



*Making Music:
Composing With Young Musicians
Program Evaluation*

*Bernard W. Andrews
University of Ottawa*

*Maia Giesbrecht
University of Ottawa*

Abstract:

Making Music: Composing with Young Musicians is a research-commissioning project that involves a partnership between the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa and Curriculum Services, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). Over a three-year period, 18 new research-based compositions for students enrolled in school music programs were created, studied and premiered in local schools by teachers and their students. The purpose of this presentation is to provide the findings from three focus groups, each representing one of the three years of the Making Music Project. Overall, the participants indicated that the experience was very positive; they appreciated the opportunity for their students to connect with professional composers and they indicated an eagerness to participate in future projects. The major strength of the project was the opportunity for teachers and their students to collaborate with living composers in the creative process, and the major weakness was the composers' lack of experience composing educational music (a wide-spread problem in Canada). Based on their experience in the project, the teachers indicated that they were more willing to teach music

composition in their classes. They noted that the composers were far more involved in the students' learning process than would normally occur with a standard commissioning program. The teachers also noted that their own involvement shifted towards a facilitating role rather than that of teacher-directed instruction. The project could be improved through better promotion to the schools and a prior meeting with the participants to articulate roles, responsibilities and process.

Keywords: collaboration; educational music; music creativity

Biographical Notes

Bernard W. Andrews is Professor of Education at the University of Ottawa. His research focuses on educational music, interactive teaching strategies, arts-based research methods and teacher development in the arts.

Maia Giesbrecht is a recent PhD graduate and now counseling supervisor. Her research focuses on identity formation in music education.