise. And so, I think you could make any kind of learning a game, put it in disguise.

Adam also mentioned how he uses elements of gamification, in addition to singing games, to keep students and engaged and participating, such as "solfa and rhythm bingo, for example, which is another way of doing the same thing."

4.1.4 Physical movement

The final sub-theme I have developed from the first central theme of *engagement and participation* is *physical movement*. The physical element of the singing games was pointed out as a significant by both Alice and Jack.

Alice explained:

> Up and moving as well, there's all the body stuff I guess that's the third element, right? Yeah, in terms of hand-eye coordination, and crossing the midline and all the research that tells us that you know, it's really good for brain stuff. Particularly in the pubescent and prepubescent, so I find it so fascinating. I mean I teach [*only*] girls now too, so there's that. It's very different, compared to a co-ed setting. Like teenage boys are much more tentative to sing and to play clapping games, I think they find it maybe a little bit emasculating. Or this is what girls do, you know. But of course, they're the ones that need it, because you watch them doing the hand-eye coordination stuff around that puberty, year eight mark and they look like geese. Like we cannot do it.

Jack brought up what he referred to as "the old school idea" of learning styles, and how singing games fit into a kinaesthetic approach:

> And if we move away from the Kodály perspective, for a moment, just looking at in terms of best practice and what engages kids. Kids enjoy moving and singing. If we think about the old school idea of teaching styles, in terms of aural, kinaesthetic, and visual. If we really want to engage kids in that kinaesthetic movement, singing games is a really great way to do it.

When Jack was pressed to explain how the movement of singing games was significant, he elaborated:

> Yeah, movement, and suddenly it's fun. It could be a competition; it's essentially not considered learning. It's everything other than learning that they might have in their mind. But in in my mind, I still call it learning. And that's no different to if you're playing *A Qua Qua,* for instance, and you're passing the beat. We're just practising passing the beat and singing a song. That's really the learning of the activity. You know, there might be singing confidence and might be growing as a class community, but because there's that competition element, which boys love, competition, it's suddenly this amazing experience.

I will now discuss the second central theme I have developed from the thematic analysis, namely *social learning.*

4.2 Social learning

It is perhaps not surprising that all of the teachers discussed in depth how singing games can influence the *social learning* of the students. This social learning is the second central theme which I have identified from the thematic analysis, and different teachers highlighted in different ways how this social learning was influenced by the singing games. These different aspects make up the sub-themes under this central theme of *social learning*, and they are:

- *Socialising*
- *Community building*
- *Democratising the classroom*
- *Physical connection with other human beings*
- *The importance of rules*

It is clear that we can draw parallels between the social learning the games offer the students, to the sociocultural theories of learning articulated by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Rogoff (1995). We can recall that Lave and Wenger proposed understanding learning as *increasing participation in communities of practice*, something which concerns the whole person acting in the world, and that places greater emphasis on the sociocultural transformation that occurs

between newcomers and old-timers in a shared social practice. Similarly, Rogoff's idea of *participatory appropriation* refers to how individuals are transformed through their involvement in an activity, and how they become prepared for further involvement in similar activities. It is also plain that in this instance of *social learning* we can understand learning in terms of the *participation* metaphor expressed by Sfard (1998), as the participation metaphor emphasises the growing relationship between the *individual and others.*

I will now discuss the different sub-themes which I have identified as belonging to this central theme of social learning.

4.2.1 Socialising

All of the teachers discussed in depth how singing games bring socialising benefits to their students and classrooms. It was interesting to see how these socialising benefits were realised across the different age-groups taught by the different teachers. For teachers who work with younger students, like Geoffrey and Caroline, the socialising benefits of the singing games could be talked about in terms of what Caroline termed "soft skills", as well as helping to develop empathy. She explained:

> To have the ability to look into someone's eyes, to hold someone's hands, to stand next to someone who we might not necessarily like. Those kinds of things are just how we need to work for a good society to run. And if we practise those skills less, of course we become worse at being able to deal with conflict. Look at what's happening in some situations online. We've lost the ability to empathise, or I don't know, feel in some ways the other person's feelings. And I feel like singing games allows that empathy to develop a lot.

For Geoffrey, the socialising benefits of playing singing games in the music classroom are paramount:

> Let's talk about the big one. Let's talk about the social work. So, from the very beginning, what am I saying all the time? 'Are you helping one another? Can you find a partner? Find a partner, I said. Look at your partner. Help one another. Everybody is your friend here. Don't run across room to find your bestie.' So we're developing a lot of social work, and what am I doing with the children who are, you know, on the spectrum? They have a whole lot of spectrum sort of issues. They're often my partner. 'Look at me, hold my hands...' So, there is all of this other level of social work that's going on.

For Caroline, having a strong focus on the social aspects of school and learning was critical in the early years of primary school, as a way of laying the foundations for a later focus on content:

By the time they reach year 12, their teachers are going to be focusing on that content knowledge, that specific knowledge. But down here I'm doing a lot of the other stuff. It's not necessarily content knowledge or specific language, it's more exposure, readiness. And slowly, you can pull apart that formalised learning from a game or from the music.

Geoffrey explained how for him, the singing games present an opportunity for the students to be presented with a model and reinforcement of good social behaviours:

Ooh, if we wanna make a train, for example. Everybody has to work together. 'What if one person, doesn't step at the right time? The train won't work, be careful.' So we're laying down this whole notion of working together, and the sort of social dimension of learning. And what that does is help a child learn not just from me, I'm sort of just the facilitator here. They are looking at one another as well, and I'll remind the children...So one of today, a little girl. One of these pre-preppies, so she would be maybe three or four. (She said) "I can't do this". And I said, 'No, I don't think you could. Do you think there would be a way to get some help? Have a look who could help you.' And she looked at me and said 'You could help.' I said 'I could help. But is there somebody else who could help? Look at the table? There are five other people here, could you ask somebody to help?' So, she turned to the girl next door, and said 'G**** can you help me?' and G**** said: 'Yes, you need pink'. And then they went on without me, so they are immediately learning this whole other social dimension of how to operate, and that so often is reinforced and modelled in the singing games.

Geoffrey also discussed how the singing games encourage the students to take responsibility themselves if they were to play the games outside of the classroom or perform them for others. "What we're trying to do is let the children have the games back, ultimately, that's what we want. The games belong to the children, that's where the games belong."

4.2.2 Community building

Closely connected to the idea of socialising students in the classroom, is the idea of building a classroom community. The way that singing games can help build a classroom community was mentioned by several of the teachers interviewed. In the school where Alex works, an individual class is referred to as a "house group", who will have many of their lessons together from the 7th to the 12th grade. Thus, a strong sense of community is particularly important in Alex's classes. The singing games, for Alex, are useful tools in building a community in his classes. "And you know, like as a music teacher, I'd prefer class cohesion and energy to come from that [*singing games*] than from, I don't know...I don't know what else do people do, have discussions about banding together?"

Alex also discussed how the role of the teacher as the expert in that community was affected by the singing games, and how the class has to rely on each other to make the games work:

And it's also community building, you know? Like it's a trust relationship with your teacher. It serves a purpose of a teacher, kind of in a weird way asserting dominance, which is weird to say. But I'm the instruction giver so it does place the teacher on a kind of a...you're the expert in the room, which is an interesting aspect of game playing.

The potential for classroom music to be a place for fostering community was not lost on Alex: "If that time that they spend with me is having some kind of community building or normalisation of different viewpoints or whatever it might be, then I think that's powerful."

Jack, who works in an all-boys high school, also spoke about the singing games in terms of community building. Jack explained how the start of high school was challenging for many students, as they come from many different schools and backgrounds, as well as going through the hormonal changes of puberty. Jack talked about how in his classroom, he very carefully scaffolds the group learning first through individual work, then to working with partners, up to group and ensemble work. For Jack, the singing games play a critical role in developing later ensemble musicking:

I think the games have contributed, among other things, to building that ability to work with one another. And I think the long-term goal is eventually, in year twelve, I want the students to be able to work together, and form bands or little ensembles.

Adam, who also works in an all-boys high school, talked about how the games can help develop friendships across the classroom and foster a sense of community. He highlighted how the teacher could engineer group games so that students could interact with a variety of different students. As Adam explained, sometimes getting students to work with each other can be difficult, but it is an important part of school life:

Yeah, it's very important, and sometimes if you have a quite dysfunctional class, you will have to engineer that. And they don't like it (*laughs*). Yeah, "I'm not playing that with him". "It's only for 10 minutes, off you go. Be nice. Stop it", yeah. Because that's an important job in schooling.

4.2.3 Democratising the classroom

Hand in hand with helping to build a community, several teachers explained how the singing games can have a democratising effect on the classroom, in different ways. Singing games can highlight a student's musical skill or potential, but it may not necessarily be the students who already play an instrument proficiently who are "good" at the games. Alex discussed how the singing games can be what he called an "equaliser":

It's a bit of an equaliser. You know, so we can be having like a joint musical experience. I'm not pointing out the four kids who could be a string quartet. And I'm not looking at the percussion brass kids. It's like we're all in this together.

Jack explained how the singing games helps put the students on what he termed "a level playing field", at a potentially awkward time when their outward appearances are very different as a result of puberty:

Some boys are really tall. Some boys are really short, you know. It's just this weird and wonderful collection of people. And again, we'll just play a game, and it's… what it does is that it puts everyone on an equal playing field.

Adam talked about games as being a "great leveller", and something that everybody just has to do in his classroom:

Well, everyone does it. If a kid says "I don't have to play this game", I say, "well, do you do plus in maths? You don't get a voice, do you? Well, when you're in my class, if you're going to do plus in maths, you're going to play a game in here, it's quite simple.

4.2.4 Physical connection with other human beings

Another aspect of social learning highlighted by several of the teachers interviewed was the physical connection that the games provided between the students, as well as the students and the teacher. For some teachers, the importance of this physical connection was made even more clear as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Caroline talked about how difficult this physical connection was to establish with online learning:

In some ways, covid has taught us that even more so, those games are so important. It's so hard to translate the feeling of playing a game with someone online, like, I'm just about to teach primary one online, for a group in Malaysia. And I'm thinking, how do I teach them *Let us chase the squirrel*, in a circle, you know. How do you get, that excitement, that joy?

For Alex too, the covid pandemic disrupted the physical connection the games bring to the students in the classroom, as students needed to wear face masks when they were allowed back to school. In his experience, this loss of physical connection made the class environment dryer:

Ah, we weren't allowed to play instruments for a long time, and so music took on this kind of a dry flavour. And it's starting to become more normal now, right? And this week, you know, no masks. As of yesterday. Yeah, so that frees us up to be happier, but even when we play games in masks, it's just not the same. Yeah, because it is, it's that kind of human connection.

Geoffrey spoke at length about the importance of the singing games in creating a physical connection between children, and children and adults. For Geoffrey, the games are an alternative to a world where children are more and more connected to digital devices:

> We get lost. We get distracted. We buy lots of computers and we put them (*the children*) in front of videos. And we do all of these things that are meant to be interesting to the children. What is interesting to the child is connecting with human beings. That's if you like, a fundamental, and so this singing and playing of games forms this deep connection between the teacher and the children. Don't they love it if I'm their partner? Absolutely, but with the children and one another, and then with the other children. The children then share that with their other teachers, and so there becomes this sort of joy that comes in the whole school more generally, so is that a principle we should be having? Yes! Let's not remove that play, that joy. And I'm not talking about just in the Infant School. Why? Why is there not this wonderful stuff everywhere?

Geoffrey also mentioned how physical contact between children and adults happens less often now than it used to, and he sees this as a negative development:

> We can see so often now, if we take away fingerplays, and we can't bounce children on our knees in schools anymore due to child protection things. We don't do that, but once upon a time we would even allow children to bounce on our knees. All of this interaction helps the child. So all of this interaction that should happen with parents and grandparents…kids are sitting in front of TV. Kids are not having that same human contact, and those basic things of language acquisition are not happening.

Interestingly, this resonates with recent research on the phenomenon of *joint attention*, which is the idea that by simply being engaged in an activity, such as a game, together with another, a child's language development improves, as well as their ability to concentrate (Suarez-Rivera et al, 2019).

Several of the teachers also discussed how the singing games offered an opportunity for the students to engage in the real world, and away from their devices. Alex explained how "for me the game, you know, in a school context and particularly with the older kids it's a chance to get away from your device. It's a chance to engage with the kids."

Jack highlighted how the games, which were originally intended to bring the playground into the classroom, are instead now being taken out of the classroom and into the playground by his students:

> I think it actually is incredibly important because I think that culture of children playing in the playgrounds…I think society has evolved and it doesn't, doesn't happen as naturally. Now they're playing PlayStation instead. They go to the library and use their laptops. We will sometimes see boys going to the playground

and taking out games from the classroom to the playground, which is actually the opposite of what initially happened. The whole idea was that games would go from the playground into the classroom, but now we're actually seeing the opposite, so I think it's really interesting that the time and place that we're in and the ramifications of online learning, and covid in particular.

Other teachers also discussed how the singing games offered an opportunity for the students to engage in the real world, and away from their devices. As Alex explained "the game, you know, in a school context and particularly with the older kids, is a chance to get away from your device. It's a chance to engage with the kids."

4.2.5 The importance of rules

For several of the teachers interviewed, the singing games are useful in how they teach children the importance of following rules, as well as providing a safe space for some children to know what the rules are, and that they will be adhered to.

Caroline explained how she found game structure and rules provide a safe space for children with different learning needs. "Rules, structures of games, gives them this boundary, where they can say, 'I feel safe, because I know what to expect', and especially for those kids who do have issues with anxiety, or who knows what else."

For Adam, the rules of the game provide clarity, something his male teenage students appreciate: "because boys like to, like this is a generalisation, but many boys in that context they like clear directions. They like to know where they stand."

Geoffrey explained how the rules of the games help his younger students to socialise and interact with each other:

It's a game. And so there are rules. And what do you have to do? And if you don't do that, you're out. And we learn very quickly. That it is a game. It's fun. I don't have tears and carrying on when people get out, 'cause that's the game. That's the rules.

For Jack, who teaches in high school, the rules were still important in assisting the students socially, in that they have a consequence. "I'll be extremely strict on the rules, and if the rules are not adhered to there are consequences, like the game will end or whatever."

I will now look at the third main theme which I have developed from the thematic analysis, namely *joy*.

4.3 Joy

All of the teachers interviewed were keen to discuss how the joy of the singing games influences their classroom, and that joy is an overlooked factor in today's school. Several teachers also identified joy as one of the principles of singing games which could be extrapolated and applied to other subjects in school. As Alex explained, the music classroom can offer a space for joy:

> I think there is a lot to be said for joy. Yeah, and I think a lot of subjects don't have pure joy at their core. So we'll often start a lesson with a game, and that being something um, for the students that will be totally different to the experience that they've had for the rest of the day.

Alex believed that joy was one of the principles from the singing games which could be extracted and applied to other subjects. He also believes that the element of joy in the games takes the focus away from an answer which is right or wrong. Instead, the focus is on the process, not the product.

> One of the joys of a game is it's not about individuals being right or wrong. And I look at, let's say our maths classes here at school, and there still is...it's more modern than it used to be, but there's this sense that, like the correct answer, will be on page 49. There's this sense that um, the teacher knows the answer and I don't know the answer. Whereas coming and playing with ideas and playing with music. It just puts every, it just puts an end to all of that, you know?

Other teachers discussed how joy was contagious. Geoffrey explained how the joy of the singing games in music can spread from the music classroom throughout the school, and that his students would often sing their music songs in other classes:

> I think there are so many principles we can extract from this way of thinking about it. But let's start with the notion of joy. What if a child's experience of a subject is joyful, well, they're more willing to be involved in that subject, yeah? And if there's some joy in this subject, that joy doesn't stop at my door as they go back, they're singing the song back to their classroom. Even though I've said: "Don't make any noise, go back," but they're gonna sing that song when they go back. Teachers tell me very often, at any time during the day. So, I happen to be in a room. Children were colouring in, doing something, this was preps, and one of the boys started singing what we've been singing in the morning, and then slowly just all the other children started singing it, and they kept doing their job but suddenly singing while they do it. How fantastic! So, for me that joyous experience isn't limited just to music, that becomes a joy that starts to permeate the rest of the child's experience. Now, what if there was no joy in any subject? Well, that's grim, then. So for me that's essential. It's essential that there is this sort of joy, this unfettered happiness that children have from doing things.

Geoffrey became emotional as he told a story which illustrated the meaning of this joyfulness in the classroom:

> The joy for me is all about the joy in them. There is a little boy in year one, and we were playing *Skip to the Barbershop.* Everybody sits and this boy skips round the outside, takes a hat and they put it on three children and the third person is new one. And when this boy stood up, he's incredibly musical. It turns into dancing. He's very artistic child, but he couldn't stop beaming. And I nearly burst into tears. I thought, this is just unfettered joy, coming from this child. From doing something as simple as singing, while he skipped around. Oh, it's just, it's just quite fantastic. Makes an old man very happy.

For Caroline, "the love and the joy in music making is number is number one reason why I use them [*the singing games*], and how I encountered them."

Many of the teachers also pointed out that if the children *enjoy* what they are doing in a subject, they are more likely to want to keep doing it. Alice too, believed that joy was a principle that could be extracted from the use of singing games and applied to other school subjects. For her, this joy contributed to the students wanting to be in her class:

> Yeah, because they're having fun! Because they enjoy it. It's not rocket science, like we as adults, we like to do things that we enjoy, you know. I would much rather go to the pub with my friends than pay my taxes! Like, of course you can go and follow the things that you enjoy.

From this central theme of *joy,* I have identified two closely related sub-themes:

- *a source of comfort and happy memories*

- *fostering a love of music*

I will now explore these sub-themes in the following paragraphs.

4.3.1 A source of comfort and happy memories

Some of the teachers interviewed expressed how the joy of the singing games was a source of comfort for the students, who in their later years of schooling may be overwhelmed by assessment.

For Alex, Geoffrey and Alice, this was demonstrated when the older students requested to play the games in times of stress:

> You know they'll come from a heavy physics exam, and they'll say, "can we just play a game?" Like can we just play a game we know really well, from when we were in year nine or whatever"....it's comforting. (Alex).

Geoffrey had a similar anecdote about how the games could be a source of comfort and a memory of a happy time, which he identified as something young adults need. For him, this was important in a time when we know that many young adults struggle with their mental health:

> We have the alarming rise in suicide rates in those early 20 years, and I wonder about all of that. I wonder, have we put or sown the seeds of those very simple, joyous things which are ultimately connected to other people? 'Can we play *Lucy Locket*?' It wasn't 'can I have an icy pole', or 'can I watch *Frozen*?' It was 'can I do this thing where we all laughed and played together?'

Alice also discussed how the singing games were a source of joy, shared experience and happy memories for her senior students. Alice can see part of the music teacher's role is to facilitate these shared experiences for their students. "Particularly as music teachers and creative arts subjects' teachers, we are cultural bearers. And I think it can be really bonding, and that's why the year 12s want to do it again, because it's a shared experience."

4.3.2 Fostering a love of music

Closely connected to the idea of the singing games being a source of comfort and happy memories, is the idea expressed by some teachers that the singing games help to foster a love of music. For these teachers, fostering a love of music was the most important goal of their teaching philosophies, far more important than any academic outcome. As Geoffrey said, "if we don't foster a love of music, then I think we've missed the point."

Jack made a similar point, and described how his thinking had changed over time:

> The most important thing that the child can receive from music education to leave with a positive value and experience in music. If they can do ta and titi, great. If they can do so and mi or whatever, cool. But if they can do all those things, and they hate music well, then I think we've actually failed. I think that, at a baseline, there must be enjoyment.

I will now discuss the final theme I identified during the course of the analysis, which is *teaching concepts and practising skills*.

4.4 Teaching concepts and practising skills

All of the teachers interviewed believed that the games were useful tools for teaching particular concepts and practising skills. This is potentially different from the other themes, in that it to a greater extent involves the learning and practising of *content* rather than being a participatory *process*. Or, in terms of Sfard's (1998) metaphors, we can understand this in

terms of an *acquisition* rather than a *participatory* metaphor. However, these distinctions are nuanced, and certainly not black and white.

Different teachers identified different concepts and skills which could be taught and practised through singing games. I have organised these into five sub-themes, which I will discuss in the following paragraphs. These sub-themes are:

- *teaching defined musical concepts and skills*

- *teaching broader educational concepts and skills*

- *unconscious learning through play*

- *practising motor skills*

- *a way of conducting formative assessment*

I will begin by looking at the first sub-theme, *teaching defined musical concepts and skills*.

4.4.1 Teaching defined musical concepts and skills

For all of the teachers, the games could be used to teach or practice a musical concept or skill, such as beat, different rhythms, solfa intervals, pitch and so on. Some teachers also talked about how the singing games normalised singing in the classroom. It was interesting to note that while all the teachers had a background in Kodály pedagogy, they all appeared to have quite varied practices in terms of what they wanted the games to achieve. While some used the singing games as content for learning new musical concepts or skills; others used the games for the practise of these skills, or as preparation for later learning (in addition to reasons identified in the other themes).

Alex explained how he uses the games to teach and practice advanced musical concepts and skills:

> So a game that we know particularly well, I'll then be breaking down and saying 'let's look at rhythm elements'. Or, you know, by the time we know it well, let's inner hear every second beat. Let's derive the rhythm. Let's look at, you know, the solfa for the pitch. Let's sing the letter names. Let's go to the keyboard and play it in canon with each other.... so it, it takes on or that game repertoire takes on all kinds of like, teaching purposes.

For other teachers, the games could be used to teach simpler, foundational musical concepts and skills. Geoffrey explained how the singing games assist the musical education of the students:

Do the singing games influence the music learning of the child? Without a doubt, every time we play a game, it's a music activity. The child is learning to sing better, they sing in a more easy, open, relaxed manner. Nearly all of the games are about practising beat; many other games are played practising rhythms, so there is this straight music education agenda, but alongside that is, uh, a broader educational agenda.

Alice explained how "I think of them as almost two categories. Like ones that I use to explain a musical concept, and ones that are just fun for you know, for fun purposes." When she uses a song for teaching a musical concept, she is particular with her repertoire:

I try to pick up singing games that I can then use the song to actually teach a musical concept… So we've maybe clapped through a few weeks and then I'll go, "You know that song, yadda yadda." Whatever song we've been working on, and now we're going to use it to explain a rhythm or to explain how a chord works. Or, um, you know that kind of more academic learning.

Caroline explained how for her, the games are not used for learning content specifically, however in later years she may use the games to practice particular skills.

Yeah, I was once told in my pedagogy training to never analyse a game, which I think is a good thing to remember, that a game needs to be fun. It needs to be challenging, but in a safe environment; it needs to have, um, the potential for kids to feel that well-being, that positive well-being, and not necessarily learn a so and mi, a ta and titi. However, you can do that as well, and I don't think it takes away from the learning.

As the students get older, Caroline uses the games to practice partwork, and the focus moves from practising soft skills to practising musical skills:

So, for instance, *Mexican Woodpecker,* where we might do an 8-beat ostinato against a song that's in three metre, so more drawing out of the musical literacy, the partwork skills for the games, rather than how do I take a turn? How do I develop those social skills? Of course, we still need to hold hands, and look into each other's eyes, and be a partner with people, but the emphasis is not on resilience or things like that. That's a by-product as such, whereas it's very, very much the focus of the lessons in the beginning.

For Jack, part of the beauty of the singing games for him is that they allow him to include practice and preparation of musical concepts, in addition to doing so many other things:

So, if I look down at my lesson plans, I will very rarely have an activity that has [*only*] one purpose, or one reinforcement or one preparation. Everything has been so carefully chosen. Because we're so time poor as well. To tick off as many boxes as possible, and my greatest game, is getting activities that I can get to do many things at once.

Adam stated concisely that "I still think the core purpose if you're a music teacher, is to teach music, and that my main reason for using games is that it teaches music really well." For

Adam, teaching musical concepts such as beat, rhythm and pitch requires the students to be active and moving, and the games provide a good opportunity for that:

> People use games to teach anything, but if you're teaching music, music is an embodied skill. So, you learn beat and rhythm by experiencing it. You can read novels about rhythm if you wish, but it's not gonna make you perform in time. You learn that as an experiential experience, so the most logical way of doing that is kinaesthetic. You know, walk the beat, tap the pulse. It's a no-brainer, and if you want to bore your class to death you could do hours and hours of drill of that activity, and sometimes you do need to do that at various year levels, but it's a lot more fun for it to be a game... So the first advantage of it is it's an embodied way of learning the core concepts of beat and pulse, and I think they're probably more important than almost anything.

As Adam stated, people "use games to teach anything". I will now discuss some of the broader educational concepts and skills that the teachers believed singing games helped to teach.

4.4.2 Teaching broader educational concepts and skills

All of the teachers interviewed explained different ways that they believed the singing games could be used to teach a broader educational agenda.

For Alex, the singing games can be used as a way of *teaching critical thinking*. As he explained, "and that's my current fascination, because it goes beyond like what is the game? It's like, where does this game come from. Do you have any questions about this game?" This was an important point for Alex, as the singing games in his experience can often be used without an awareness for the cultural meaning of the game.

In Adam's classroom, the singing games can be used as an opportunity for *self-reflection and self-assessment*.

> You need to be honest, and ask "did we play that well? Well, what would you give that game out of 10? Yeah, I think it's only a six. Let's try for an 8 this time." I'm not talking about who won the game. I mean, were we all in time, was it in tune, could you hear the canon working in the room, that sort of stuff.

For Caroline, the games can foster *self-expression and creativity*. "We do lots of dramatic play songs where they learn to express themselves, and respond to others expressing themselves."

Geoffrey, Caroline and Jack also discussed how the games could be used by the students to *practice solving complex problems.* As Geoffrey said, "the thing about the singing games is

often they involve a number of steps or processes, and what we do know is that if we want children to develop complex thinking, then we should be giving them complex tasks."

Caroline stated that "it's very child-friendly to play games, in order to approach more complex issues." Jack also brought up how young children needed to practice making circles and other spatial concepts, and how the games facilitated this.

4.4.3 Unconscious learning through play and doing

Several teachers highlighted that the singing games are a way of the children developing skills and learning concepts unconsciously, and that this was a positive thing. Jack described this as "learning in disguise".

For Geoffrey, teachers today often rely too heavily on verbal or overtly theoretical explanations. This, for him, is a problem.

> If we're talking about sort of educational principles, I would make the point that we rely far too heavily…on words. That we've reduced learning to words, to verbal linguistic chatter. Uh, and I think it's a really, um, it's seductive. But it's *wrong*. So, should I start with a concept: "Girls and boys. This is called the beat. The beat is like when the windscreen wipers go forwards and backwards. See, it's the beat, it's the beat." And then we tell them to do it, and we just talk endlessly to them about the beat...and then we colour in windscreen wipers, and now we've learned about the beat. But that's completely wrong! Just play the game with me, just move with me, move with the music, we do it, and a minute later I said "Wow! Look at that, look at how your feet are all moving together. We call that the beat."

Caroline also discussed this unconscious way of learning. "The kids, they don't realise that they're learning so much, and that they know so much. It's just fun. It's just a game."

Adam explained that, for him, one of the advantages of the singing games is that they unconsciously train children to have an internal sense of beat and pulse. As Adam said, "if you haven't got that, you really can't function as a musician at all".

4.4.4 Practising motor skills

Several teachers made the point that the singing games are a good way for the students to practise and develop fine and gross motor skills, particularly boys. This was relevant not just for the younger children, but also adolescent students in high school.

Alice had an interesting anecdote about a connection she had observed between motor skills and learning difficulties in other areas:

And you know the start of year seven. We're trying to get a read on which of these kids might need some support. And I would go into a staff meeting in week two, and be like, right. These are the kids, like da da... These are the kids that I think are gonna need individual support. Then the other staff are like, "ah, it's a bit early, and we're gonna do all of the academic testing", and I'm just basing it on who struggles with the clapping games. And then, you know, later in the term they go "also, here's the list", and I'll be like yes. Those are those boys that were, you know, struggling with the beat-keeping in the class.

Caroline explained how that, despite the fact that getting adolescent boys to play games was often difficult, it was important for them to practice those motor skills because they needed it the most. As she said, "this kind of pattycake thing for boys at 13 years old is really hard…They need to do those skills, otherwise, they're going to have slower development, and less coordination for a much longer time, yeah?"

4.4.5 Formative assessment

Alex made the important point that the singing games were a way of quickly conducting a formative assessment of the students' musical skills and confidence at the beginning of a new school year.

So, I get a new class and within three minutes of the very first lesson of the very first class I know OK, the average range of pitch that I should be choosing in this class for the next semester. Which student has zero identification? Zero ability to identify the beat, you know, as we go around the room. And they don't know that, right? It's just me formatively gauging. And then coming back in subsequent lessons, like you know, who's got better pitch now? Who has better confidence now? Who still can't tap the beat in time? Like, you see that thirty kids at a time, instead of having to do a written test or a one on one, meet with the kid.

In this way, the singing game provides a quick and easy way for a teacher to formatively assess a student's skills in a particular area, for example, beat-keeping.

4.5 Can games sometimes be a bad thing?

While not one of the main finds from my interviews, I was interested to hear from the teachers if they were ever *not* in favour of using singing games in the classroom. I wanted to include some of their responses here for the sake of nuance. Perhaps not surprisingly, some of the teachers discussed how the right game need to be selected for the right time, and how the wrong game played at the wrong time could be damaging for the class and for the teacher.

Geoffrey stated that "if a person understands the point of the singing games, there is nothing but benefit to be gained. Have I seen games are being used over and over and

56

over badly? Yes, I have yeah." Geoffrey elaborated further how the games could be used as a chance for children to bully each other while the teacher was preoccupied with the game:

> I've had plenty of instances where a child has been hurt, or whether the sort of power dynamic has shifted badly… and I have places where a child got bullied badly because the teacher was far too busy playing the game, and not paying attention to what was going on. 'Cause there's a lot going on, like it's hard. It's challenging for the teacher. You have to keep... you have to know what you're doing.

Interestingly, while all of the teachers discussed how games could help with whole class participation, some teachers also mentioned how the games could draw attention to children who *didn't* want to participate in the game. Alex explained that "not every kid is a great participant, you know, and it can very publicly highlight a kid who just doesn't want to do it."

Jack talked about how the credibility of the teacher could be damaged if they performed the game badly, and how he and his colleagues will rehearse the games before they teach them. For Jack, if he hadn't rehearsed the games, he wouldn't teach them in class:

> They have to be done well. You have to know what you're doing. If the teacher doesn't know what they're doing, like how to run a game, hasn't practised themselves, it will go badly, and the game will flop, and that will be actually a negative experience, and the teacher will actually lose credibility.

Again, while not included in the main finds of my results, I believed for the sake of nuance in the discussion it was important to include the teachers' opinions on when a game could be a negative influence on the music classroom.

4.6 Summary of results

My research question for this master's thesis is "how can singing games influence learning in the music classroom?" In my attempt to answer this question, I have interviewed six music teachers who utilise singing games in their practice and analysed the data from these interviews thematically.

As a result of this analysis, I have identified four central themes which we can use to discuss singing games potential impact on learning. These themes also include sub-themes, which provide further depth and nuance. The themes and sub-themes I have identified are:

- Engagement and participation

- o Brain breaks
- o Gamification
- o Energy-channelling and focus
- o Physical movement
- Social learning
  - o Socialising
  - o Community building
  - o Democratising the classroom
  - o The importance of rules
  - o A physical connection with other human beings
- Joy
  - o A source of comfort and happy memories
  - o Fostering a love of music
- Teaching concepts and practising skills
  - o Teaching defined musical concepts and practising skills
  - o Teaching broader educational concepts and skills
  - o Unconscious learning through play and doing
  - o Practising motor skills
  - o A way of conducting formative assessment

In the next chapter, I will discuss these results in greater depth in light of the theoretical perspectives and previous research pointed out in Chapter 2.

5.0 Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the results from the interview study in light of the theoretical perspectives and previous research presented in chapter 2.

It is important to note at this point that while these interviews have helped me to identify potential links between singing games and their impact on learning, I am not claiming that these links definitively exist. These results only represent the teachers' reflections on this topic, as well as their stories about their experiences.

5.1 Core themes and how they relate to theoretical perspectives presented

Four core themes were identified during the course of the thematic analysis of the interview study, and these were presented in the results chapter. These themes present an opportunity to discuss how singing games can potentially impact on students' learning in the music classroom.

The four themes presented were:

- Engagement and participation
- Social learning
- Joy
- Conceptual learning and practising skills

I will now consider each of these core themes and how they relate to the theoretical perspectives and previous research presented in turn.

5.1.1 Engagement and participation

Closely connected to the joy students got out of from the singing games, is the engagement that the teachers believed the singing games create in their students. We know from the previous research presented that games spark student engagement, as highlighted by Sutton-Smith and Avedon:

> It may be said that what is now *known* about games and simulations as instructional media is this: *they are useful devices for getting and holding student interest and attention"* (1971, p. 321).

The most recent Ungdata survey revealed that seven out of ten 10-12 year olds are bored at school, and one in four dread going to school, while the percentages are even higher amongst the older students (Eriksen, 2022). These statistics have given parents, teachers, school

leaders and politicians cause for concern. While an argument can be made that it is not the role of teachers to entertain students, it is obviously desirable for students to engage with the activities and material that they are presented with at school.

According to the teachers interviewed, this initial engagement sparked by the singing games led to increased student participation in their classes. As well as leading to intrinsic motivation, we can understand this further participation in terms of Rogoff's (1995) idea that initial participation in a cultural activity can lead to further participation in that activity. As previously stated, Rogoff suggests that when children participate in the activities of their community and engage with other children and adults in collaboration, the process of participating in these activities prepares them for further participation in future activities. We can see from this perspective that another way singing games can influence learning in the music classroom is by sparking student engagement, potentially leading to further student participation in music classroom activities.

We can also think about the students' participation in the singing games in terms of Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of *legitimate peripheral participation*. As previously stated, Lave and Wenger see learning as *increasing participation in communities of practice*. In this instance, the student group who make up the music class, as well as their teacher, could be seen as constituting a community of practice. While a teacher could represent, as Alex stated, "the expert in the room", the students are the apprentices, or newcomers. Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss the importance of the sociocultural transformation which occurs between apprentices and experts in a shared social practice, and how the social relationships of apprentices change through their direct involvement in activities (1991, p. 49). Ultimately, as the apprentices gain skills, they can make the practice their own. Marsh and Dieckmann (2017) have also discussed how the formulaic movements of playground singing games can be learned through the process of legitimate peripheral participation. They describe how children can watch other children play the games, then gradually pick up the movements themselves and join in as they felt more confident (p. 715).

We can see students making the practice of the singing games their own when they take the singing games out of the classroom and into the playground, something several of the teachers mentioned as taking place. Interestingly, taking the singing games out of the classroom and into the playground was something that Kodály originally intended to happen when he proposed using singing games as a pedagogical tool. For Kodály "the limited time available

for musical education of the child can thus be extended on the playground without diminishing the time for other activities" (Kodály cited by Kraus 1990, p. 79–80).

5.1.2 Social learning

The social learning that singing games can lead to was considered significant by all of the teachers interviewed. Interestingly, this social learning was observed by teachers who teach the youngest students (Geoffrey, Caroline), as well as by teachers who taught in high school (Jack, Adam, Alice, Alex).

Teachers talked about how the games assist younger children to learn "soft skills" and socialise, as well as helping older students to democratise the classroom, build a sense of community, learn the importance of rules and have a physical connection with other human beings.

We know from the work of Marsh and Dieckmann (2017), that playground singing games can be useful devices for assisting with social integration of refugee and newly migrant children. Marsh and Dieckmann (2017) argue that the non-sensical texts of many singing games, as well as their focus on kinaesthetic prowess and the formulaic nature of the games' movements, encourage participation from non-English speaking children. I would argue that these same characteristics of singing games encourage participation from children of varying abilities in the music classroom as well. In this way, the singing game has the potential to democratise the classroom.

Some of the teachers discussed how important the social learning was for the students, in a society they perceived as becoming increasingly difficult for children and young adults to socially navigate. Several teachers talked about how the singing games offered an important counterweight to "screens", and how important they felt that social interaction with their fellow students and teacher was for the children's social and language development. Teachers also highlighted how playing singing games can help develop empathy in younger children, something they considered especially important for children to learn given today's online arenas for social interaction.

According to the teachers interviewed, there is no doubt that the singing games contribute to their students' social learning. While the outcome of social learning is often visible, social learning itself is difficult to measure. However, social learning is considered part of the

purpose of schooling in Norway, and is detailed as such in the Values and Principles for Foundational Education, Section 2.1:

> School, as an educational institution, is to support and contribute to the pupils' social learning and development through work in specific subjects and in everyday school life. The pupil's identity and self-image, their opinions and attitudes are shaped through relations with others. Social learning takes place both during teaching and in all other activities organized by school. Subject specific learning cannot be isolated from social learning. In day-to-day work, pupil's subject-specific and social learning therefore go together. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020)

For the majority of teachers interviewed, the ability of the singing games to influence social learning was one of the most important reasons for including them as part of their teaching practice.

5.1.3 Joy

One could argue that motivation theory supports the idea that singing games can influence learning, in the sense of increasing student motivation through experiencing joy. The joy students feel from playing singing games was identified as a critical factor by all of the teachers interviewed. While it would not be correct to claim that all students enjoy singing games, we do know from the literature that children from different cultures have played singing games for hundreds of years (Lomax Hawes & Jones, 1987; Opie & Opie 1985; Marsh & Dieckmann, 2017). Despite concerns that singing games were fading into obscurity, researchers have found that children continue to play them (Campbell, 1998; Marsh, 2008). One can infer from this that the reason singing games continue to be played by children is because children continue to enjoy them.

Joy relates to learning in that it is significant for a student's intrinsic motivation. As previously stated, students' motivation for an activity determines how much effort and attention they dedicate to it (Imsen, 2014). Heightened intrinsic motivation means that the students will devote more energy to an activity, which in this case, is a singing game constituting a part of classroom music.

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to consider *why* children enjoy singing games. One possibility (of many) could be that is that singing games offer a level of challenge which is in balance with the students' capabilities, creating a what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls optimal experience, or flow. A task which is optimally challenging can generate intrinsic motivation as it provides the student with the best opportunity to extend their

capabilities (Hallam, 2002). As previously stated, students' own experiences of singing games could constitute a part of further research on this topic.

Another important aspect of students' enjoyment of singing games is precisely that – that they enjoy them. Many have expressed concern for the mental health of school students today, extending from young children to teenagers. In Norway, one in three teenagers will receive a mental health diagnosis during their teenage years (Andersen, 2021). Some have made the connection between these alarming statistics, and the increasing pressures from standardised testing and performance expectation in today's school (Lunde & Brodal, 2022). Taking this into consideration, the joy students experience in a school day is not to be trivialised or dismissed. As Geoffrey mentioned, the joy of the singing games is contagious, and can spill over into other classes and situations outside of music. In this way, the joy that comes from singing games potentially influences not only the learning of classroom music, but also a student's experience of schooling.

5.1.4 Conceptual learning and practising skills

The last core theme to discuss is *conceptual learning and the practise of skills*. As opposed to the social learning described above, the outcomes of conceptual learning are potentially simpler to measure.

All of the teachers discussed how the singing games were useful for teaching and practising musical concepts and skills such as beat, rhythm, solfa intervals, pitch and singing. Adam summed up this position clearly: "my main reason for using games is that it teaches music really well."

We can see that the singing games represent an opportunity for "subject-specific play", as outlined by Bentsen and Håland (2021). As previously discussed, subject-specific play is teacher-initiated, and has at its core the uniqueness of the different school subjects. According to Bentsen and Håland, subject-specific play can clearly be linked to the different competency goals as outlined in *LK20*, the Norwegian school curriculum.

For instance, if we look at *LK20*, we can find nine competency goals in music for students after the seventh grade. Here are two of them:

- Perform a repertoire of music, song and other vocal expressions and dances from today and the past;

- Rehearse and perform songs and music, with others or individually, either by ear or with the help of simple notation.

The practice and performance of singing games could easily help students fulfil these two goals for the seventh grade. We can find other examples in the competency goals across the other grades.

From the tenth grade:

- Perform a varied repertoire of music, songs, other vocal expression and dance;

From the fourth grade:

- Perform and explore a repertoire of songs and dances from different musical cultures, including sami;
- Sing and play instruments alone and with others by ear and by using simple notation.

And finally, from the second grade, where singing games are mentioned explicitly:

- Perform a repertoire of singing games, songs and dances from the students' musical culture and from the cultural heritage

One could argue that the use of age-appropriate singing games could help students and teachers achieve these differing competency goals spanning the school grades, offering an excellent example of "subject-specific play" as defined by Bentsen and Håland (2021). Additionallly, the teachers also highlighted a broader range of concepts and skills that the singing games could assist with teaching, such as critical thinking, self-reflection, self-expression and to practice solving complex problems. Several teachers also mentioned how the singing games helped students to practice their gross motor skills.

However, if one considers the ideas of Rogoff (2003), one could argue that a child's participation in singing games itself *is* learning. She argues that human development is a process of people's changing participation in sociocultural activities of their communities. From Rogoff's (2003) perspective, humans develop as they participate in and contribute to cultural activities that they themselves develop with the involvement of people in successive generations. So in this way, singing games not only influence learning by providing suitable *content*. Rather, that singing games can influence learning through their particularly useful ability to create opportunities for a student's active *participation*.

For instance, teachers discussed how the singing games were "learning in disguise" or "learning by stealth", as a type of unconscious learning through play. Geoffrey and Adam, for example, mentioned how learning the concept of beat was *experiential*, as opposed to "reducing learning to words" (Geoffrey). While the content of the singing game represents an opportunity to learn a musical concept, such as the beat, the *participation* of the students in the game is how the students understand what "the beat" means.

It is also interesting to consider what Rogoff (2003) refers to as "successive generations" in relation to singing games. Marsh (2008) has found that the same singing games are modified and changed by different groups of children in different cultures. Similarly, Lomax Hawes and Jones (1987) found that some singing games from the Georgia Sea Islands of the United States had their origins in the United Kingdom hundreds of years previous, but the songs had been modified. In this way, singing games could represent what Rogoff (2003) refers to as cultural activities that develop with the involvement of people in successive generations.

6.0 Conclusion

This master's project has had as its aim to find out how singing games can influence learning in the music classroom. I have drawn on theories of learning and motivation, as well as previous research on the use of games in the classroom, to assist my understanding of the results from my interview study with six teachers who utilise singing games in their practice. These results represent the opinions and experiences from these teachers only, and I am not claiming that they definitively show a link between singing games and learning. The four central themes I have identified through my analysis of the interviews were:

- Engagement and participation
- Social learning
- Joy
- Conceptual learning and the practising of skills

Based on these results, I have argued that singing games can potentially influence learning in the music classroom by contributing to students' intrinsic motivation to participate in class, through sparking joy and engagement in the students. The students' participation in the singing games can lead to social learning, as well as conceptual learning and the practise of musical and non-musical skills. However, I would stress that it is difficult to separate these themes, and would argue instead that the way they interrelate is potentially more interesting than any one individual outcome. One can understand singing games as a potential example of what Bentsen and Håland (2021) term "subject-specific play", as a way of achieving competency goals through play. However, on a deeper level one could argue that participation in the singing games itself *is* learning, if we take Rogoff's (2003) position.

At this point I would like to come back to where this project began, with Professor Nordahl's warnings to teachers about the use of too many games as a learning method in the classroom. I have come to understand from my research with this project that what is often referred to as "learning outcomes" in schooling is actually very difficult to define. What I have found is that the teachers I interviewed used singing games in their classroom because they were an effective tool for achieving many different things. They were an effective tool for engaging students and ensuring participation, and they created joy in the classroom, which was important for students' motivation and further participation in class. They were also useful for teaching concepts and as a way to practise musical and non-musical skills, and they were

meaningful for the social learning for the students. The way that these factors interrelate is complex and potentially much more interesting than one individual learning outcome that could be extracted from participation in a game. It is an altogether different approach from that which Professor Nordahl's recommends for learning something well, which is that you need to work hard and specifically with it. However, these teachers believed that using singing games in the classroom was a powerful pedagogical tool, perhaps *because* of their ability to teach many things at once, and that they taught these things well.

It should be noted as well that the teachers were not always in favour of using games, and that they believed that the singing games could be done badly. The competence of the teacher in performing the game and the selection of the right repertoire for the right time was crucial for the game's eventual success or failure. However, the right game, when performed correctly and at the appropriate time, was an extremely useful pedagogical tool for the teachers interviewed.

In terms of further research on the topic, it would be interesting to investigate the experiences of non-Kodály music teachers of using singing games in the classroom, as well as interviewing students for their experiences of participation in singing games in both Kodály and non-Kodály settings. It would also be meaningful to conduct classroom observations to see what further insights can be gained from witnessing the games in action.

I believe that this thesis can contribute to the field of music education research by potentially showing that singing games today can be useful pedagogical tools for additional reasons than the ones that Kodály originally foresaw. While Kodály understood that singing games were engaging for the students, and that they were useful for learning and practising musical concepts and skills, this thesis also highlights the social learning and the joy that comes from singing games, and how this could affect a child's experience of schooling. The social learning and the joy from playing the games were both critical reasons for the teachers that I interviewed for including them in their practice.

It has also been interesting for me to see that regardless of how one views learning, and the idea of learning outcomes, singing games are can potentially influence that learning. On the basis of my research, I would argue that singing games are a great resource to teachers of classroom music, given their ability to spark joy and engagement, as well as helping to develop important social and conceptual learning outcomes. Most of all, it is my opinion that

singing games as they have been described here offer a unique opportunity for students to actively participate, and therefore learn, in classroom music.

References

Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2018). *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. (3rd ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications.

Andersen, B. (2021, 23 Jan.). Vil granske hvorfor mange unge får en psykisk diagnose: – Fantastisk. Retrieved from https://www.nrk.no/nordland/psykisk-helse-blant-ungdom_-ordforer-i-bodo-vil-granske-hoye-tall-for-psykiske-diagnoser-hos-ungdom-1.15322512

Avedon, E.M. & Sutton-Smith, B. (1971). *The Study of Games*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Baraldnes, R. (2019, 23 Nov.). Advarer mot for mye lek og gøy i skolen. Retrieved from https://www.tv2.no/a/11007333/

Bentson, E.I & Håland, A. (2021). Hvordan integrere lek i begynneropplæringa. *Bedre Skole*. Retrieved from https://www.uis.no/nb/lesesenteret/hvordan-integrere-lek-i-begynneropplaeringa

Bjørnestad, E., Myrvold, T.M., Dalland, C.P. & Hølland, S. (2022). *Hit eit steg og dit eit steg – sakte, men sikkert framover? En systematisk kartlegging av premisser for og trekk ved førsteklasse* (OsloMet Skriftserie 2022 number 7). Retrieved from https://skriftserien.oslomet.no/index.php/skriftserien/article/view/794

Bjørnebekk, G. (2021). Motivasjon – motiver, læringsmiljø og orientering mot mål. In Heldal, J. & Wittek, L. (ed.), *Pedagogikk – en grunnbok*. (2nd ed.). Oslo, Norway: Cappellen Damm Akademisk.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3* (2). 77-101. http://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Campbell, P. (1998). *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children's Lives.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Choksy, L. (1999). *The Kodaly Method II: Folksong to Masterwork.* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York, NY: Harper Row.

Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. (1985) *Intrinsic Motivation and Self Determination in Human Behaviour*. New York, NY: Plenum.

Eriksen, N. (2022, 15 Aug). Ungdata junior: Mange barn gruer seg til å gå på skolen. Retrieved from https://www.ungdata.no/ungdata-junior-mange-barn-gruer-seg-til-a-ga-pa-skolen/

Farkas, A. (1990). Can Kodaly help my teaching? In Carder, P. (ed.), *The Eclectic Curriculum in American Music Education*. (Rev. ed.) p. 103-06. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference.

Flatås, R.M. (2022, 8 Aug.). På tide med lekeløft i første klasse. Retrieved from https://www.utdanningsnytt.no/lek-robert-mjelde-flatas-skolestart/pa-tide-med-lekeloft-i-forste-klasse/329739

Fuster-Guilló, A., Pertegal-Felices, M.L, Jimeno-Morenilla, A., Azorín-López, J., Rico-Soliveres, M.L. & Restrepo-Calle, F. (2019). Evaluating Impact on Motivation and Academic Performance of a Game-Based Learning Experience Using Kahoot. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10,*1-8. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02843.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local Knowledge – Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Gomme, A. (1894). *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. London, UK: David Nutt.

Hattie, J. (2009)*. Visible learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. London, UK: Routledge.

Hallam, S. (2002). Musical Motivation: Towards a model synthesising the research. *Music Education Research*, 4(2), 225-244. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461380022000011939

Imsen, G. (2011). Hattie-feberen i norsk politikk. *Bedre Skole*. Retrieved from https://utdanningsforskning.no/artikler/2011/hattie-feberen-i-norsk-politikk/

Imsen, G. (2014). *Elevens verden – innføring i pedagogisk psykologi*. (5th ed.). Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget

Johansen, G. G. (2020). *Children's Guided Participation in Jazz Improvisation - A Study of the 'Improbasen' Learning Centre*. London, UK: Routledge.

Karlsen, S. (2013). Immigrant students and the "homeland music": Meanings, negotiations and implications. *Research Studies in Music Education*. *35* (2), 161-177. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X13508057

Knapp, H. & Knapp, M. (1976). *One Potato, Two Potato: The Secret Education of American Children*. New York, NY: Norton.

Kraus, E. (1990). Zoltan Kodály's Legacy to Music Education. In Carder, P. (ed.) *The Eclectic Curriculum in American Music Education.* (Rev. ed.), p. 79–92. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference

Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2020). *Læreplan i musikk* (MUS01-02). Retrieved from https://www.udir.no/lk20/mus01-02

Kunnskapsdepartementet. (2020). *Overordnet del – verdier og prinsipper for grunnopplæringen.* Retrieved from https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/

Kvale, S. & Brinkman, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. (3rd ed). London, UK: Sage Publications.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lillejord, S., Børte, K., & Nesje, K., (2018). *De yngste barna i skolen: Lek og læring, arbeidsmåter og læringsmiljø – En forskningskartlegging.* Retrieved from https://www.forskningsradet.no/om-forskningsradet/publikasjoner/2018/de-yngste-barna-i-skolen-lek-og-laring-arbeidsmater-og-laringsmiljo/

Lillemyr, O.F. (2014). Lek som mangfold. In Rasmussen, T.H. (ed.), *På spor etter lek - lek under moderne vilkår*. Bergen, Norway: Fagbokforlaget.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lomax Hawes, B. & Jones, B. (1987). *Step it Down: Games, Plays, Songs and Stories from the Afro-American Heritage*. (Rev. ed.). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Lunde, C. & Brodal, P. (2022). *Lek og læring i et nevroperspektiv*. Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.

Marsh, K. (2008). *The Musical Playground: Global Tradition and Change in Children's Songs and Games*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Marsh, K. & Dieckmann, S. (2017) Contributions of playground singing games to the social inclusion of refugee and newly arrived immigrant children in Australia, *Education 3-13*, *45* (6). 710-719. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2017.1347128

Marsh, K. & Young, S. (2006). Musical Play. In McPherson, G. (ed.). *The Child as Musician: A Handbook of Musical Development.* p. 290-310. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Mikkelsen, J.F. (1977). In Nielsen, F., (ed.). *Pædagogisk teori og praksis. Om pædagogisk realisme, pædagogisk humanisme og kritisk pædagogik*. p. 39-51. Copenhagen, Denmark: Borgen.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Müller, C., Otto, B., Sawitski, V., Kanagalingam, P., Scherer, J-S. & Lindberg, S. (2021) Short breaks at school: effects of a physical activity and a mindfulness intervention on children's attention, reading comprehension and self-esteem. *Trends in Neuroscience and Education*. *25*(21). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tine.2021.100160

National Research Ethics Committees. (2022, 26 May). Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Retrieved from https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/guidelines/social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/guidelines-for-research-ethics-in-the-social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/

Nerland, M. (2004). Musikkpedagogikken og det musikkulturelle mangfoldet: Noen utfordringer for musikkpedagogisk virksomhet i vår tid. In Johansen, G, Kalsnes, S. & Ø. Varkøy, Ø (ed.). *Musikkpedagogiske utfordringer. Artikler om musikkpedagogisk teori og praksis.* p. 135–148. Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag.

Opie, I. & Opie, P. (1959). *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren.* Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press

Opie, I. & Opie, P. (1963). *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Opie, I. & Opie, P. (1985). *The Singing Game*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

Pellegrini, A.D. (2009). *The role of play in human development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Plass, J. L., Homer, B.D., Kinzer, C.K. (2015). Foundations of Game-Based Learning. *Educational Psychologist*. *50*(4), 258-283. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2015.112253

Postholm, M.B. & Jacobsen, D.I. (2018). *Forskningsmetoder for masterstudenter i lærerutdanning*. Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Riddell, C. (1990). *Traditional singing games of elementary school children in Los Angeles.* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.

Rogoff, B. (1995). Observing sociocultural activity on three planes: participatory appropriation, guided participation and apprenticeship. In Wertsch, J.V., del Rio, P & Alvarez, A. (ed.), *Sociocultural Studies of Mind.* p. 139-164. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The Cultural Nature of Human Development.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Scully, P., & Roberts, H. (2002). Phonics, Expository Writing, and Reading Aloud: Playful Literacy in the Primary Grades. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 30*(2), 93–99. https://doi:10.1023/A:1021297001501

Schmidt, L.K. (2006). *Understanding Hermeneutics*. London, UK: Routledge.

Sfard, A. (1998). On Two Metaphors for Learning and the Dangers of Choosing Just One. *Educational Researcher*, *27*(2). 4-13. https://doi.org/10.2307/1176193

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Analysis of Expert Readers in Three Disciplines: History, Mathematics and Chemistry. *Journal of Literacy Research, 43*(4), 393–429.

Skinner, B. F. (1950). Are theories of learning necessary? *Psychological Review, 57*. 193-216.

Stabell, E.M. (2018). *Being talented – becoming a musician : a qualitative study of learning cultures in three junior conservatoires.* (Doctoral dissertation). Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo.

Stake, R.E. & Trumbull, D. J. (1982). Naturalistic Generalizations. *Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science, 7*(1&2). 1-12.

Suarez-Rivera, C, Smith, L.B. & Yu, C. (2019). Multimodal Parent Behaviors Within Joint Attention Support Sustained Attention in Infants. *Developmental Psychology 55*(1). 96-109. https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000628

Sætre, J. H. (2014). Gjensyn med Orff-Schulwerk: Et bidrag til nytenkning av musikkdidaktisk analyse. *Nordisk musikkpedagogisk forskning: Årbok, Vol 15*, 269-293.

Sætre, J.H. & Zhukov, K. (2021) Let's play together: teacher perspectives on collaborative chamber music instruction. *Music Education Research 23*(5). 553-567. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.1979499

Säljö, R. (2017). *Læring i praksis: et sosiokulturelt perspektive*. (11th ed.). Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag.

Thurén, T. (2020). *Vitenskapsteori for nybegynnere*. (2nd ed). Oslo, Norway: Gyldenhal Akademisk.

van Veldhuisen, A. (2017, July). Swimming in the deep end: A small scale case study exploring Flow in a Kodály-based secondary music classroom. Paper presented at the Australian Society for Music Education XXI National Conference, Melbourne, Australia.

Weslake, A. & Christian, B.J. (2015) Brain Breaks: Help or Hindrance? *Teach Collection of Christian Education, 1*(1), 38-46. Retrieved from https://research.avondale.edu.au/teachcollection/vol1/iss1/4

Willis, J. (2016, 17 Dec.). Using Brain Breaks to Restore Students' Focus. Retrieved from. https://www.edutopia.org/article/brain-breaks-restore-student-focus-judy-willis

Zimmerman, J. (2015). *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Appendix 1

Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, what is your background as a teacher and as a musician?

2. How did you come to use singing games in your teaching practice?

3. Why do you include singing games?

4. What do you think the benefits of using singing games are? Can you give me some examples of this from what you have seen in your practice?

5. Can you think of any negatives in the use of singing games as a pedagogical tool? Again, examples please.

6. How do you incorporate singing games into your classroom?

7. Have you any theoretical basis for using singing games?

8. Do you meet any opposition to your use of games in the classroom?

9. Do you think we can extract any principles from the use of games in the music classroom to how we approach other subjects in school?

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about the use of singing games in the music classroom that I have neglected to mention?

Appendix 2

Information given to interviewees and consent form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

"Singing games and participatory appropriation: what can we learn from musical play in the music classroom"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to discover how the use of musical play, specifically singing games, can influence learning in the music classroom. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
The project is associated with my master's thesis in music pedagogy at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

The main research question for the project is "How can musical play influence learning in the music classroom?" The project has the following supplementary questions, which assist in answering the main research question:

- What is an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding the role of musical play in music education?
- How can musical play be incorporated into the music classroom?
- Can principles arising from the use of musical play be extrapolated and applied to learning situations in other school subjects?

Who is responsible for the research project?

The Norwegian Academy of Music is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate because you utilise singing games in your work as a music educator.

What does participation involve for you?
If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you will participate in a conversation with me that will last 30-60 minutes. The conversation will be recorded with an audio recorder and then transcribed to ensure a precise reproduction of what has been said.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
I will only use your personal data for the purpose specified in this information letter. I will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

The publication will not contain personal information. The participants in the study will be anonymised and will not be recognizable in the final publication. I am not looking for sensitive information and will not link any statements directly to any schools or institutions in the study. Focus will be directed away from the participants themselves, and instead directed towards the knowledge participants can contribute to the topic of how singing games can influence learning in the music classroom.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The research project is scheduled to be completed by June 30th, 2023. At the end of the project, I will delete audio recordings from interviews and transcripts will be anonymised by removing personally identifiable information. The key that connects data material and personal information will be deleted.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with the Norwegian Academy of Music, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Elizabeth Morris Innset (student), +47 40393764, elizabeth.m.innset@student.nmh.no
- Jon Helge Sætre (supervisor), +47 23407365, jon.h.saetre@nmh.no
- Our Data Protection Officer: Rolf Haavik, +47 907 33 760, pvi@nmh.no

- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by phone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Morris Innset

Jon Helge Sætre

Student

Supervisor

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "Singing games and participatory appropriation: what can we learn from musical play in the music classroom?" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent to participate in an interview and for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approximately, June 20th, 2023.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 3

Approval from NSD

◆◆ Sikt

Notification form / "Singing games and participatory appropriation: what can we lea... / Assessment

Assessment of processing of personal data

Reference number	**Assessment type**	**Date**
193411	Standard	13.10.2021

Project title
"Singing games and participatory appropriation: what can we learn from musical play in the music classroom."

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)
Norges musikkhøgskole / CERM - Senter for utdanningsforskning i musikk

Project leader
Jon Helge Sætre

Student
Elizabeth Morris Innset

Project period
01.11.2021 - 30.06.2023

Categories of personal data
General

Legal basis
Consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a)

The processing of personal data is lawful, so long as it is carried out as stated in the notification form. The legal basis is valid until 30.06.2023.

Notification Form 🗗

Comment
Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 13.10.2021 , as well as in correspondence with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to begin.

SHARE THE NOTIFICATION FORM
It is mandatory for students to share the Notification Form with their supervisor (the project leader). To do this, please tap the "Share project" button in the upper-left corner of the form. Within a week, your supervisor must accept the invitation. In case the invitation expires, you have to repeat the procedure.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION
The project will be processing general categories of personal data until 30.06.2023.

LEGAL BASIS
The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing general categories of personal data is therefore consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA
NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

• lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
• data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will