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What Is the Intersection Between Musical Giftedness and Creativity in Education? Towards a Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

This article proposes a pluralistic conceptual framework for fostering creativity in musically gifted students, exploring the complex and non-linear nature of creativity development and manifestation. It aims to address a core research question: what is the intersection between musical giftedness and creativity in education? The proposed framework integrates two prominent theoretical models—the systems theory of creativity and the 'four C' model of creativity. Together, these models offer a dynamic and developmental understanding of creative expression, ranging from everyday creativity to potential for eminent achievement, as it manifests in musically gifted learners. The role of the teacher is placed at the heart of the creative developmental process, and the teacher is conceptualised not merely as a knowledge provider but as a central catalyst for creativity. This framework argues that the teacher functions as an environmental mediator shaping classroom climates that support innovation and as a curator of meaningful musical experiences. The article considers how established gifted education strategies, including enrichment, acceleration, and differentiated instruction, can be oriented toward fostering creative musical growth. Implications for research and practice will be discussed.

Keywords: gifted education; music education; musical giftedness; creativity; expertise; conceptual framework

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1. Introduction

The way in which creativity can be defined and developed has become an increasingly studied area of interest for educational researchers and practitioners. Creativity is a complex and nuanced concept inherent to the practice of music and other creative arts. But how can creativity be effectively conceptualised and developed, in musically gifted education contexts, in a way that allows for the myriad ways in which creativity can manifest?

This article seeks to answer one research question: How do musical giftedness and creativity intersect in educational contexts? And, as a sub-question, what facilitates this intersection? This question arose through consideration of the ways in which creativity can be defined, its natural alignment with music as a 'creative art', and its frequent inclusion as a characteristic of gifted individuals (Johnsen, 2018; Türkman, 2020). There is overlap between these concepts—but how can this relationship be made meaningful in an educational context?

To answer this question, this article will take a pluralistic approach to developing a conceptual framework for creativity development in musically gifted students, exploring the competing and convergent concepts of musical giftedness, music education, and creativity. This paper utilises the systems theory of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988;

Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018) to identify the foundational requirements for creative development in a gifted music education context. It also uses the 'four C' theory of creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009) to identify the kinds of creative processes and products possible in a music education context. And, crucially, this article identifies the teacher as mediator and curator of creative, musical experiences and opportunities. Through teacher expert practice, musically gifted students have a greater capacity to reach their creative potential and meet socioculturally defined creative benchmarks as they develop. To begin with, this article will explore the two key theories and will situate them in the context of gifted education research and practice. The article will then explore the mediating role of the teacher within the framework, showing how educators can facilitate creative metacognition and achievement for their musically gifted students. Implications for research and practice will be discussed.

2. Theoretical Foundations for Creative Development

2.1. The Conditions for Creativity

The concept of creativity has been written about extensively throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Guilford's presidential address to the American Psychological Association in 1950 has been cited (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018; Dow, 2022; Kaufman et al., 2018) as a catalysing moment for creativity research (Guilford, 1950). In his address, Guilford advocated for psychologists to rigorously explore the actual nature of creativity in order to better identify creative people and creative potential and "do something in the way of education to improve them and to increase their utilisation" (Guilford, 1950, p. 454). Guildford's hypothesised definition of creativity included three main components: fluency and flexibility of cognition, the capacity to produce novel ideas, and a level of analytical and evaluative abilities for processing complex content. Later theoretical work by other researchers also proposed that creativity would be represented by a person's capacity for divergent and convergent thinking or the ability to identify the most appropriate cognitive pathway to pursue when solving problems (Cropley, 2011; Kaufman et al., 2018).

Since these theoretical definitions, there have been several conceptualisations of creativity that both expand on and provide crucial, contemporary nuances to how creativity can be defined and manifested. Beghetto and Kaufman's (2014, as cited in Kaufman et al., 2018, p. 288) equation captured the idea with greatest clarity:

$$\text{Creativity} = \text{Originality} \times \text{Task Appropriateness}$$
$$[\text{--------Sociocultural Context--------}]$$

This equation boils creativity down to its essence—that an act of creativity can only be considered so if it is original, appropriate for the task or process, and considered creative for the given sociocultural context (Kaufman et al., 2018). The equation implies that creativity needs to exist within a set of boundaries. It is not merely freedom of thought that leads to creativity but the capacity to think within a set of confines and to produce an artefact of that thinking process that meets and exceeds sociocultural expectations. As such, creativity can be considered as a socioculturally constructed concept, as the identification of a 'creative act' can change between contexts and even between individual perceptions (Selkrig, 2018). It is the sociocultural influence that is of greatest importance to the way in which Csikszentmihalyi (1988) and Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2018) perceived the fundamental circumstances necessary for creative development. They propose that creativity comes from interactions between the key components of the domain of knowledge, the individual with creative potential, and the field of expertise.

2.2. The Domain of Knowledge

The domain of knowledge refers to the ways in which people can be creative, often specific to certain disciplines. The creative nature of these actions is typically defined as operating within a body of formally organised knowledge, symbolic rules, practices, and procedures (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018; Gontijo, 2018; Mullen, 2019). There are many and varied conceptualisations of what the domain of knowledge can look like and how it plays out, dependent on the domain in question.

In the context of this article, we would consider the domain of knowledge to be music education. This domain encompasses the ways in which people learn about music through musical performance, composition, musicology, and listening practice. Music education draws upon a broad church of musical genres, formal and graphic notation, musical terminology, performing media, and artefacts that define musical expression across generations and cultures. The values, experiences, and understandings about music possessed by the teachers and students would influence the way in which the body of musical knowledge might manifest within a classroom or school context. Music teaching and learning foci would also be shaped by the broader systemic and regulatory constraints of different syllabus and curriculum structures. These varying influences make the music classroom a kind of 'activity system', which can contain and support multiple forms of musical engagement and creative music expression (Burnard, 2016).

The theories and practices of gifted education sit alongside the domain of music education. This provides a basis for how musical giftedness can be defined. Gagné defines giftedness as 'the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed superior natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain' (Gagné, 1995, p. 106). These gifts can then subsequently manifest as talents through the developmental processes of learning, training, and practicing. Gagné's model of giftedness argues that giftedness manifestation and development is influenced by a range of factors. These include intrapersonal catalysts such as physical and mental traits; goal management abilities; environmental catalysts in the personal and broader community of the gifted person; developmental processes, from biological maturation through to formal institutional learning; and chance (Gagné, 2003). Essentially, giftedness is a person's ability to learn and their aptitude for knowledge acquisition in a particular domain: 'the easier or faster the learning process, the greater the natural abilities' (Gagné, 1995, p. 107).

What if a teacher has a student who does not achieve in line with their aptitude—an 'invisible underachiever' (Chaffey & Bailey, 2006)? Or a student who lacks formal training and skills in order to be able to demonstrate their ability? This is where the concept of 'potential' becomes an important aspect of how giftedness is defined, particularly for students who, through uncontrollable circumstances such as their socioeconomic status or home environment, may lack the formal training that can allow them to effectively demonstrate this giftedness. Potential is the key variable for giftedness in earlier childhood, with achievement and eminence the focus in later adolescence and adulthood as this potential is developed (Subotnik et al., 2011). McPherson (1997, p. 69) states, 'the identification of gifted children is essentially a task of trying to predict an individual's potential to succeed musically, prior to any formal music training'. This task is made difficult by the heterogeneity of gifted children and the ways in which individual differences can affect knowledge, skills, and motivation (Pereira Da Costa & Lubart, 2016). Haroutounian (1995) agrees that the identification of artistically gifted students should include recognition of a student's potential for talent. This potential could be beyond musical performance or production and extend into creative and expressive musical involvement. This potential is best identified by those with expertise in the area, either in gifted education or the specific talent domain.

This concept of potential leads to the ultimate difficulty in defining musical giftedness because of the many ways in which musically gifted potential can manifest. McPherson and Williamon (2015) identified eight different areas of musical talent: 'performing, improvising, composing, arranging, analysing, appraising, conducting, and teaching' (p. 352). Haroutounian (2000) counted music awareness and discrimination as key elements of musical giftedness. Lastly, Gagné (1999) stated the following:

> The best indicator of giftedness for music is the rate of progress during the first months of learning a task. This means that before the start of formal training it might not be possible, without appropriate tests, to assess with any degree of precision the presence of high aptitudes. (p. 42)

2.3. The Individual as Potential Creator

This component of Csikszentmihalyi's system for creativity is also known as the 'person' or the 'actor' (Kaufman et al., 2018), that is, the human being with the capacity to translate knowledge into novelty (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018; Gajda et al., 2017). The kind of creativity an individual may demonstrate would depend on their personality, motivation, ability, and attitude (Sternberg, 2025). Sternberg (2025) proposed the necessity of certain attitudes to be in place for creative activity to occur—a willingness to question one's own beliefs, to go against the beliefs of one's community, and to question what is commonly 'known'. Other research has emphasised the provision of opportunities for creativity alongside a person's willingness to engage and take risks (Selkrig, 2018). Or, to simply value 'doing the work', with creativity emerging from action in time (Sawyer & Henriksen, 2023). For the purposes of this article, the kind of individual relevant for discussion of this system component is one who is musically gifted.

All children are inherently musical, as evidenced by the nonsense songs they sing to themselves, to dancing along with music they hear, and making up songs and chants in the playground (Campbell, 2008). So how is it possible to distinguish between all the children who enjoy musical play and engagement and those who are musically gifted? While there are no official estimates in the literature regarding the prevalence of musically gifted children, their characteristics have been explored through the study of identified children in case studies and more general overviews (Bamberger, 2013; Evans et al., 2000; Garces-Bacsal et al., 2011; Haroutounian, 2000; Ho & Chong, 2010; Subotnik et al., 2016). While the specific labels or sets of characteristics vary across those researchers, Haroutounian (1995, 2017) proposes four key perceptual/cognitive processes (perceptual discrimination, metaperception, creative interpretation, and dynamic of performance) that best summarise the range of characteristics identified in the previously cited research.

Perceptual discrimination, or 'fine sensory awareness' is a characteristic of musically gifted children that develops the more they are exposed to and learn about music. This development in students is often at a faster rate than similarly aged peers. Musically gifted students are capable of identifying pitches, rhythms, tone colours, and how they connect together. They may be able to easily connect with a melody or rhythm in a song and perceive the nuances of sound that alter and create emotional meaning in music. This could be seen as a kind of 'fluidity' in the ability to learn—being able to quickly shift between musical sound, structure, notation, and/or instrumentation (Bamberger, 2013). These sensitivities to pitch, rhythm, patterns, and timbre are also the focus of many musical aptitude tests for young children (Marek-Schroer & Schroer, 1993).

Marek-Schroer and Schroer (1993) also noted that these kinds of aural and innate abilities should ideally be coupled with an intense fascination for music itself. This intellectual curiosity and emotional engagement with music may be notable to parents during a child's 'sensitive periods' (Shavinina, 2010), when they may become increasingly obsessed with

learning about and engaging with music (McPherson & Lehmann, 2012). These musical sensitivities in students could also be noted by teachers as 'compulsive musical pursuit' (Ohio Department of Education, 2009, p. 10) or 'over-excitabilities. . . an intense emotional commitment to one or more forms of music' (McPherson & Williamon, 2015, p. 347).

Metaperception relates to the joy found in experimenting with musical sounds, cognitively and practically. It could also be defined as the ability in students to 'think differently and produce music imaginatively' with 'fluency, fluidity and originality' (Lancaster, 2003, p. 5). Through musical play and experimentation, 'children consciously consider formal, rhythmic, and melodic appropriateness and demonstrate a sophisticated array of innovative processes' (Marsh & Young, 2015, p. 25). This particular process may not necessarily be unique to musically gifted students, but students with more musical proficiency would be able to experiment with more complex musical ideas, formally and informally.

Creative interpretation is the product of metaperception. It is the most discernible part of the artistic process and is where choices made by musically gifted students through perceptual discrimination and metaperception are finalised. This results in an artistic performance or product that is, ideally, 'a uniquely personalised statement' (Haroutounian, 2017). This description aligns with the conclusion made by McPherson and Williamon (2015) regarding the importance of musicality in a child's imitation of sounds and songs: 'the two most important core ingredients of musical giftedness, therefore, seem to involve sensitivity to structural and to expressive (in contrast to technical) properties of music' (p. 344). This sensitivity to musical properties could manifest as a student's ability to create songs with musical patterns, add or improvise musical embellishments in performance, and demonstrate an understanding of formal musical components, even if there is a lack of correct terminology (Abramo & Natale-Abramo, 2020).

Lastly, *dynamic of performance* is the learning process related to the 'doing' of music: learning through listening, performing, composing, singing, or tapping a rhythm. The immediacy of this process is shared between the student and the audience. The student's musical learning and development is shaped by time, the learning context, the student's knowledge and abilities, and the reaction from the audience. This is the process where musical gifts can come to life, communicated through performance. Musically gifted children can demonstrate their knowledge while they simultaneously learn more about music in a way where the audience (teachers, parents or others) are able to appreciate the student's musical capabilities and observe their potential.

To summarise, a musically gifted student could be defined and recognised by these characteristics: potential, proficiency, and creativity. Of all the characteristics described here, the most notable aspect is the higher pace at which both the gifted and prodigious can learn about music. A musically gifted child's capacity for creativity can be considered a hallmark of their musical potential, and 'any discussion of how gifted students can thrive should include a note of how creativity can be cultivated in education' (Kaufman et al., 2018, p. 293).

2.4. The Creative Field

We now move to the third of the components in this system: the creative field. This has been conceptualised in many different ways. Glăveanu (2020) conceived of the 'field' as the general environment or sociocultural milieu as the basis for relational and interactive creative development. Alternatively, the creative field could be identified by more specific influences such as the pedagogical approaches and support employed to facilitate creativity (Katz-Buonincontro, 2018; Selkrig, 2018) or the ways in which technology can be used for creative purposes (Henriksen et al., 2022). The field or community of practice may enable or

gatekeep innovative developments (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018), and collaborations with community members can be a means to assess and identify creative potential (Dai, 2016).

In an educational context, there is the capacity for non-domain experts to become 'gatekeepers' within a creative field. These are individuals—teachers, students, administrators—who may define what may be regarded as creative or valuable within the school or classroom context and what may be considered barriers or hurdles to achieving or experiencing creative development. As the learning environment encompasses physical, psychosocial, and pedagogical aspects, as well as the human element (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014), gatekeeping practices can be demonstrated by a range of stakeholders. When considering the smaller, everyday creative occurrences inherent to classroom practice, peers, music faculty, and school executive or administration could all be considered gatekeepers and definers of creativity. These community members can determine what may be relevant and meaningful in youth culture, whether music or gifted education is a priority for the school, or what may be worth resourcing or funding with institutional budgets. They may not possess the expertise required to identify the kind of creative artefacts that could change the world in a significant way, but their judgement and influence within a specific school context could mean the difference between a student who can and cannot visualise themselves as a musically creative individual.

As shown in Figure 1, the domain of knowledge, the individual, and the field are the three core system components required for creativity to develop in an educational context. Using Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2018) as a theoretical underpinning, we can see that there is a symbiosis between creativity, musical giftedness, and education. This provides a foundation for creative exploration and achievement but not the means to define and identify creative outputs. This is where the 'four C' model (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014) can provide direction and scope for what may be produced.

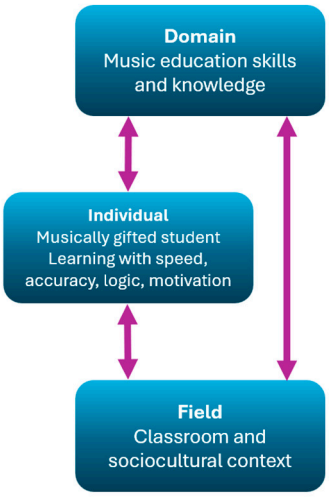


Figure 1. Systemic components required for creative development.

2.5. Creative Actions and Outputs

The nature of creative development can be considered cumulative and on a continuum. As shown by the many and varied influences on creativity, it is a complex and nuanced construct, allowing for multiple means to identify creative approaches and creative artefacts. It is the importance of the sociocultural context and the capacity for creative development over time that led to the 'four C' model of creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014; Kaufman et al., 2018) as a means to identify and categorise the different ways creativity can manifest. The 'four C' model proposes four types of creative outputs to accommodate and appreciate the different ways in which people can exhibit creativity and grow in creative eminence.

These four types are identified as mini-c, little-c, pro-c, and big-c, and we will examine each in turn.

Mini-c: This type of creative output represents new and meaningful discoveries that are inherently small and personal. People generate personal meaning for creativity by 'creatively rendering' their personal experiences and knowledge (Mullen, 2019, p. 8)—letting what they know and can do inform how and what they create. In the case of mini-c creativity, the context for identifying creative actions, thoughts, and behaviours is the individual and their personal level of experience and knowledge. In music education, these actions could include the moment when a kindergarten child first experiments with playing two notes together on a xylophone, when a student realises they can figure out how to play their favourite bass riff by playing along with the song, or when another student changes the register of the melody they are writing in their digital notation app. These actions are little moments of creativity that millions of people have had before, and will have again, but for that individual, it represents a catalyst for change and the capacity to think in different ways to solve problems.

Little-c: This type could encompass everyday creative accomplishments; the simple and complex actions people take to solve problems and explore the world around them. The context for little-c creativity could be considered the individual's local community, their family and friends, or even their classroom or school. Little-c creative achievements occur when a student is consistently able to improvise cool body percussion riffs, is able to devise weird and interesting ways to play instruments, or who is always able to play the best solos with the school jazz band. Little-c achievements are creative ideas and actions that impact their broader context and are recognised by their community as innovative or original.

Pro-c: This is, in essence, the development of little-c with time, experience, and expertise. It is the student whose capacity for transcribing bass riffs led them to becoming a local sessional musician, capable of learning new songs quickly and without formal notation. Or perhaps the student who experimented with instrumental performance in Year 7 Music eventually toured the country with her avant-garde wind ensemble. They are students, young people, who pursued and developed their creative and musical skills in such a way that it became recognised and appreciated by experts in the field. Those capable of pro-c creativity are able to command influence over their domain and their audience through their expertise and accomplishments.

Big-c: This level could be considered 'creative genius, the type of eternal, everlasting work that shapes the world and is appreciated across generations' (Kaufman et al., 2018, p. 289). A person's capacity for big-c creative output is so great that it can influence the way in which a generation thinks, how a nation is shaped, or how a genre is defined—consider Jimi Hendrix, Paul McCartney, Beethoven, or Quincy Jones. A person's capacity for big-c creativity can be impacted by many factors, including time, domain expertise, field recognition, and the individual's willingness to commit to their pursuit of eminence in some form (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

In an educational context, it is highly unlikely that a student, of any age, would be capable of achieving big-c creativity without a culmination of exceptional circumstances. These circumstances would include a level of inherent musical prodigiousness, early specialty domain achievement, and resourcing to support global reach and exposure (McPherson, 2016; McPherson & Lehmann, 2012; Simonton, 2017). This limit to the capacity of schools to support this highest level of creativity is also acknowledged by Subotnik et al. (2011) in their discussion of the development of eminence in gifted education: 'the goal [of gifted education] is to develop the talents of children and youth at the upper ends of the distribution in all fields of endeavour to maximise those individuals' lifetime contributions

to society' (p. 23). The big-c level of creative achievement should not be the ultimate goal, or expectation, of creative development for musically gifted students. Instead, effective education of the creative capacity of musically gifted students would mean that they are best placed to continue into outstanding creative achievement as adults. As such, the big-c level will be considered as the possible next step after the proposed conceptual framework for creative development in school contexts.

As shown in Figure 2, the framework proposed in this article will focus on the first three levels of the 'four C' theory, with the understanding that development of these levels in a child's formative years may lead to more opportunities for big-c achievement later on. With Figure 2, we can see how a foundation can be laid for musically gifted students to achieve creative outputs at the level of mini-c, little-c, and pro-c creativity. However, these components of creative development and achievement require effective educational intermediaries to ensure that students are able to learn and utilise the skills and knowledge that will yield creative accomplishments. This paper will now focus on the intersection of these theories and explore how teachers can become nurturers of creative abilities for musically gifted students.

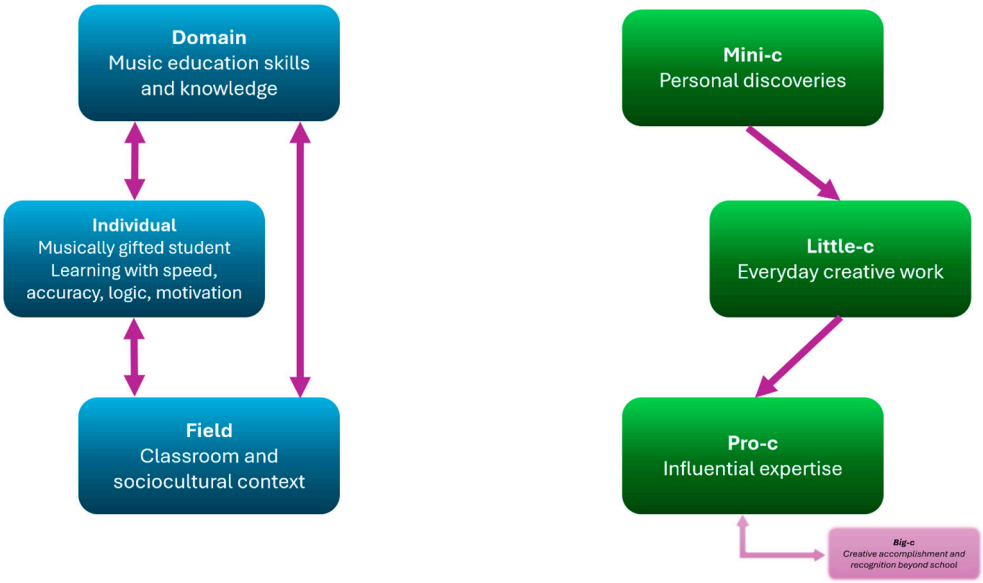


Figure 2. Systemic foundations for creativity and student creative processes and outputs.

3. A Conceptual Framework for Musical Giftedness and Creativity

3.1. The Intersection of Two Theories

The pluralistic conceptual framework shown in Figure 3 acknowledges the relationship between systemic elements required for creative development, as well as the ways in which different levels of creative output can be defined within a context. The proposed conceptual framework is pluralistic in several ways. One is that it allows for multiple conceptualisations of musical giftedness and field specification in order for it to be applicable. It is not a conceptual framework that requires a distinct set of circumstances for it to work. Rather, it relies on the constant—the teacher—to have the pedagogical content knowledge to effectively understand and synthesise the competing requirements of their individual students and educational field in order to allow creativity to manifest. This flexibility of framework application incorporates the need to acknowledge and allow for social diversity in education and work within a sociocultural context's variety of values, practices, and beliefs (Yumatle, 2015). The conceptual framework also combines two systems of knowing (Wegerhoff et al., 2022) with Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2018) and Beghetto and Kaufman's

(2014) theories. These theories are utilised in an effort to meet the possible epistemic and practical demands that researchers may have when investigating the phenomenon of creativity in music education (Wegerhoff et al., 2022). These are two theories at different ends of the creativity continuum, and utilising them in this way could enable researchers and practitioners to identify and explain effective practice in creativity development.

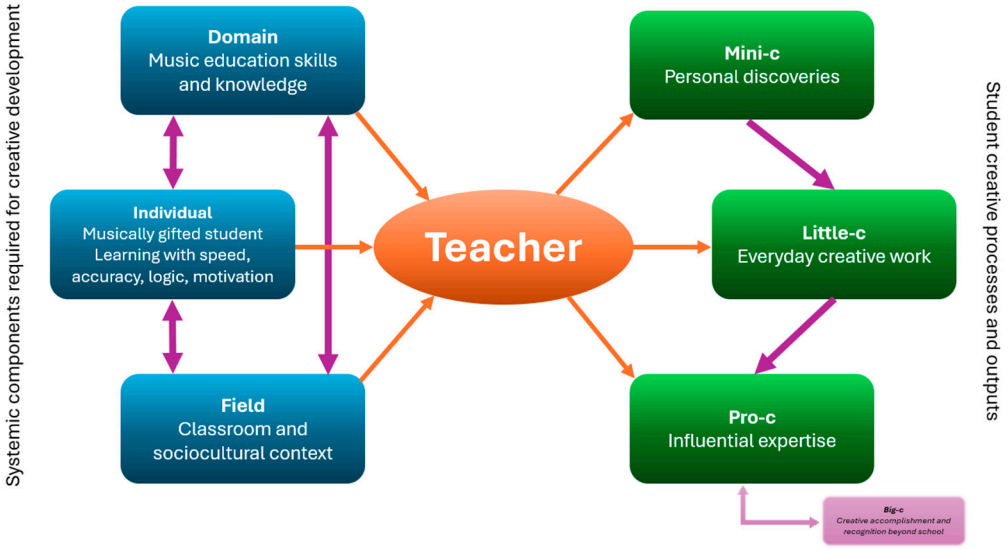


Figure 3. A conceptual framework using the teacher as mediator to translate a systemic foundation into levels of creative output for musically gifted students.

However, in order for creative cognition and action to effectively manifest in educational contexts, it requires a knowledgeable, expert teacher to unite, translate, mediate, and assess student creative productivity. The teacher utilises their music education domain knowledge and skills, their understanding of their gifted students' needs, potential, and capacity, and their ability to navigate the sociocultural contexts of their classroom and educational institution. Teachers translate this expert understanding through teaching and learning activities to facilitate opportunities and experiences that allow musically gifted students to demonstrate and develop mini-c, little-c, and even pro-c levels of creativity. Each systemic component on its own is not enough to facilitate creativity beyond the rate of chance. However, an expert teacher can enable the metacognitive development of creative processes and effectively encourage and identify the production of varying levels of creative outputs.

3.2. The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher in gifted education is of great significance, with a positive teacher–student relationship being 'incredibly important, maybe the most important thing' (Jarvin, 2017, p. 135; Subotnik et al., 2016, p. 13). A teacher of gifted students should be highly capable, passionate, and analytical (VanTassel-Baska, 2005), as well as professionally trained, in order to effectively cater for the needs of gifted students (Rowley, 2008). Teachers are instrumental in fostering relationships between key stakeholders in the lives of gifted students, such as peers, parents, and mentors, and teachers should hold high expectations and knowledge to encourage student achievement (Brigandi et al., 2018).

Effective teachers of gifted students need to be skilled in differentiation, organised, creative, and have significant in-depth knowledge (Vialle & Rogers, 2009). The domain, individual, and field requirements in the proposed conceptual framework inform the kind of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) teachers of gifted students require. To be able to effectively enable creative learning and understanding, teachers need to know their

students, their musical content, and pedagogical strategies specific to gifted education (Weber & Mofield, 2023). Their PCK should enable them to be dynamic and adaptable, translating content for students to foster meaningful learning experiences (Yusoff et al., 2023). Understanding how the foundational components of their classroom milieu interact allows teachers to make informed decisions about the relevance and difficulty levels of curriculum content and assessment. This in turn impacts instructional quality and student learning (Evens et al., 2015) and student capacity for musically creative outputs.

Centring the teacher in this conceptual framework allows for creativity development for musically gifted students to be more than just the student's inherent capacity for acquiring musical knowledge, or reliant on the student's ability to effectively demonstrate their musical abilities. Instead, it emphasises the importance of musically gifted potential, a key aspect of identification of giftedness, particularly in young children (Gagné & McPherson, 2016). It is an aspect that requires knowledgeable others, such as teachers or domain experts, to recognise a child's capacity for musically creative exploration and achievement (Wood & Laycroft, 2020; Worrell et al., 2019). This capacity can be demonstrated through a fluid sensory awareness, a fascination and joy for music, and an ability to develop knowledge and skills through creative musical exploration. Once identified, there are a number of ways in which teachers can provide support and enrichment for their musically gifted students which can ensure that their creative and musical abilities are valued, challenged, and nurtured (White, 2021).

3.3. Gifted Education Approaches for Creative Musical Development

Certain conditions in educational contexts can increase the likelihood of creativity being developed and expressed (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). These conditions include allowing for creativity to grow with feedback, practice, and time (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). This can present some issues for teachers, as the 'messy reality' (Yahn & Kaufman, 2016, p. 77) of creativity in the classroom can result in disruption, impulsivity, and risk-taking. Teachers need to be aware of the difficult balance that needs to be struck between the pursuit of creative potential and the human need to behave in socially acceptable and familiar ways (Yahn & Kaufman, 2016). Teachers also need to support students' rights to imagine and question the nature of reality (Katz-Buonincontro, 2018) and ensure students understand the nuances of the musical domain so they can make informed decisions about how to creatively work within it (Hanson, 2019).

Creativity can also be considered to be a 'naturalised' component of learning, in that the teaching of creativity is part of daily classroom transactions, rather than part of specific creativity lessons or activities (Dai, 2016). Musical creativity, in particular, is a key component of all musical learning and 'the exemplary locus of diverse forms of practice' (Burnard, 2012, p. 321). This includes considering the 'centrality of music listening and music making (of all kinds) as basic components of any creative musical enterprise' (Barrett, 2005, p. 191). In the context of educating gifted students, however, it is also important for teachers to consider how they 'think about, value, and accommodate exceptional abilities' (Hanson, 2019, p. 293) within disciplinary constraints. This can be achieved by combining evidence-based best practice in gifted education and in creativity development.

3.3.1. Acceleration

Acceleration can be an ideal way of catering for students whose academic abilities mean that they 'require more specialised and directed services' (Ford, 2012, p. 102). It involves identifying students who are capable of working through curriculum content at a faster rate than their similarly aged peers and accommodating this through grade-skipping or curriculum compaction (Brooker, 1999; Worrell et al., 2019). Acceleration programs

can provide regular challenges for gifted learners and allow them to work in their field of passion (Dai & Chen, 2013). While students may encounter issues with social, emotional, or physical maturity that may contrast with their academic ability (Ford, 2012), there is no conclusive evidence that this is a comprehensive reason to not employ acceleration for all cases (Jolly, 2009).

Acceleration for musically gifted students can be a way for teachers to better facilitate all levels of creative outputs by allowing students to explore fields containing like-minded or similarly abled peers and adjusted domain expectations for knowledge and capabilities. Allowing students to attend music class with a higher grade, or play with a senior or more advanced music ensemble, gives students the opportunity to work towards challenging goals (Kaufman, 2016) and to be in a learning environment that actively supports their potential for advanced learning and engagement (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). These experiences could trigger a mini-c moment for a young student musician where they see how commitment to their instrument could lead them to first chair in the orchestra or give them the opportunity to engage in little-c activities with peers capable of collaborating on a similar level.

3.3.2. Enrichment

Enrichment can generally be described as 'a process that extends instruction beyond the bounds of the curriculum' (Southern et al., 1993, p. 390). Passow (1958) described several ways in which the curriculum can be modified for gifted learners, including adjusting depth of content, the kind of content presented, and connecting content to the interests of gifted learners. Merely adjusting content may not be enough, however, as this could easily become another form of acceleration (Southern et al., 1993) and assumes that the original content is arcane and pointless. Connection with like-minded students through enrichment programs can contribute to a supportive, positive learning environment and assist in building positive relationships with peers (Kim, 2016). However, it is worth noting that though research in this area indicates positive results, the reasons for the positive results can be multifaceted and not necessarily just due to the enrichment itself (Golle et al., 2018; Kim, 2016).

For musically gifted students, co-curricular activities should be specifically designed to accommodate and encourage the needs and potential of identified students. These activities can be a way to effectively facilitate the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environment to spark creative development (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018; White, 2022). How teachers could design and implement these activities could vary depending on the learning needs of students and what is developmentally appropriate. They could manifest as a lunchtime music listening club, a bespoke chamber ensemble, or an experimental electronic music ensemble. Enrichment activities for musically gifted students represent ways for the student to learn and explore domain-specific knowledge that makes it accessible and enjoyable for young people (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2018) and even highlight student capacity and achievement at little-c and pro-c levels with performances at school, community, and competitive events (White, 2022).

3.3.3. Appropriate Instruction

There are many ways in which teachers of musically gifted students can make their regular music classroom a place where students can engage with music in ways that allow for choice, imagination, and exploration (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Of greatest importance for teachers is for them to consider how they curate the field—the classroom or the student's immediate sociocultural context—to mitigate possible psychosocial and pedagogical gatekeepers and facilitate creative progress (Mullen, 2019). This means curating a

classroom culture that is cooperative, allows for the pursuit of ideas, supports student questioning and suggestions, manages their frustrations and failures, and promotes tolerance for non-linear creative development (Cropley, 2011). Creative development requires the teacher to provide safe and collaborative learning opportunities and the student to engage in risky, new tasks and problems (Selkrig, 2018). This engagement has a greater likelihood of occurring with an expert teacher who is aware of their learning environment. It also allows for greater recognition of 'micromoments', where teachers value and acknowledge surprising mini-c expressions as they happen (Kaufman et al., 2018).

Teachers should adjust their pacing of instructions for gifted students appropriately and ensure that students are able to understand and apply more advanced knowledge with breadth and depth (Tomlinson, 2005). As mentioned before, an advanced learning pace is a hallmark of giftedness and creative capabilities. Adjusting the pace of learning and allowing for students to individually pursue challenging and novel tasks can foster intrinsic motivation and student agency (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Providing appropriate feedback and realistic and constructive praise can also encourage creative metacognition—an understanding of one's creative capabilities and limits, as well as the task, domain, or contextual boundaries within which they can work (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014; Kaufman, 2016).

Ability grouping is the practice of grouping students based on prior skill or knowledge attainment. For gifted students in particular, it means allowing them to interact with others who are at a similar cognitive and ability level to ensure a more efficient facilitation of differentiation in the learning context (VanTassel-Baska, 2005). There is research that indicates there are academic and achievement benefits to ability grouping for gifted students (Neihart, 2007; Preckel et al., 2019; Rogers, 2007; Steenbergen-Hu et al., 2016), as well as benefits in working with like-minded peers with similar-level goals and ideas (Brigandi et al., 2018). However, it is important for teachers to adjust their teaching to suit their gifted student's creative and musical capacities, as ability grouping alone 'may have little learning impact unless significant curriculum modification is employed at the same time' (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2019, p. 17). Grouping musically gifted students with like-minded and similarly capable peers is a way of supporting appropriate levels of challenge rather than forcing students into inexpert teaching or mentoring roles in order to bring a group up to their level.

4. Conclusions and Implications

When considering the intersection between musical giftedness and creativity in education, a review of major modern theories shows that they can be brought together into a conceptual framework for musically gifted students in education. Combining these theories requires a central role that conducts the process of creative development for musically gifted students. This conceptual framework argues that it is the teacher that is the logical and necessary intermediary for creative talent development.

This article proposes a way for researchers and practitioners to conceptualise how creativity can be developed in musically gifted students, by exploring the ways teachers utilise pedagogical content knowledge to support creativity development into the different levels of creative cognition and action. It utilised theories of creativity alongside theories of giftedness, couched in the domain of music education. It considered aspects of the theories from a music classroom context, specifically the ways in which domain creativity gatekeepers may manifest and what teachers can do to facilitate mini-c, little-c, and pro-c capacity and achievement.

As this is a conceptual paper based on the literature, it is important to acknowledge the absence of empirical data. This article initiates a scholarly journey into the complexities

of fostering creativity in educational environments. It is meant to propose a model for researchers to examine teaching practice for creative purposes, specifically with musically gifted students. While the framework is intended to have broad application, testing of this framework in different socioeconomic, cultural, or educational environments may yield results requiring further refinement of the framework.

This conceptual framework was proposed with the development of musically gifted students in mind. However, it is possible for this framework to be applied to the creative development of all students, in the context of other domains or disciplines (e.g., mathematics or dance) or with other kinds of fields or environments such as tertiary institutions or specialist schools. The necessity for the teacher to be the expert translator and curator would remain constant regardless of changes in context or adjustments to what would be considered evidence of mini-c, little-c, or pro-c processes. Studies comparing creativity development with and without expert teachers, or utilising teaching approaches that are more or less focused on student-centred learning, such as inquiry or project-based learning rather than more teacher-directed approaches to creativity development, may help to strengthen this conceptualisation.

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