

**School of Education**

**Written Feedback:  
Exploring the Reflections of Upper Primary Music Students  
at Two Western Australian Schools**

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**This thesis is presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
of  
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# Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number RDHU-03-16.



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14 March 2019

# Abstract

Feedback is often recognised as having a powerful effect on student learning and achievement. It is therefore not surprising that providing effective feedback to students has been strongly emphasised in Australian educational contexts. According to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, teachers in Australia are required to demonstrate the ability to provide quality feedback to students as part of their teaching development. The implicit assumption is that students will respond to good quality feedback and make improvements in their learning. However, evidence suggests that students do not always respond to feedback in anticipated or desired ways. This discrepancy raises important questions relating to how students receive and respond to teacher feedback.

This study sought to investigate the reflections and responses of upper primary students specifically in relation to two types of written feedback provided by a teacher: written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. Both types of written feedback were provided within the context of music history/appreciation projects. A qualitative practitioner research, two-case study design was utilised in this study. Data was collected from 34 upper primary students (aged 10-12) at two school sites. Multiple methods of data collection were employed including questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, a teacher-researcher journal, and artefacts. Data from both school sites were first analysed separately and then later compared in order to identify broader patterns. It was anticipated that the strength of a two-case study design and the inductive analysis of multiple data sets would generate more robust findings.

Findings from this study provided insights into students' perspectives on written feedback, personal responses to written feedback, processing of written feedback, and patterns in their use of written feedback. The main conclusion of these findings was that students respond to written feedback in different ways, have different feedback preferences, and apply different strategies when using written feedback. These findings have contributed to reducing the current paucity of research pertaining to how primary school students reflect on and respond to written feedback from teachers. It has also resulted in the development of a reflective model of written



feedback as well as practical recommendations that could assist teachers in empowering primary school students to use written feedback more effectively.

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*Soli Deo Gloria*

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Teachers can spend a significant amount of time providing written feedback to their students (Fisher & Frey, 2012). This is often done with the expectation that students will respond to feedback and make improvements in their learning. However, a problem exists in that students do not always receive and respond to feedback in desired ways (O'Donovan, Rust, & Price, 2016). To address this issue, researchers have tried to identify factors that contribute to increasing the effectiveness of feedback (e.g., Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). Much of this research has focussed on the mechanics of giving feedback and explaining or extending teachers' feedback practice. In more recent years, studies have shown the need to shift the focus to how students respond to feedback. That is, increased attention should be paid to how students receive, understand and use feedback rather than on how teachers provide it (Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Hattie & Gan, 2011). The purpose of this research then was to explore students' reflections on and responses to written teacher feedback.

Interest in the subject matter of this thesis arose from the first-hand experiences of the author. As a primary school classroom music teacher, she was aware that feedback was a critical element of the teaching and learning process (Hattie, 2009). However, she had observed that although considerable effort was expended into providing written feedback to students, students did not always use feedback in desired or intended ways. This outcome seemed to be at variance with what general educational policies and literature had suggested regarding the potential positive effects of feedback. The discrepancy between the anticipated outcomes and the actual outcomes motivated the author to investigate her students' experiences of written feedback and build a better understanding of why students responded to feedback in the way that they did.

Initially, the author had intended to focus specifically on written individual feedback as this was a practice that she frequently engaged in (e.g., individual feedback on draft work and assignments). Other types of feedback such as oral feedback were utilised by the author in her teaching practice. However, oral feedback was relatively easy to provide. Written feedback, on the other hand, was more labour-intensive especially in the author's position as a classroom music teacher, teaching multiple classes across a range of year levels. Providing individual feedback on the work of all students in a particular year level was therefore a demanding task. As such, the author was interested in finding out what students thought of the written feedback they received.

In the process of preparing the proposal for this study, the author took part in conversations with other educators and shared her interest in conducting a study into students' experiences of written feedback. When the topic of the proposed research was made known, one educator suggested that it might also be helpful to explore other types of written feedback, for example, written whole-class feedback (e.g., a page of feedback provided to a whole class of students). They explained that this was a practice they had used at tertiary level. The concept of written whole-class feedback seemed like an interesting and important avenue to explore given that this type of written feedback could help to make a teacher's workload more manageable. It could also potentially have been better suited to the needs of certain students. This

inspired the author to expand her research to include a wider range of written feedback methods beyond written individual feedback alone.

In order to accomplish the aim of exploring students' experiences of written feedback, the author chose to conduct a case study into her own professional practice as a teacher. This type of research falls under the broad category of practitioner research (i.e., research situations where a practitioner is the researcher and where the research site is a professional context). Given that the interest in the subject of feedback stemmed from the author's own teaching practice, practitioner research seemed to provide the most logical avenue for systematically studying students' reflections and responses to feedback. From henceforth, the author of this thesis will be referred to as the teacher-researcher to acknowledge the dual role she played in this study.

At the time of this study, the teacher-researcher was employed as a classroom music teacher at two school sites. It was expected that by studying students in two separate settings and investigating similarities as well as differences, a more robust understanding would be gained of how students responded to written teacher feedback. This study therefore focussed specifically on upper primary students at two school sites who received written teacher feedback in the context of a music history/appreciation project. The intent was that findings from this study would contribute to current understandings of students' experiences and perceptions of written teacher feedback, particularly in primary school contexts. This was significant given the current paucity of feedback research in primary school settings.

This chapter will begin by defining feedback and outlining key issues that relate to feedback in educational contexts. Subsequent sections will describe the research objectives and methodology as well as the significance of the study. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the organisation of this thesis.

## 1.2 Background

The term ‘feedback’ was originally used to describe an arrangement in electrical or electronic circuits where information about an output signal was fed back into the system via one of its inputs (Black & Wiliam, 1998). This information would allow the gap between the output signal and a pre-determined reference level to be either reduced or increased. The main idea was that feedback helped to close gaps in a system, thus enabling the system to perform at its optimal level. The term has since been applied to social and educational contexts with similar connotations.

From an educational perspective, feedback can be defined as information that is provided to a learner in order to close gaps in the learner’s performance or understanding, thus facilitating improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This broad definition suggests that feedback can be provided in different ways, for example, teachers may provide written and spoken feedback to students in both formal and informal contexts, students may provide written and spoken feedback to their peers, and a computer program may generate automated feedback to a user (Shute, 2008). Given the diverse range of feedback possibilities, it was necessary to define the parameters of this study. This study concentrated on written feedback provided by a teacher to students. Although the provision of written feedback can be demanding, it is often seen as an ideal way for teachers to provide considered and thoughtful comments that students can refer to at a later time (Bruno & Santos, 2010).

Written teacher feedback can be delivered to individual students as well as to a group of students (e.g., a whole class) (Brookhart, 2008). Some disagreement exists in relation to the effectiveness of feedback provided to a group of students as opposed to feedback provided to individual students. Although some have suggested that group feedback is generally less effective (e.g., Hattie & Gan, 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007), others have asserted that both types of feedback can be used to benefit learners (e.g., Brookhart, 2008; Tindale, Kulik, & Scott, 1991). Interestingly, very few research studies have been conducted in relation to group feedback in educational settings let alone primary schools. Students’ responses to both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback were investigated in this study.



Assumptions about the nature of feedback have varied over time and these differences can be traced to the influence of dominant learning theories. For example, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century behaviourist theories emphasised feedback as reinforcement of students' correct responses, whilst in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century cognitive theories drew attention to the capacity of feedback to identify and correct students' error responses (Mory, 2004). Contemporary beliefs about feedback continue to be largely influenced by cognitive theories. Hence, teachers have been encouraged to provide feedback to students to highlight quality in their work, point out where their work could be improved, and offer clear guidance on how to make improvements (Swaffield, 2011). These understandings correspond with theoretical models developed by Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Wiliam (2010). In accordance with these models, the purpose of feedback is to reduce discrepancies between a student's current understanding or performance and a desired goal, thus leading to improved learning outcomes.

Based on this theory, it is not surprising that research suggests feedback can have a powerful effect on student learning and achievement (Hattie, 2009). Yet, feedback is not always effective and for many students, feedback seems to have little or no impact despite the amount of time and effort put into its production (Price, Handley, Millar, & O'Donovan, 2010; Sadler, 2010). Researchers have sought to address this problem by identifying factors that contribute to increasing the effectiveness of feedback (e.g., Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). This category of feedback research tended to focus on the mechanics of giving feedback, for instance, what type, when and how much feedback should be given to students. Essentially, the aim of these studies was to explain or enhance teachers' feedback practices with the general conclusion being that certain types of feedback are more powerful than others (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Shute, 2008).

This understanding is reflected in the stance currently taken by educational policy-makers in Australia, and in their agenda to improve the feedback practices of teachers in Australian schools (see Table 1.1). This has been spearheaded by the national leadership group, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and the introduction of the *Australian Professional Standards*

*for Teachers*. In particular, Standard 5.2 states that Australian teachers are required to provide timely and appropriate feedback to students on their learning (Education Services Australia, 2011). Whilst there is certainly merit in this, this stance seems to place the onus on the teacher to provide quality and effective feedback to students in order to improve student learning. The implicit assumption is that students will inherently know how to use feedback.

Table 1.1

*Descriptors from the ‘Australian Professional Standards for Teachers’ Relating to the Provision of Feedback to Students*

Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.	Provide timely, effective and appropriate feedback to students about their achievement relative to their learning goals.	Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student’s current needs in order to progress learning.	Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.

*Note.* From “Australian Professional Standards for Teachers,” by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011, p. 16. Copyright 2011 by Education Services Australia.

Increasing pressure has been placed on Australian teachers to utilise strategies that are considered to have the most impact on student learning. Feedback is frequently cited as one such strategy. For example, the Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2017) recently released a document outlining ten ‘high impact teaching strategies’. This select list of strategies was designed to encourage teachers to engage in instructional practices that would reliably increase student learning. Feedback was included in this list. Yet clearly, given the findings of this study, there is still much for educators to learn about feedback and why it does not always have the impact assumed by Australian policy makers and educational administrators.

The intent of this study is not to discount the valuable contributions that have been made to the field of feedback research. However, it does seek to make better sense of

the gulf that can exist between the giving of feedback and the receiving of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The approach taken in this study corresponds with more recent research that has highlighted the need to shift the focus to how students receive, understand and respond to feedback (Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Hattie & Gan, 2011; Smyth, 2012). In this light, researchers have begun to recognise that a preoccupation with the giving of feedback alone could obscure a range of other factors. For example, Willis (2008) identified that teacher-student relationships and classroom contexts can play a role in influencing how students respond to feedback.

This change in perspective can be traced to the rise of sociocultural theories and the underlying premise that students' responses to feedback can be shaped by their contexts (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Lee, 2014). The present study has contributed to this emerging area by exploring how primary school students receive and respond to written teacher feedback. However, rather than utilising an exclusively behaviourist, cognitive or sociocultural approach, all three perspectives were used to frame this study and interpret the data. This allowed the teacher-researcher to draw on helpful behaviourist and cognitive understandings of the feedback process whilst also considering sociocultural and contextual issues. Hattie and Gan (2011) support the use of this approach and assert that focussing solely on a single perspective can limit one's understanding of feedback.

Feedback provided in a classroom context is rarely a decontextualized practice. Teachers provide feedback to students in a particular setting for a particular reason. In educational research, the provision of feedback is frequently linked to the broader arena of assessment (e.g., Black, 2010; Havnes, Smith, Dysthe, & Ludvigsen, 2012; Swaffield, 2008; Wiliam, 2013). Assessment can be defined as the process of collecting, evaluating and using information for a specific purpose (Harlen, 2005). Two main types of assessment are generally identified in the literature: summative assessment (i.e., assessment of learning) and formative assessment (i.e., assessment for/as learning). Whilst this dichotomy has been criticised (e.g., Taras, 2005), it does serve as a useful way of conceptualising assessment and its purposes.

Feedback can be provided to students in either a summative or formative assessment context. On one hand, feedback provided in a summative assessment context is

generally intended to inform a student about their learning after instruction, for example, at the close of a unit of learning (Scott, 2012). Although it is usually provided for formal reporting purposes, feedback on summative assessments can be used by students to support future learning (Brookhart, 2008; Harlen, 2005; Irons, 2008).

On the other hand, feedback provided in a formative assessment context is usually given during a unit of learning and can take on a variety of forms (e.g., written comments on draft components, discussions, questioning, self-assessment). It may be spontaneous, planned or embedded in the curriculum (Heritage, 2007). The main purpose of formative assessment is to improve, enhance and promote student learning (Wiliam & Black, 1996). For example, it gives students the opportunity to make timely changes, and helps them move from where they are to where they need to be. Theories of formative assessment have been further developed through the work of Lorna Earl (2003) who advanced the concept of ‘assessment as learning’. This concept highlights the role of students, and emphasises the need for students to actively engage in assessing themselves (Scott, 2012). Current feedback literature tends to align the concept of feedback more closely with formative assessment rather than summative assessment. Thus, in this study, students’ experiences of feedback were explored within a formative assessment context.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) are key proponents of feedback in a formative assessment context. Their model of formative feedback proposes that feedback should address three fundamental questions that correspond with the notions of feeding up (Where am I going?), feeding back (How am I going?), and feeding forward (Where to next?). In other words, feedback should tell students where they are going, where they are right now and how to get to where they need to be. It is interesting to observe that models of formative feedback such as Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) tend to place more emphasis on the giving of feedback rather than the receiving of feedback. However, the third element of this model (i.e., feeding forward) does hint at the actions that students take in response to feedback. The idea of students acting upon feedback brings to the fore issues such as reflection, self-regulation and metacognitive awareness. Students need to be able to assess their own work and use the feedback they obtain to adjust their learning and make

decisions about what to do next (Earl, 2003). A reflective approach is therefore needed within the feedback process.

It is unsurprising then that literature suggests a close link exists between feedback and the concept of reflection (e.g., Anseel, Lievens, & Schollaert, 2009; Duijnhouwer, Prins, & Stokking, 2012; Mutch, 2003; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Reflection refers to the process by which a person takes a personal experience, brings it inside their mind and makes sense of it through various thought processes (Daudelin, 1996). The role of reflection in the feedback process is generally not debated, particularly from a cognitive theoretical standpoint. This is because feedback must first be attended to or reflected upon in order to have any effect on performance or learning. In other words, if students do not actively and cognitively engage with feedback, it is unlikely to bring about changes in their learning or work. Nevertheless, scant research has been conducted that explicitly examines feedback within a reflective framework. Two notable exceptions are studies by Duijnhouwer et al. (2012) and Quinton and Smallbone (2010). However, these studies involved university students. This suggests that very little, if any, research to date has simultaneously explored both feedback and reflection in primary school settings. This study has therefore made an original contribution to this area.

### **1.3 Research aims and methodology**

The aim of this study was to explore how upper primary music students reflected on and used written teacher feedback provided in a formative assessment context. It was envisaged that this would provide insights into students' experiences of written feedback and help to build an understanding of why students responded to feedback in particular ways. This was accomplished by investigating how Year Five and Year Six students (aged 10-12) at two Western Australian schools responded to written individual feedback as well as written whole-class feedback in a formative assessment context (i.e., draft music history/appreciation project). This study also examined how students used this feedback in the production of final music history/appreciation project submissions. Five research questions were used to guide this study:

1. How do upper primary students reflect on written individual feedback received on a draft music history/appreciation project component?
2. How do upper primary students use written individual feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music history/appreciation project submission?
3. How do upper primary students reflect on written whole-class feedback received on a draft music history/appreciation project component?
4. How do upper primary students use written whole-class feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music history/appreciation project submission?
5. Why do upper primary students respond to feedback in the way that they do?

The search for answers to these questions was conducted through qualitative practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) and a two-case study (Yin, 2003). A number of considerations influenced these methodological decisions. Firstly, the research questions of this study were based on the underlying belief that students interpreted and experienced feedback in their own unique way. This assumption aligned well with a qualitative approach to research. Secondly, the main reason for conducting practitioner research was that the research questions arose from a specific problem the teacher-researcher had encountered in her own professional practice as a classroom music teacher. Practitioner research therefore seemed to be the most compelling way to systematically investigate students' reflections and responses to written feedback. Thirdly, the teacher-researcher was employed as a classroom music teacher at two school sites at the time of this study. This made a two-case study possible. It was expected that studying students in two separate settings and investigating similarities as well as differences would result in a more robust understanding of how students reflected on and responded to written teacher feedback (Yin, 2012).

In line with case study methodology, data was collected from a variety of sources: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, artefacts (i.e., items that students and the teacher-researcher had produced as part of the normal learning/teaching program that were relevant to this study), and a teacher-researcher journal. The main bulk of data

was generated from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This data was text-based and contained students' own words and reflections on written feedback. As such, thematic analysis was used to interpret this information. Data from artefacts and the teacher-researcher journal were handled differently due to the unique nature and purpose of these instruments.

As this was a two-case study, two stages of data analysis were required (Merriam, 2009). In the first stage, each case (i.e., school site) was treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. In the second stage, findings from each case were compared in a cross-case analysis. Like any research design, both two-case study and practitioner research were naturally accompanied by certain limitations. Quality and ethical concerns relating to two-case study and practitioner research were given careful consideration and the ways in which potential issues were addressed will be explained in detail in Chapter Six.

The two school sites at which this study was conducted were two separate primary school campuses (Kindergarten – Year 6) of an independent coeducational college in Perth, Western Australia. These school sites will be referred to as School A and School B. Although the ethos and general operations of both School A and School B were similar, the demographics of student families varied somewhat. Compulsory classroom music lessons were held once a week in the music room of each school for the duration of one hour. Music lessons included theory (e.g., music history/appreciation and composition) and practice (e.g., singing and instrumental performance). However, this study focussed specifically on written feedback provided in the context of music history/appreciation projects. All students in the upper primary classes (Year Five and Year Six) at both school sites completed the same music history/appreciation projects as part of their normal program of learning. However, only consenting students' data was utilised in this research ( $N = 34$ ).

Fieldwork at both School A and School B took place over the course of two school terms (April-July 2016, July-September 2016). From henceforth, these school terms will be referred to as Term A and Term B respectively. In Term A, all students completed a music history/appreciation project based on a piece of music called 'Kakadu' by the composer Peter Sculthorpe, and received written individual

feedback on their music history/appreciation project. In Term B, all students completed a music history/appreciation project based on a piece of music called 'Rhapsody in Blue' by George Gershwin, and received written whole-class feedback on their music history/appreciation project. Thus, students at both school sites received written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback in comparable and consistent classroom contexts. This enabled different levels of cross-case comparisons to take place at a later stage.

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study is significant for three main reasons. To begin with, feedback studies have traditionally focussed on improving teachers' feedback practices in order to increase the effectiveness of feedback. However, more recent studies have suggested that greater attention should be paid to how students understand and use feedback rather than on how teachers provide it (Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Hattie & Gan, 2011). This is an emerging area of interest in feedback research. The present study has contributed new knowledge to this emerging area as it investigated two different types of written teacher feedback by focussing on the reflective thinking that primary school music students engaged in during the feedback process. The inclusion of written whole-class feedback in this study was also significant given that scarce research exists in relation to this particular type of written feedback. This study has therefore helped to fill gaps that currently exist in feedback research.

Furthermore, limited research on written teacher feedback has been carried out in primary school contexts. This is due to the fact that many existing studies focus on written teacher feedback in secondary school and university settings (e.g., Carless, 2007; Crisp, 2007; Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Havnes et al., 2012; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Pitt & Norton, 2017; Poulos & Mahony, 2008; Price et al., 2010; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Some written teacher feedback studies conducted in primary schools were carried out by Parr and Timperley (2010), Williams (2010), and Santos and Pinto (2011). However, these studies were more concerned with exploring students' general appreciation of written feedback, or identifying how teachers could provide better written feedback to students. The



present study will therefore enable new comparisons to be made with regard to the applicability of findings from written feedback research in secondary or university contexts to primary school contexts.

Finally, feedback has been recognised as a critical component of effective teaching. As mentioned previously, it is particularly relevant to Australian educators given that the ability to provide effective feedback comprises Standard 5.2 of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Education Services Australia, 2011) (see Table 1.1). Investigating the topic of feedback is therefore a timely concern. Whilst findings from this study are not generalizable in a conventional sense, this research has provided contextualised insights into the feedback process and students' experiences of written teacher feedback. Findings from this research therefore have the potential to help music teachers and primary school teachers in empowering their students with the skills and strategies they need to use feedback more effectively.

## **1.5 Organisation of the thesis**

The next chapter of this thesis, Chapter Two, presents a review of relevant literature that links the present study to existing research. Various theoretical perspectives on feedback will be examined from a historical perspective in greater depth.

Consideration will be given to the concept of assessment and the characteristics of written feedback. The review will also examine the idea of reflection and the influence of contextual factors on the feedback process. The chapter will culminate with the presentation of the conceptual framework of this study.

Chapter Three details the methodological aspects of the study including philosophical assumptions, and the use of a practitioner research, two-case study research design. An argument will be put forward to show how these methodological choices align strongly with the aim of exploring upper primary students' reflections on and use of written teacher feedback. Descriptions of the two school sites and participants will also be included in this chapter together with a detailed explanation of the curricular context of this study. This information will help to create a clearer picture of the setting within which written teacher feedback was provided to students.

Data collection procedures and methods of data analysis will also be explained. The chapter will conclude by outlining how quality criteria and ethical issues were addressed in this study.

Findings from this study will be presented in two separate chapters in keeping with the research questions of this study. Chapter Four describes findings relating to how and why students reflected on and responded to written individual feedback whilst Chapter Five presents findings pertaining to written whole-class feedback. Both chapters will explore significant themes and patterns that emerged from the intrinsic (i.e., individual case) as well as instrumental (i.e., cross-case) analysis of the data. A key feature of these analyses will be the identification of student profiles that offer an insight into how upper primary students in this study reflected on and used written teacher feedback.

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter Six, answers the research questions and discusses how findings from this study relate to existing literature. A new reflective model of feedback will be introduced and discussed. The implications of this study will be examined in relation to classroom practice and future feedback research. The constraints and limitations of the study will also be identified.

## **1.6 Summary**

This study investigated the reflections and responses of upper primary students to written teacher feedback. This is a significant and relevant topic considering Australian policy-makers' interest in the provision of feedback in schools (Education Services Australia, 2011), and the current paucity of research which specifically investigates how primary school students respond to and use written teacher feedback. This chapter has introduced the study by defining feedback and briefly exploring related concepts such as formative assessment and reflection. The research objectives and design of this study have also been outlined, and the remaining chapters of this thesis have been previewed. The following chapter will provide a review of the literature that relates to this study and will also present the conceptual framework guiding this research.



# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

Feedback is often recognised as having a powerful effect on student learning and achievement (Hattie, 2009). Yet, providing feedback to students does not always produce the desired results (Handley, Price, & Millar, 2008). The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literature that supports the research questions put forward in Chapter One. These questions are premised on the notion that feedback is a complex phenomenon, capable of eliciting a range of responses from students.

This literature review is structured in four sections. The first section will examine three key theoretical perspectives on teacher feedback, namely, behaviourist, cognitive and sociocultural. The second section will locate teacher feedback within an assessment context. The third section will identify characteristics of written teacher feedback and analyse the effects of these characteristics. The fourth section will explore the link between reflection and teacher feedback. Taken together, these four elements form the initial conceptual framework of this study (see Figure 2.1).

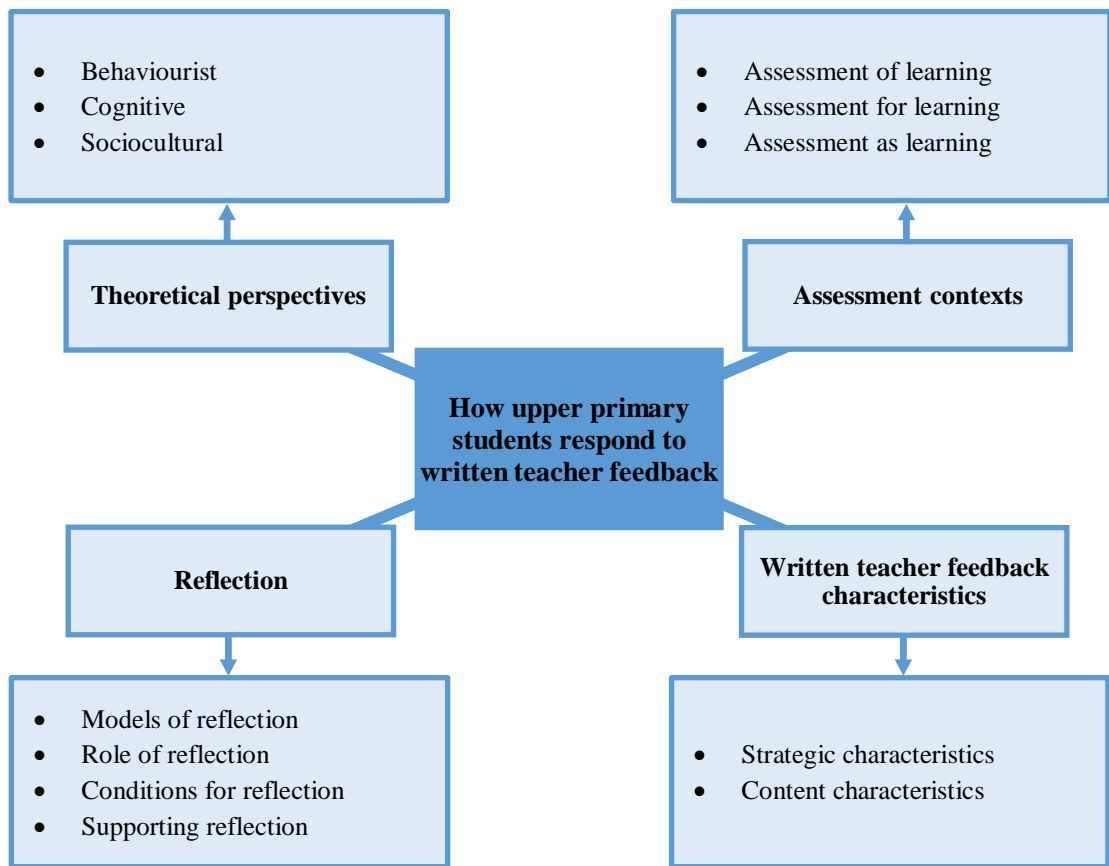


Figure 2.1. Initial conceptual framework of the study.

## 2.2 Theoretical perspectives on feedback

Theoretical perspectives on feedback are often tied to theories of learning. Indeed, Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991) have observed that any “theory that depicts learning as a process of mutual influence between learners and their environments must involve feedback implicitly or explicitly because, without feedback, mutual influence is by definition impossible” (p. 214). This section will begin by tracing the historical development of three major theoretical perspectives on teacher feedback: behaviourism, cognitivism and socioculturalism. Developmental implications relating to these theoretical views will also be explored within this section.

### 2.2.1 Behaviourist theories

Feedback research emerged during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was underpinned by behaviourist learning theories (Burke & Pieterick, 2010). These theories were based on the assumption that students learn through stimulus-response associations and reinforcement. Feedback was therefore regarded as a powerful external stimulus that provided positive or negative reinforcement to behaviour. One of the earliest behaviourist researchers, E. L. Thorndike, posited that feedback acts “as a ‘connector’ between responses and preceding stimuli” (Mory, 2004, p. 746). Thorndike’s (1911) law of effect suggested that if a learner experienced a sense of satisfaction following a particular response, they would be likely to repeat that response. Feedback was seen as something that could create a satisfying sensation and therefore it soon became synonymous with ‘reward’ and ‘incentive’ (Kulhavy & Wager, 1993). This viewpoint has perpetuated much confusion between feedback and rewards or praise. However, contemporary researchers generally agree that differences exist between general praise (e.g., ‘Great job!’) and specific feedback (Hattie & Gan, 2011).

Thorndike’s work paved the way for other researchers such as B. F. Skinner who investigated feedback in the context of programmed instruction. Skinner (1958) drew heavily on Thorndike’s law of effect and postulated that feedback serves as both a reinforcer of behaviour and a motivator for learning. Applying these concepts to educational contexts, Skinner developed teaching machines that elicited responses from a student and provided feedback to the student about the correctness of their response. The belief was that the provision of ‘correct answer’ feedback would increase the likelihood a student would answer correctly again in the future (Skinner, 1958). Interestingly, Skinner’s teaching machines were predominantly concerned with verifying and reinforcing correct responses rather than incorrect responses. The latter were simply ignored or treated as an unpleasant consequence (Mory, 2004). Two key assumptions lay behind this approach. Firstly, it assumed that feedback on error responses would emotionally upset students and should therefore be avoided (Kulhavy & Wager, 1993). Whilst this line of reasoning is somewhat debatable, it did recognise that an emotional dimension is present in the feedback process and that errors have an inherently aversive nature. Secondly, it assumed that feedback was a

form of receptive-transmission provided by an external source (e.g., a teacher or teaching machine).

During the 1970s, the behaviouristic concept of feedback began to be questioned. Studies demonstrated that feedback following a correct response did not always act in a reinforcing manner (Anderson, Kulhavy, & Andre, 1971; Barringer & Gholson, 1979). Other later studies also showed that students sometimes changed initially correct answers to wrong responses on a post-test even though they had received reinforcing feedback (Peeck, Van den Bosch, & Kreupeling, 1985; Phye & Bender, 1989). In spite of the limitations of behaviourism and its present unfashionableness in educational circles, it should be acknowledged that this theoretical perspective provides a useful explanation for feedback as a reinforcer and verifier. Behaviourism helped to set the stage for the development of cognitive theoretical perspectives on feedback.

### **2.2.2 Cognitive theories**

In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cognitive theories of feedback came to the fore. This coincided with a shift in the wider field of psychology towards cognitive research. As psychologists became dissatisfied with behaviourism, they began to seek alternative ways to explain how people learn. A corresponding rise in computer technology led to analogies being drawn between the human mind and the information-processing capacity of computers. Researchers' focus therefore turned from observable behaviour towards complex thinking processes (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). This signalled the dawn of what has been called the 'cognitive revolution' (Mandler, 2002; Miller, 2003). Cognitivism represented a fundamental change from an external view to an internal view, and emphasised the role that students themselves play in the feedback process. This significant development acknowledged that students do not receive feedback passively but rather actively interpret feedback information (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Butler & Winne, 1995; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

Theories of cognitive development address how the thought processes of human beings change as they grow from conception to adulthood. According to Jean Piaget (1972), a prominent cognitive developmental theorist, children pass through four broad stages as they progress to adulthood and each stage is characterised by certain patterns of thinking and underlying mental logical structures. Table 2.1 depicts the four stages commonly associated with Piaget’s theory and outlines characteristics of each stage.

Table 2.1

*Piaget’s Four Stages of Cognitive Development*

Stage and approximate age range	Characteristics
Sensorimotor (0-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins to recognise the world outside of themselves</li> <li>• Begins to use imitation, memory and thought</li> </ul>
Preoperational (2-6 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses symbols and language</li> <li>• Thinks logically in one direction</li> <li>• Has difficulty seeing perspectives of others (egocentrism)</li> </ul>
Concrete operational (6-12 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons in a logical, flexible and organised way</li> <li>• Increases in ability to consider different perspectives</li> </ul>
Formal operational (12-adult)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons in an abstract, hypothetical and deductive way</li> <li>• Employs a wide range of cognitive processes</li> </ul>

*Note.* Based on Feldman (2004) and Woolfolk and Margetts (2013).

It can be seen that Piaget’s concrete operational stage is most relevant to the population being studied in this research, that is, upper primary students (aged 10-12). Piaget (1954) theorised that students in the concrete operational stage begin losing their egocentrism (a preoccupation with one’s own self and viewpoint) and gain the mental ability to take on the perspectives of others. Students’ thinking also becomes more flexible and logical (Miller, 2010). These concepts of perspective and logic are important elements in the feedback process.



In order to receive teacher feedback, students need to recognise that another person's view of their work may differ to their own. This will enable students to progress beyond an immediate emotional response to feedback and think rationally about the feedback received (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Furthermore, in order to interpret teacher feedback, students need to engage in logical reasoning. Cognitive theoretical models of feedback suggest that this will involve mental activities such as making internal judgements about the feedback message, monitoring progress towards personal goals, and identifying what steps of action to take next (Butler & Winne, 1995; Chinn & Brewer, 1993). In spite of these general understandings, it has been suggested that Piaget's stages should be thought of as gradual trends rather than discrete stages (Kuhn & Franklin, 2007; Miller, 2010). Children may also move back and forth between different levels of thinking, and cognitive abilities can appear either earlier or later than Piaget suggested depending on a student's experiences (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010). This has potential bearing on assumptions about upper primary students' capacities to reflect on teacher feedback.

Cognitive theories had two important implications for feedback research. Firstly, feedback was recognised as having the capacity to help a student modify incorrect responses. As such, the focus in feedback then shifted to identifying and correcting error responses rather than merely reinforcing correct responses. Cognitive perspectives highlighted the significance of both directive feedback (information that indicates correctness or incorrectness) and facilitative feedback (information that helps learners to improve, develop concepts and refine skills) (Kulhavy & Stock, 1989; Shute, 2008). The underlying belief was that facilitative feedback would result in enhanced future performance. Secondly, it was recognised that feedback was not always effective in every situation but rather it was a double-edged sword (Kluger & DeNisi, 1998). This went against the assertions of behaviourists, and prompted the emergence of new concerns such as how much and what type of feedback would result in improved student performance.

Feedback research in recent decades has predominantly been conducted from a cognitive information-processing perspective and this has contributed to the development of many theoretical models of feedback. These models share similar information-processing characteristics. However, each model shines a spotlight on

different aspects of the feedback process. Two models that aligned well with the objectives of this study were Butler and Winne's (1995) self-regulated learning model, and Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention model.

Butler and Winne's (1995) model of self-regulated learning depicts a recursive process in which external feedback passes through a learner's cognitive system and interacts with self-generated internal feedback. A key component of this model is the concept of self-regulation. This term refers to the active process of monitoring, controlling and regulating one's own thinking, motivation or actions in order to achieve a goal (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Pintrich, 2005). Two important propositions can be identified in Butler and Winne's model. The first proposition is that students' personal goals drive their cognitive and affective engagement with external feedback. For example, students may choose which feedback to respond to by considering whether the investment of further effort is likely to help them achieve their goals. The second proposition is that external feedback is filtered through students' prior knowledge, beliefs and thinking. These filters influence the way in which students self-regulate and ultimately respond to feedback. Butler and Winne's (1995) model of feedback is distinctive as it briefly highlights the role of 'goals' or motivations behind students use or non-use of feedback.

Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention model identifies that feedback can be directed at three different loci: task details, focal task, and self. The central premise of this model is that feedback attracts a person's cognitive attention, and this cognitive attention is hierarchical in nature. In particular, feedback that is directed to a task is more effective than feedback that is directed to a student's self or person. For instance, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) suggested that norm-referenced feedback that compares a student's performance to others tends to direct attention to the student's self. This may lead to decreased expectations and reduced motivation in future tasks. Kluger and DeNisi's model laid the groundwork for Hattie and Timperley's (2007) influential research on feedback. This research has helped to establish the view that teacher feedback should seek to direct students' attention to a task at hand, or to the processes and self-regulatory strategies needed to accomplish a task.

The significance of cognitive models such as those outlined previously lies in the way in which they link external teacher feedback to what takes place inside the black box of students' thinking. These models help to illuminate how students process feedback messages and why students do not always respond to teacher feedback in desired ways. Hattie and Timperley (2007) have referred to this as the gulf that exists between the giving of feedback and the receiving of feedback. The insights provided by cognitive theories are valuable. However, cognitivism's preoccupation with what takes place inside an individual's head has also been a drawback, obscuring important contextual issues surrounding the feedback process. Recognition of this omission has led to the emergence of sociocultural theoretical perspectives on feedback.

### **2.2.3 Sociocultural theories**

Recent trends in feedback research demonstrate an increasing interest in how sociocultural factors influence the way feedback is given and received. This can be traced to the development of more social theories of learning (Smyth, 2012) and emergent findings from the field of second language writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Sociocultural theories recognise that teacher feedback is provided by different teachers to different students in different contexts, and this has an impact upon how students respond to feedback (Lee, 2014). However, "different variations and interpretations of meaning" (Elwood & Murphy, 2015, p. 190) exist in relation to what exactly constitutes a sociocultural perspective on feedback.

Differences in interpretations can be seen in the varying emphases that sociocultural researchers have placed on certain aspects of the feedback process. Some researchers have emphasised aligning feedback with Vygotskian concepts, for example, viewing feedback as scaffolding within a person's zone of proximal development (e.g., Mustafa, 2012; Rassaei, 2014; Shepard, 2005), whilst others have focussed on the interactional and interpersonal aspects of feedback (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006). Others have called attention to the way in which broader conditions (e.g., classroom, school, political and economic contexts) shape feedback practices (e.g., Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008).

Despite these variations, most authors who ascribe to a sociocultural framework hold to the fundamental premise that students' responses to teacher feedback are influenced by wider social and cultural factors (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Lee, 2014; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008; Shepard, 2005; Willis, 2008).

The main implication of this assumption is that feedback research should not only look into students' heads, but also into their histories and contexts (Elwood & Murphy, 2015). This poses a significant challenge for researchers and teachers given that 'histories and contexts' represents a combination of myriad factors. Goldstein (2001) has identified that these factors could include the characteristics of the instructional setting (e.g., the type of subject, how it fits into the overall curriculum), the classroom setting (e.g., the teacher's instructional approach, the degree of fit between instruction and feedback), the teacher (e.g., the teacher's experience and ideology of feedback), and the students (e.g., level of proficiency, expectations of the subject, gender, attitudes to the teacher). The interaction of contextual factors such as these creates a unique setting that must be looked at in order to truly understand what happens in the feedback process (Goldstein, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2014). In a way, these contextual factors represent a combination of both sociocultural and cognitive elements. For example, factors within the classroom relate directly to socioculturalism whilst factors relating to the student could also be connected to cognitivism. However, given that discussion of context falls more strongly within the purview of sociocultural theories, contextual factors pertaining to the classroom and to students will be considered in the present section.

Classroom contexts can affect the way that students receive teacher feedback. Hattie and Timperley (2007) have identified that the climate of a classroom is especially important if constructive feedback is to be welcomed and used by students. For example, the intricacies of teacher-student relationships can play a role in influencing how students respond to feedback. This is because students' acceptance of feedback is mediated by the level of trust they have in the person providing the feedback and how much they value the opinion of that person (Evans & Waring, 2011b). From another perspective, Ruiz-Primo and Li (2013) have observed that many existing feedback studies omit details such as the specific nature of the learning task based on which feedback is provided. Many studies also do not include providing students

with a pedagogical introduction to prepare them to receive, interpret and use feedback. These omissions neglect to take into account contextual issues that may have had an impact on the feedback process.

Furthermore, individual differences amongst students can influence students' preferences for and perceptions of teacher feedback. These differences include features such as gender (Evans & Waring, 2011b), interest in a topic (Katz, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Bereby-Meyer, 2006), personality (Black & Wiliam, 1998), and beliefs about self (Cowie, 2005). For example, Katz et al. (2006) found that girls with moderate interest levels in a subject perceived positive feedback as being controlling whereas boys with moderate interest in a subject perceived positive feedback as motivating. It should be noted that a focus on gender and personality is beyond the scope of the present study given that the purpose of this study is to explore upper primary students' responses to teacher feedback in general. However, it is acknowledged that individual differences such as these could impinge on the feedback process.

Another individual difference among students relates to academic ability. From an educational perspective, 'ability' refers to a student's propensity to be able to do something competently (Tymms, 2010). Thus, academic ability could be defined as a student's propensity for competence in academic subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics. Although the concept of academic ability and its underlying assumptions is somewhat controversial, it is worth exploring in relation to teacher feedback. Brookhart (2008) has observed that students who struggle academically may not fully understand the requirements of an assignment or the feedback they receive. This group of students could include those with an identified learning difficulty as well as those who may not have had sufficient prior learning experiences. Students who struggle academically may require more self-referenced feedback rather than criterion-referenced feedback and tend to respond better to small workable suggestions for further improvement (Brookhart, 2008). Whilst specifically investigating how students with learning difficulties respond to written teacher feedback is not the aim of this research, it would be reasonable to assume that a student's academic ability could be a relevant factor in the feedback process.

Students' personal perceptions and beliefs about their ability could also have an impact on their responses to feedback. Dweck (2016) uses the term 'mindset' to explain the perspectives that students can hold in relation to their ability or intelligence. Students in a 'fixed mindset' view their ability as being relatively unchangeable whereas students in a 'growth mindset' view their ability as something that can be developed and improved (e.g., through experience, effort, instruction, support) (Nottingham & Larsson, 2019). One key premise of mindset theory that appears to be particularly relevant to feedback is the idea that students' mindsets can affect the way they respond to challenging or critical feedback. For example, students in a growth mindset would be more likely to view feedback as being a helpful part of their learning whilst students in a fixed mindset would be more inclined to disregard or take a defensive stance towards feedback (Forsythe & Johnson, 2016). Some debate exists in relation to mindset theory. For instance, it has been suggested that mindset theory can overlook cross-cultural differences (Chen & Wong, 2015) and the effects of genetics (Plomin & Deary, 2015). In spite of this, mindset theory could be useful in explaining why students respond to feedback in certain ways.

The difficulty for feedback researchers lies in determining how exactly to take contextual factors into account when conducting a study. Whilst it is recognised that many contextual factors are involved in the feedback process, it would be unrealistic to attempt to identify causal relationships between every contextual variable and students' responses to written teacher feedback. What appears to be more needful is an approach to feedback research that considers sociocultural dimensions, and that acknowledges that context is a crucially important frame that surrounds feedback.

Goldstein (2001) has suggested that researchers can address this issue by taking pains to provide a sufficient and complete description of a research study's context. This is important given that much existing feedback research omits situational information and fails to position feedback within specific contexts, rendering it "acontextual and non-social" (Lee, 2008, p. 73). Granted, not all would agree with this approach. However, Elwood and Murphy (2015) have identified that the social and cultural experiences of teachers and students can neither be controlled for nor ignored. Providing contextual information would therefore appear to be an

appropriate way of coming to grips with situational variables (Goldstein, 2001). It would also help to throw light on mismatches between recommended feedback practices and how feedback is actually outworked in classrooms.

Sociocultural theories are akin to psychosocial theories in that both focus on how social forces can affect learning. As such, a general theory of psychosocial development will now be briefly examined. Erikson (1951), a key psychosocial theorist, proposed that an individual's social-emotional development proceeds in eight stages:

1. Trust vs. Mistrust (Birth-1 year)
2. Autonomy vs. Shame (2-3 years)
3. Initiative vs. Guilt (3-6 years)
4. Industry vs. Inferiority (6-12 years)
5. Identity vs. Role diffusion (13-18 years)
6. Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young adulthood)
7. Generativity vs. Stagnation (Adulthood)
8. Integrity vs. Despair (Old age)

Erikson's fourth stage, 'Industry vs. Inferiority' is most relevant to upper primary students. During this stage, students can be expected to develop a sense of competence through working hard and accomplishing challenging tasks successfully. However, failure, ridicule and punishment can lead to feelings of inferiority. According to Erikson's theory, students at this stage are also goal-oriented and keen to meet expectations. It could then be posited that upper primary students would welcome teacher feedback that would help them achieve their goals. This is highly compatible with cognitive self-regulatory models of feedback (e.g., Butler & Winne, 1995; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Findings from Williams' (2010) study have supported this view as students aged 12-13 clearly showed an appreciation for teacher feedback that helped them meet a particular standard.

Nonetheless, a potential question that could be raised is how students at the 'Industry vs. Inferiority' stage would respond to more critical feedback. Based on behaviourist theoretical models, such feedback may have a negative impact on a student's ego. Erikson's theory has been criticised for its anecdotal nature (McDevitt & Ormrod,

2010) and its failure to adequately address the role of culture in psychosocial development (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010). However, despite these shortcomings, this model does seem to offer a valuable perspective on students’ social-emotional development, and could help to explain the psychosocial tensions students may face as they engage in the feedback process.

**2.2.4 Summary of theoretical perspectives**

This section has attempted to synthesise behaviourist, cognitive and sociocultural theoretical perspectives on feedback. Developmental implications relating to these theoretical views have also been explored. As explained in Chapter One, it is proposed that a merging of theoretical perspectives is necessary in order to obtain a more complete picture of teacher feedback (see Figure 2.2).

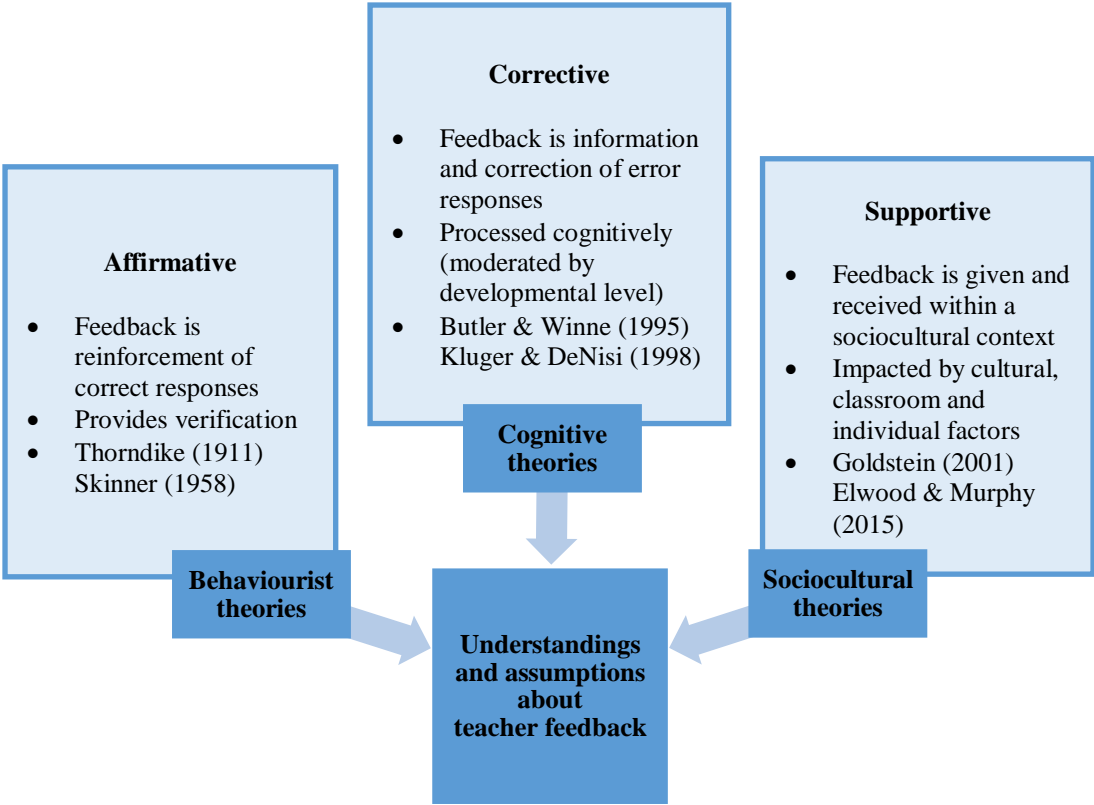


Figure 2.2. Key theoretical understandings and assumptions about teacher feedback.



Behaviourist theories support the concept of teacher feedback as verification and reinforcement. Cognitive theories emphasise the role of teacher feedback as corrective information and provide explanations for how students process feedback. Sociocultural theories consider the influence of contextual factors on how students respond to teacher feedback. With this in view, the following section will establish a basis for the provision of teacher feedback in classroom settings.

## **2.3 Assessment and feedback**

Teacher feedback provided in school classrooms is rarely an isolated act or decontextualized practice. Instead, teachers generally provide feedback to students for a specific purpose. Current literature typically situates feedback within the broader arena of assessment (e.g., Black, 2010; Havnes et al., 2012; Swaffield, 2008; Wiliam, 2013). Two different types of assessment are generally identified in educational contexts: summative assessment (assessment of learning) and formative assessment (assessment for learning) (Harlen, 2005). In recent years, the additional idea of assessment as learning has also emerged (Earl, 2003). These assessment concepts have been applied to a range of school situations and subjects, including music education (Scott, 2012). This section will explore the relationship between teacher feedback and each of these types of assessment. It will propose that whilst teacher feedback is more closely associated with assessment for and as learning, assessment of learning can also constitute part of the wider setting of feedback.

### **2.3.1 Assessment of learning**

Assessment of learning is designed to evaluate student learning in a course of study and is also known as summative assessment. These terms will be used interchangeably in this thesis. The main priority of summative assessment is to elicit data for accountability purposes or for certifying student competence. Harlen (2004) has identified that summative assessment could be for internal purposes (e.g., reporting within the school and to parents) or for external purposes (e.g., high stakes testing). Currently, assessment of learning continues to be used extensively in Australian schools for these very reasons.

In classroom settings, assessment of learning typically takes place at the close of a unit of learning and usually involves teachers giving students' work a grade or a mark (Cizek, 2010; Tuttle, 2009). This in itself is a contentious issue. Some have argued that giving marks or grades can distract students' attention away from constructive narrative feedback as students tend to focus solely on the grade or mark (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Tuttle, 2009). At this point, it should be noted that assessment in music education is currently a somewhat contentious area. For example, some researchers have highlighted the problematic nature of grading in a creative subject such as music (Denis, 2018), and have raised concerns about the risk of over-assessment and 'criteria compliance' in music education (Almqvist, Vinge, Väkevä, & Zandén, 2017). Yet, others have stressed the importance of aligning music assessments to specific standards (Payne, Burrack, Parkes, & Wesolowski, 2019). The debates in this area have primarily focussed on the assessment of musical performance or composition. Thus, although this topic is acknowledged, it will not be further explored as it is beyond the purview of the present study.

Assessment of learning can be accomplished through various means, for example, tests, quizzes, examinations, and assignments (Lebler, 2015). Performance tasks such as projects or demonstrations can also be used to summatively assess student learning (McMillan, 2007). Indeed, teachers frequently designate projects as assessment items as they can be easily embedded in regular learning activities (Harlen, 2004). Regardless of the type of assessment method used, McMillan (2007) has suggested that certain quality criteria should be met, for instance, learning targets should be clear, assessment methods should match the target being assessed, and assessment should be valid, reliable, fair as well as practical and efficient. Rubrics can be used to help ensure that assessment tasks meet these criteria. When tasks are scored according to a rubric, the inferences made are more consistent, criteria are more clearly described, and the task is more closely aligned with learning goals (Lane, 2013). In light of the sociocultural perspectives of feedback outlined in the previous section, summative assessment tasks can comprise part of the wider setting of feedback (Goldstein, 2004). The implication of this is that the requirements of a

particular assessment task and its relative importance could influence the formative feedback that teachers provide and how students respond to this feedback.

Contemporary feedback literature does not tend to strongly associate feedback with assessment of learning. This could be attributed to the way in which feedback on summative assessments is seen as being of limited use to students since a final judgement has already been made. Nevertheless, there must be a clear goal, objective or standard in sight in order for feedback to be effective (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Sadler, 1989). It is proposed that assessment of learning, and all that it entails, helps to establish this target. As Taras (2005) stated, “SA [summative assessment] is central and necessary to all assessment” (p. 476). Therefore, despite the common dichotomisation between the two, assessment of learning shares a close relationship with assessment for learning.

### **2.3.2 Assessment for learning**

Assessment for learning, or formative assessment, came to prominence in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Black (2010) explained that the term ‘formative’ in education was first introduced during the 1960s in relation to curriculum evaluation. Since that time, the concept of formative assessment has garnered increasing attention due in large part to the work of several United Kingdom task groups, in particular, the Assessment Reform Group. The primary purpose of assessment for learning is, as its name suggests, to improve, enhance and promote student learning. It is any type of assessment that helps to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses, or that assists educators in planning for future instruction.

Assessment for learning strategies can take on a variety of forms (e.g., discussion, questioning, analysis of student work). It may be spontaneous, planned or embedded in the curriculum (Heritage, 2007). Assessment for learning helps students bridge the gap between where they are and where they need to be in their learning. As such, it is commonly implemented in the midst of a unit “when and where it can do the most good” (Brookhart, 2008, p. 1). The cognitive perspectives previously discussed, with their focus on feedback as information, are closely associated with assessment for

learning. As such, many of the concepts which will be explored in the present section are reminiscent of key ideas from cognitive theories such as Butler and Winne's (1995) model of self-regulation.

Carless (2007) has asserted that in order for formative feedback to be helpful to students, students should be provided with the opportunity to put the feedback they receive to immediate use. He therefore proposes the concept of 'pre-emptive' formative assessment. This concept denotes "teacher actions which attempt to clarify student understandings before misconceptions have resulted in ineffective learning outcomes and/or loss of marks in assignments or examinations" (Carless, 2007, p. 171). Carless (2007) identified that the problem with feedback, in particular written feedback, is that it usually occurs after a task is completed. This is ineffective because it does not provide students with the motivation or opportunity to act upon it. Whilst Carless' (2007) notion of pre-emptive formative assessment is not widely recognised, he has made a salient point that is reflected in much of the feedback literature. In order for formative assessment to be effective, it should generate feedback to students about their learning and it should provide them with an opportunity to modify their thinking or behaviour.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) are key proponents of feedback within an assessment for learning context. They identify that formative feedback needs to address three fundamental questions that correspond with the notions of 'feed up', 'feed back' and 'feed forward':

1. Feed up - Where am I going?
2. Feed back - How am I going?
3. Feed forward - Where to next?

The first question of 'Where am I going?' relates to goals. Students need to understand what their goals are and what success at those goals will look like otherwise feedback will have little effect (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wiliam, 2010). Feeding up can involve setting clear learning objectives as well as providing students with exemplars that show varying levels of success. These strategies will help to make goals clear to students (Brookhart, 2008; Hattie & Gan, 2011; Sadler, 1989). Goals should be appropriately challenging and students need to demonstrate a

commitment to them. When teacher feedback is given against such a backdrop, it is more likely to be sought and better received (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, Hattie and Timperley (2007) have cautioned teachers not to assume that students hold the same goals as them. The reality is that shared commitment to learning goals needs to be nurtured and built.

The second question of ‘How am I going?’ is related to progress towards goals. This question involves a teacher “providing information relative to a task or performance goal, often in relation to some expected standard, to prior performance, and/or to success or failure on a specific part of the task” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 89). This could be described as the feed back aspect. Teachers’ responses to student work should contain information about a student’s progress towards their goals and should also suggest actions students can take to come closer to the expected standard (Fisher & Frey, 2009). Little disagreement exists in relation to the need for goal-oriented feedback as findings generally indicate that feedback is more effective when it specifically relates to a learning objective (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Clarke, 2003; Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, & Stone, 2012; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

The third question of ‘Where to next?’ relates to consequential actions. It involves considering activities that students can undertake in order to make better progress (Hattie & Gan, 2011). However, the concept of feed forward has been interpreted in various ways. Quinton and Smallbone (2010) viewed feed forward as being concerned with how students use feedback in future work whereas Fisher and Frey (2009) defined feed forward as the way in which teachers use assessment data to modify and plan for future instruction. Alternatively, Black and Wiliam (2009) used the term feed forward to describe any information that tells learners how to get from where they are to their intended goal. Each of these perspectives is legitimate and corresponds in some way with Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) original idea of feed forward. However, Black and Wiliam’s (2009) conceptualisation makes the three-stage process somewhat clearer. In short, feed up tells the learner where they are going (goals), feed back tells the learner where they are right now (progress) and feed forward tells them how to get there (action). Figure 2.3 synthesises both Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Black and Wiliam’s (2009) conceptualisations of formative feedback.

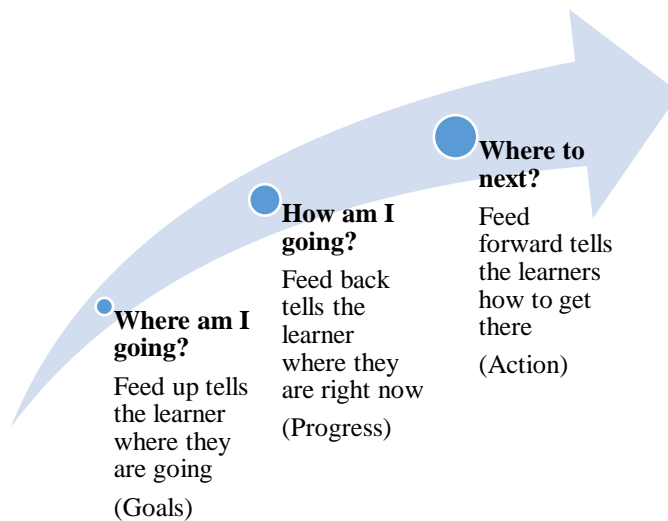


Figure 2.3. Model of formative feedback based on Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Black and Wiliam (2009).

The third element of the model shown in Figure 2.3 is of particular interest. As alluded to previously, feed forward holds several different meanings. These varied interpretations can be attributed to an emerging trend in formative assessment, namely, assessment as learning.

### 2.3.3 Assessment as learning

The concept of assessment as learning has been strongly influenced by Canadian researcher Lorna Earl (2003). Assessment as learning could be considered a subcategory of assessment for learning. However, proponents of assessment as learning argue that a distinction should be made between the two due to a clear difference in outcomes. In a nutshell, assessment for learning results in teachers making changes to their teaching (e.g., providing feedback to students, modifying curricular programmes) whereas assessment as learning results in students making changes to their learning (e.g., evaluating and using feedback from teachers, engaging in reflection). Some might contend that the introduction of yet another assessment-plus-preposition phrase unnecessarily muddies the water of assessment jargon. However, it is argued that by focussing on students' role in the assessment

process, assessment as learning “extracts deeply valuable tools that are currently filed under the assessment for learning umbrella, gives them profile, and adds a third dimension to the dialogue” (Parker, 2006, p. 108).

In Australia, assessment as learning has had some impact on the educational landscape. This impact can be traced to the national agreement, the *Melbourne Declaration on National Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008) and its inclusion of assessment for, as and of learning as desired approaches for assessment practice in Australian schools. The *Melbourne Declaration on National Goals for Young Australians* has defined each term in the following manner:

“assessment for learning – enabling teachers to use information about student progress to inform their teaching

assessment as learning – enabling students to reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals

assessment of learning – assisting teachers to use evidence of student learning to assess student achievement against goals and standards”

(MCEETYA, 2008, p. 14).

As previously indicated, the key difference between assessment as and for learning lies in who does the assessing and who takes action based on the results of the assessment. Assessment as learning emphasises the role of the student. It foregrounds issues such as self-monitoring, self-regulation, reflection and metacognitive awareness. Within an assessment as learning context, students assess themselves and use the feedback they obtain to adjust their learning and make decisions about what to do next (Earl, 2003). Thus, assessment as learning is closely linked to the idea of self-assessment (Earl & Katz, 2013). Self-assessment and assessment as learning both embody the concept of students being critical assessors of their own learning. They are therefore inextricably entwined with cognitive perspectives on feedback (Butler & Winne, 1995) and a reflective approach to formative assessment (Brown, Andrade, & Chen, 2015; Earl & Katz, 2013; Kim, 2015; Schuessler, 2010).

Self-assessment can be operationalised in a variety of ways, “ranging from a careful consideration of the quality of one’s own work guided by a rubric or feedback from the teacher, to scoring one’s own work, to practices like predicting one’s likely score on an impending task or test” (Brown & Harris, 2013, p. 368). The main goal of self-assessment is to promote student autonomy and to encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning (Andrade, 2010; Brown & Harris, 2013; Earl & Katz, 2013; Paris & Paris, 2001). The rationale is that engaging in self-assessment will assist students to become independent self-regulated learners who are able to assume control and ownership over their learning. With this in mind, it would seem as though the provision of teacher feedback defeats the very purpose of self-assessment. However, this is not entirely true.

Teacher feedback and self-assessment are not mutually exclusive. Earl and Katz (2013) have identified that students cannot successfully achieve the goal of self-assessment without guidance and descriptive feedback from teachers. Teacher feedback can challenge students’ ideas, introduce new information, provide alternatives and create conditions for self-reflection. In so doing, teacher feedback can effectively spearhead and support self-assessment practices. From another perspective, Brown, Andrade and Chen (2015) observed that teacher feedback can help to improve ‘calibration accuracy’ when students engage in self-assessment. This term refers to how well students’ judgement of their performance matches their actual performance. As might be expected, calibration accuracy is not always high in self-assessment for various reasons. For example, Dunning, Heath and Suls (2004) identified that when people self-assess, they have the tendency to hold overinflated views about their abilities, ignore important information, and be unaware of what they have omitted. The provision of external feedback can help to counteract tendencies such as these, thus allowing students to construct a more accurate understanding of their current level of performance (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Nietfeld, Cao, & Osborne, 2006).



### 2.3.4 Summary of assessment contexts

This section has addressed three conceptualisations of assessment: assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Each type of assessment serves a unique purpose and, in its own way, provides a context for the provision of teacher feedback in a classroom setting (see Figure 2.4). The models shown in this section (i.e., Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4) guided the provision of teacher feedback in this study.

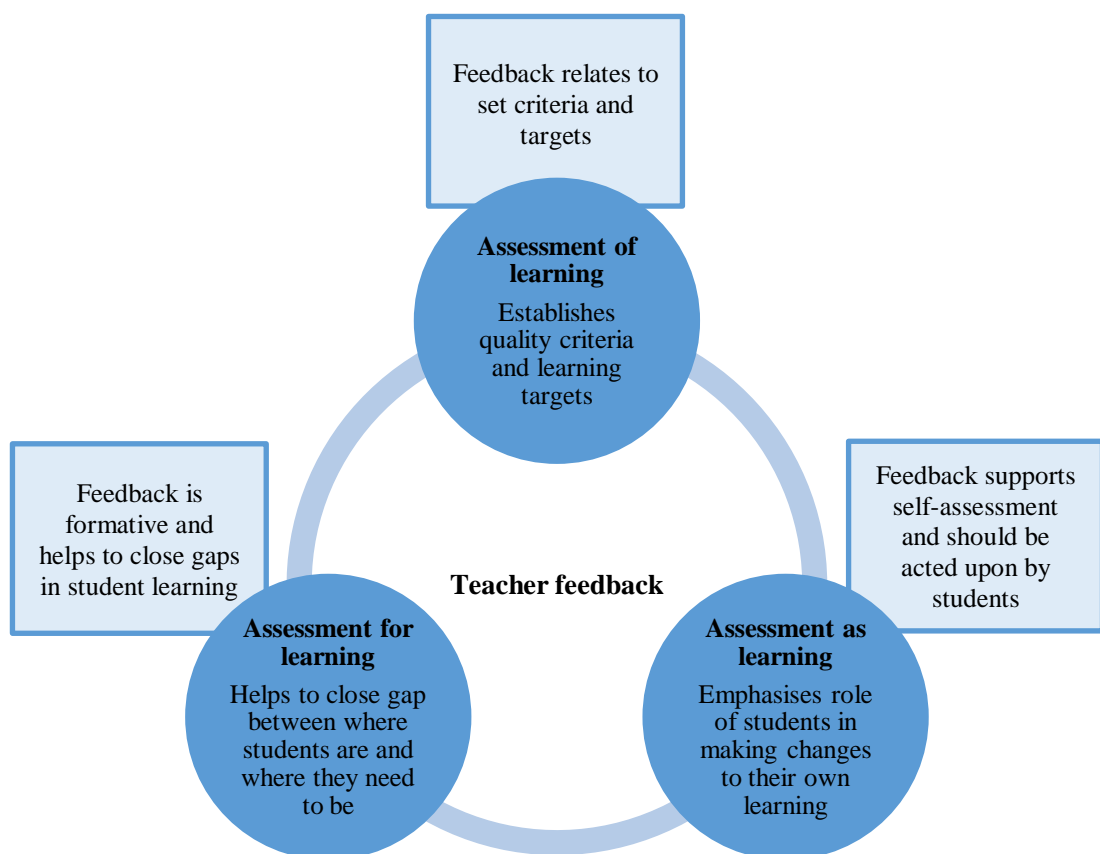


Figure 2.4. Model of teacher feedback within an assessment context.

The initial conceptual framework of this study will now be revisited in order to draw connections between the ideas that have been discussed thus far, and to preview the remaining areas of interest (see Figure 2.1). Theoretical perspectives on feedback have been discussed with a focus on behaviourist, cognitive and sociocultural theories. These theories help to provide a fuller understanding of written teacher

feedback and offer insights into how students aged 10-12 can be expected to respond to feedback. The concept of assessment has also been investigated revealing that written teacher feedback is typically situated within classroom assessment contexts, in particular, assessment as/for learning. The remaining sections of this chapter will address the characteristics of written teacher feedback as well as the significance of reflection in the feedback process.

## **2.4 Written teacher feedback characteristics**

In educational settings, written teacher feedback is frequently provided in relation to students' written work (Clarke, 2000; Elliott et al., 2016). For example, teachers may formatively assess and write comments on students' draft assignments. Anecdotal evidence suggests that written teacher feedback is typically provided outside of regular classroom time, for instance, during teaching breaks or after school hours. The provision of written teacher feedback can therefore be fraught with difficulty as students may have trouble processing teachers' responses and may misinterpret feedback or be unable to decipher comments (Burke & Pieterick, 2010; Carless, 2006; Richardson, 2000). In spite of these hurdles, written teacher feedback continues to be a commonly utilised tool (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). This could be due to the way in which written feedback allows teachers to efficiently provide comments on student work, affords a record of this assessment, and gives students the opportunity to revisit comments at a later time (Brookhart, 2008; Clarke, 2000).

In this section, characteristics of written teacher feedback will be explored.

Brookhart's (2008) typology will be utilised as a basis for discussing how certain characteristics of written teacher feedback may have an impact on the feedback process. In Brookhart's (2008) typology, several important characteristics of feedback that teachers have control over have been identified. These characteristics fall into two broad categories: strategic characteristics (e.g., timing, mode, amount, audience) and content characteristics (e.g., focus, valence, tone, clarity).

## **2.4.1 Strategic characteristics**

Strategic characteristics relate to how (mode), how much (amount), to whom (audience), and when (timing) feedback is given. These characteristics will now be examined in greater detail.

### **2.4.1.1 Mode**

Teacher feedback is traditionally given to students in either one of two modes: written (e.g., comments handwritten on students' work) or spoken (e.g., informal conversations, one-on-one assistance with a particular task) (Elliott et al., 2016). It is generally recognised that written and spoken feedback are both valid modes of delivery, each with their own unique applications, advantages and disadvantages (Brookhart, 2008). Some evidence suggests that written comments can be preferable to oral communication as students can revisit feedback comments at a later time (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Shirbagi, 2007; Shute, 2008). Written comments also allow the teacher to provide students with a more thoughtful and deliberate response (Tuttle, 2009). In line with the research questions put forward in Chapter One, this study will focus solely on teacher feedback in written form.

### **2.4.1.2 Amount**

The amount of feedback provided to students is a particularly problematic area in relation to written feedback. Too often, teachers' natural inclination is to want to fix everything they see (Brookhart, 2008). This could be due to an awareness that others (e.g., parent, principal) might scrutinize their marking and pick up 'missing' mistakes (Swaffield, 2008). Yet from a student's perspective, too many written comments can quickly become overpowering and excessive (Askew & Lodge, 2000). This is likely to result in students not giving any notice to it or getting disheartened by the amount of corrections to be made (Bruno & Santos, 2010; Shute, 2008). Brookhart (2008) and Bruno and Santos (2010) have therefore recommended that teachers be selective and choose only a few main points on which to provide feedback in order to maintain student interest and motivation.

### **2.4.1.3 Audience**

The characteristic of audience relates to whether feedback should be given to individuals or to a group of students (e.g., a small group or a whole class).

Disagreement exists in this area. Although some suggest that group feedback of any kind is generally less effective (e.g., Hattie & Gan, 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007), others argue that both group and individual feedback can be used to benefit learners (e.g., Brookhart, 2008; Tindale, Kulik, & Scott, 1991; Tuttle, 2009). Arguably, individual feedback is ideal as it can be tailored to the needs of each student. This makes it more effective in increasing students' achievement and motivation (Archer-Kath, Johnson, & Johnson, 1994) and reduces the likelihood of confusion (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Group feedback can be useful when many students in a class make the same error or demonstrate the same misconception (Brookhart, 2008). Carless (2007) has offered a more pragmatic perspective by explaining that due to the realities of classroom life, individualised feedback is not always feasible given the pressures of time. This study will give attention to both individual feedback and group feedback in written form.

Group feedback is a frequent practice amongst educators and is mentioned incidentally in feedback literature. However, very little empirical research has been conducted in this area. Based on the limited research available, it can be seen that group feedback has different meanings depending on the context in which it is provided. For example, group feedback can refer to feedback that is provided to a group of students working collectively on a group task (e.g., Resendes, Scardamalia, Bereiter, Chen, & Halewood, 2015). It can also refer to feedback that is provided to a group of students working independently on individual tasks (e.g., Ice, Kupczynski, Wiesenmayer, & Phillips, 2008). In this study, focus will be placed on the latter type of group feedback (i.e., collective feedback provided to a whole class of students based on tasks that have been completed individually and independently). From henceforth, this will be referred to as whole-class feedback.

Scarce, if any, research exists in relation to written whole-class feedback in educational settings let alone primary schools. This could be due to the assumption that written individual feedback is a better or more preferable form of feedback. One study that addressed written whole-class feedback was conducted by Ice et al. (2008) in the context of online learning in higher education. In this study, Master's and Doctoral level students shared their preferences for individualised or written whole-class feedback. Findings showed that Master's level students placed higher value on direct individualised written feedback that did not require any additional analysing on their part and that created minimal uncertainty. However, Doctoral students valued written whole-class feedback as they preferred to analyse their work on their own, making independent comparisons between their work and the syntheses provided by their instructor. Ice et al. (2008) suggested that this could be attributed to students' confidence in their own cognitive and reflective abilities. Whilst these findings are interesting, it is difficult to draw any conclusions based on this study alone.

#### ***2.4.1.4 Timing***

A number of feedback studies have specifically explored the issue of timing, that is, whether feedback provision should be immediate or delayed (Shute, 2008). Immediate feedback can be defined as being provided right after an assessment has been completed. Delayed feedback is more relative and may occur “minutes, hours, weeks, or longer after the completion of some task or test” (Shute, 2008, p. 163). It could be observed that interest in feedback timing grew from behaviourists' concern with immediate reinforcement and cognitivists' interest in long-term memory and transfer. Studies that focus on feedback timing support the provision of both immediate feedback (e.g., Corbett & Anderson, 2001; Phye & Andre, 1989) and delayed feedback (e.g., Kulhavy & Anderson, 1972; Schroth, 1992).

Evidence also suggests that other mitigating factors can be involved when considering the timing of feedback. For example, Shute (2008) concluded that delayed feedback may encourage the long-term transfer of conceptual learning whereas immediate feedback may be more efficient in the development of short-term procedural skills. Similarly, Clariana, Wagner and Roher Murphy's (2000) findings

suggested that delayed feedback is more suited to difficult items whereas immediate feedback is appropriate for easy items. In a study that investigated feedback in computer-based instruction, Mason and Bruning (2001) found that immediate feedback was more effective for students with low achievement levels whereas delayed feedback was more effective for students with high achievement levels.

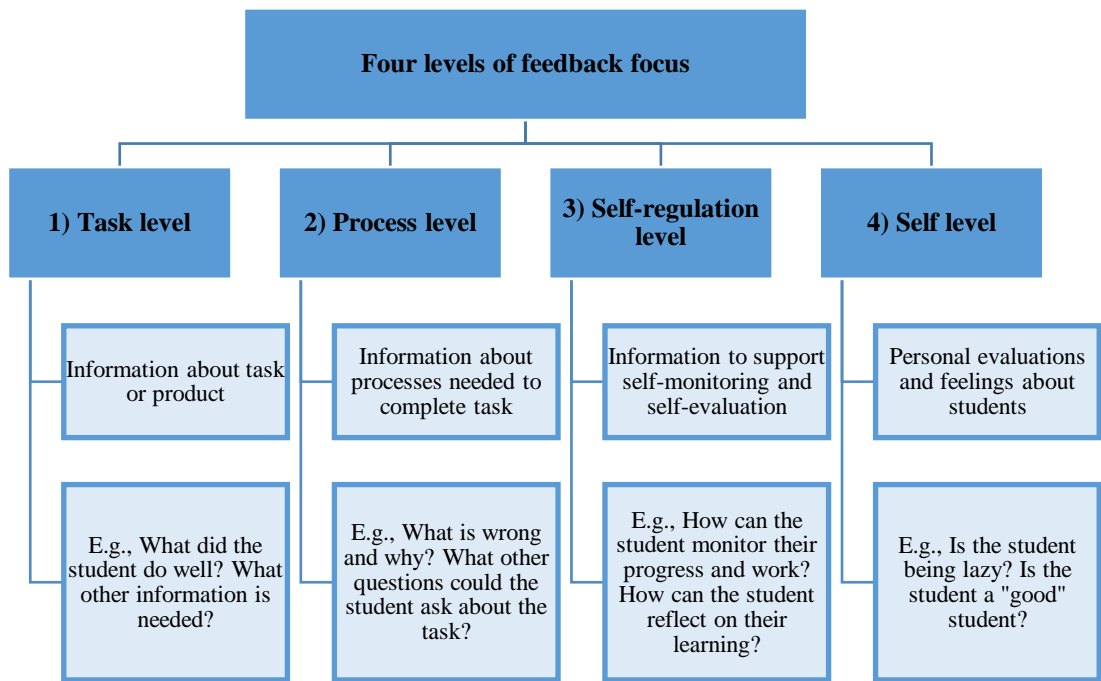
It is evident then that recommendations relating to the timing of feedback are inconclusive and dependent upon context, the nature of the task, and the characteristics of the learner. However, the practicality of adjusting feedback timing for each of these variables is open to debate. Regardless of whether teacher feedback is provided immediately or is delayed, what is certain is that teacher feedback should be timely and delivered at a moment when it can do the most good for a student (Brookhart, 2008; Carless, 2007; Dean et al., 2012; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Shute, 2008).

## **2.4.2 Content characteristics**

Content characteristics relate to what is included in written feedback. Four content characteristics will be explored in this section, namely, focus, valence, tone and clarity.

### **2.4.2.1 Focus**

In terms of focus, Hattie and Timperley's (2007) influential study has helped to cement the view that feedback can be directed at four different levels: (a) task level, (b) process level, (c) self-regulation level, and (d) self level (see Figure 2.5). Hattie and Timperley (2007) have argued that feedback should focus on the first three levels and should avoid the fourth level.



*Figure 2.5.* Four levels of feedback focus and examples of feedback provision prompts based on Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Hattie and Gan (2011).

Written feedback that engages learners at the task level provides information about a particular task or product. It is powerful when it is “more information focussed (e.g., correct or incorrect), leads to acquiring more or different information, and builds more surface knowledge” (Hattie & Gan, 2011, p. 260). Task level feedback is effective when it comes from a perceived reputable source (Hattie & Gan, 2011). Brookhart (2008) has suggested that rather than simply supplying students with answers, feedback can take the form of questions. These questions can help to guide students to the answer.

Written feedback that is aimed at the process level provides students with information about the processes needed to complete, connect or extend tasks. Such feedback can help to reduce students’ cognitive load, lead to alternative processing, cue students to seek more effective information, and direct them to more appropriate strategies (Hattie & Gan, 2011).

Written feedback that addresses the self-regulation level helps students develop self-evaluation skills and can have an impact on their effort. This type of feedback links directly to the concept of assessment as learning as it has the potential to help students generate their own internal feedback. Hattie and Gan (2011) have observed that reflective and probing questions generally work well at the self-regulation level.

Written feedback that directs attention to the self level is personal and expresses subjective feelings about the student. Students' reception of self level feedback or praise is unpredictable as it is very much influenced by their self-concept and reputational lenses (i.e., how they want others to perceive them) (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), this type of feedback should be avoided.

#### **2.4.2.2 *Valence***

The second content characteristic is valence (i.e., whether feedback is positive or negative). Broadly speaking, positive feedback involves pointing out the strengths of a student's work whilst negative feedback involves identifying its weaknesses, accompanied by helpful suggestions for improvement (Askew & Lodge, 2000; Brookhart, 2008). Some uncertainty exists as to whether feedback should contain positive or negative comments (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie, 2009). This disagreement harks back to the behaviourist assumption that negative feedback (or feedback on error responses) can be emotionally upsetting to students and therefore should be avoided (Kulhavy & Wager, 1993). It is of interest to note that the emotional impact of negative and positive feedback has begun to garner some interest amongst contemporary researchers. These researchers generally view emotion as a natural and inevitable part of the feedback process (Carless, 2006; Kerr, 2017; Rowe, 2011; Värlander, 2008).

Positive feedback, or the validation of good work, generates positive emotions and reassures students (Rowe, 2011). However, the emotional impact of negative feedback, or feedback that implies criticism and the need for change, is not so clear-cut. Carless (2006) identified that academically stronger students tend to be more



emotionally receptive to negative feedback because they possess greater confidence and a better understanding of what good quality work looks like, whereas weaker students are more at risk of being discouraged by negative feedback. Furthermore, feedback is filtered and mediated by students in different ways. Students have different goals and personalities, and vary in the way they face up to difficulty (Evans, 2013). Variables such as these can affect students' emotional responses to negative written feedback. This underscores the importance of understanding contextual factors in the feedback process as discussed earlier in the section on sociocultural theories.

A middle-ground approach to the characteristic of valence would entail providing students with a balance of positive and negative written feedback. This is supported by Kluger and DeNisi (1996) who asserted that both positive and negative feedback can improve learning. Positive feedback can increase motivation, interest and persistence in a task (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999) whilst negative or critical feedback can foster improvement in learning (Poulos & Mahony, 2008). A balanced approach would help to minimise any demoralising effects of negative feedback and yet allow students to tap into the potential benefits of constructive comments.

#### **2.4.2.3 *Tone***

The third content characteristic, tone, is linked directly to valence. Tone is an important issue in relation to written feedback (Regan, 2010). It is critical because teachers need to strike a balance between empowering students and motivating students to make necessary changes. Molloy and Boud (2014) have observed that the tension for teachers in giving written feedback “oscillates between acting with sensitivity and delivering with honesty” (p. 33). From a sociocultural perspective, this tension can arise from having to choose comments that simultaneously accomplish a variety of informational, pedagogic and interpersonal goals (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). For example, when providing feedback, teachers might not only be concerned with how best to support student learning, but also how to foster a positive relationship with students.

It is generally agreed that written comments should take on a dialogic and conversational tone, invite student response, and encourage students to engage actively with their work (McGrath, Taylor, & Pychyl, 2011; Parr & Timperley, 2010). If this tone is not present, students are not as likely to be involved in the evaluative process and therefore are unlikely to act on feedback. Parr and Timperley (2010) have observed that the typically non-dialogic nature of written feedback comments may be one of the reasons why students react defensively towards feedback. Interestingly, Hyland and Hyland (2001) have cautioned against positioning students as agents and avoiding a dictatorial tone as this can create interpretation difficulties for students who do not come from an English-speaking background. Thus, using polite mitigation strategies such as hedging devices may not be appropriate for all students.

#### ***2.4.2.4 Clarity***

The final content characteristic is clarity of feedback comments. Three key recommendations for improving the clarity of written comments can be found in feedback literature. Firstly, written comments should be readable and should contain familiar and simple vocabulary (Bruno & Santos, 2010; Sadler, 1989; Santos & Pinto, 2011). These recommendations are logical as illegible writing is likely to frustrate students, and students also need to be familiar with the words and expressions used in feedback if they are to have any understanding of it. Secondly, Bruno and Santos (2010) have suggested that feedback comments should be notated next to the part of the students' work to which it refers. Writing comments next to the relevant section of work will reduce students' doubts as to what aspect of their work the comment is referring to. Thirdly, teachers should use developed explanations rather than undeveloped abbreviations, symbols or single-word comments (McGrath et al., 2011). However, this view is not universally shared as some believe that students can be taught how to interpret time-saving feedback codes such as highlights over words (Clarke, 2000). Regardless of which view is taken, teachers should attempt to make written comments clear enough for students to understand them autonomously.

### **2.4.3 Summary of written teacher feedback characteristics**

This section has explored strategic and content characteristics of written feedback. It has examined how these characteristics can moderate the effectiveness of feedback, and has provided some general recommendations for best practice. Yet in spite of these recommendations, teachers still cannot be certain that their written feedback will help students make improvements in their learning. This is because ultimately, students can choose to take one of three actions in response to written feedback: (a) do not read it, (b) read it and take no action, and (c) read it and take some action (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). As Perrenoud (1998) has aptly observed, giving feedback to students in a class is like throwing bottles out to sea. No one “can be sure that the message they contain will one day find a receiver” (Perrenoud, 1998, p. 87). In this light, the prospects of written feedback seem bleak. However, Quinton and Smallbone (2010) suggest that written feedback need not be resigned to this fate. Teachers can help to ensure that students receive feedback messages, or at the very least read them, by supporting students’ reflection on feedback. This topic will be discussed in the following section.

## **2.5 Reflection and feedback**

Feedback and reflection are highly compatible concepts since it is essentially reflective, mindful reception of feedback that promotes learning (Duijnhouwer et al., 2012). Reflection can be defined as a cognitive process by which a person takes an experience, brings it inside the mind, and tries to make sense of it, for example, by making connections to other experiences and filtering it through their own personal biases (Daudelin, 1996). This definition highlights the close link between reflection and cognitive theoretical perspectives on teacher feedback. That is, in order for feedback to have any effect on students and their learning, students must first cognitively engage with the feedback and reflect upon it (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991). This raises some important questions in relation to how students can be expected to reflect on written teacher feedback.

The objective of this section is to examine the relationships between written teacher feedback and reflection whilst bearing in mind the cognitive developmental theories outlined earlier in this chapter. This will be accomplished through an exploration of three key topics: (a) the role of reflection in the feedback process, (b) models of reflection, (c) supporting reflection.

### **2.5.1 The role of reflection in the feedback process**

The role of reflection in the feedback process is largely uncontested. This is because feedback clearly has to be attended to or reflected upon in order to enhance performance or learning (Anseel et al., 2009; Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Van der Schaaf, Baartman, Prins, Oosterbaan, & Schaap, 2013). Some feedback studies implicitly alluded to the importance of reflection (e.g., Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) whilst others explicitly examined the connection between reflection and feedback (e.g., Duijnhouwer et al., 2012; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). It is of interest to note that the latter group of studies were more limited in number and generally involved secondary school or university students rather than primary school students. This does not imply that primary school students are incapable of engaging in some form of reflection. On the contrary, a range of studies exist that suggest otherwise (e.g., Bond & Ellis, 2013; Michalsky, Mevarech, & Haibi, 2009; Shepardson & Britsch, 2001; Whitebread, Anderson, Coltman, Page, Pino Pasternak, & Mehta, 2005; Zuckerman, 2004). It simply indicates a paucity of research that simultaneously explores both feedback and reflection in primary school settings.

Evidence suggests that reflection improves the effects of feedback on performance due to the way in which it fosters depth of processing (Anseel et al., 2009). This understanding is based on the assumption that stimuli that receive incidental attention are processed at a shallow level in short-term memory whereas stimuli that are subjected to more intentional processing and effortful thinking are more persistent over time ( Craik, 2002; Craik & Lockhart, 1972). These assumptions resonate strongly with the cognitive theories of feedback outlined earlier in this chapter. The primary role of reflection in the feedback process could then be seen as being to

prompt deeper rather than passing cognitive attention to feedback. This is more likely to lead to changes in future behaviour (Daudelin, 1996; Moon, 2004). With these understandings in view, attention will now be turned to different models of reflection.

### **2.5.2 Models of reflection**

In order to build an understanding of what constitutes reflection, three general models of reflection will be explored: Dewey's (1916) model, Kolb's (1984) model and Oosterbaan, van der Schaaf, Baartman and Stokking's (2010) model. Each of these models will first be briefly described. Broad links will then be made to cognitive developmental theories and its implications for students.

In the field of education, John Dewey is often credited as being an influential figure in highlighting the significance of reflective activity in learning (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1994; Correia & Bleicher, 2008; Kissane, 2013). Dewey (1916) identified five stages of reflection:

1. perplexity, confusion and doubt (as a learner finds themselves in an incomplete situation),
2. conjectural anticipation (as a learner tries to interpret the situation),
3. careful survey (as a learner tries to examine and clarify the problem),
4. elaboration of the hypothesis (as a learner considers a tentative hypothesis), and
5. taking a stand upon the hypothesis (as a learner acts upon and tests the hypothesis).

These stages place an emphasis on cognitive activity as well as the application of a somewhat scientific method to reflection. According to Dewey's (1916) model, a person's concrete experiences lead to the formulation of a theory and subsequent testing of that theory. One of the strengths of Dewey's model is that it attempts to clarify the various aspects of reflection and depict these as a process. However, this model has been criticised for its linear, mechanistic nature and the limited attention it pays to the role of emotions (Moore, 2010).

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle offers an alternative view of the reflective process. According to the Kolb model, learning is conceived as a four-stage cycle (Kolb & Kolb, 2012):

1. concrete experience,
2. reflective observation,
3. abstract conceptualization, and
4. active experimentation.

In the first and second stages, a person's immediate experiences form the basis for observation and reflection. In the third stage, these observations are then synthesised into a theory from which new implications for action can be identified. In the final stage, implications are subsequently tested in other situations, thus perpetuating the cycle. Kolb's (1984) model focuses on personal experiences and a cognitive 'working out' of these experiences. It is similar to Dewey's (1916) model in that it also depicts reflection as a process. However, a key difference lies in its conceptualisation of reflection as a cyclical, rather than linear, process.

In more recent years, Oosterbaan et al. (2010) have proposed a tripartite model of reflection. This particular model differs to the aforementioned Dewey and Kolb models in that it does not seek to portray reflection as a process. Rather, Oosterbaan et al. (2010) have identified that reflection consists of three distinct types of thinking activities:

1. cognitive thinking activities,
2. affective thinking activities, and
3. regulative thinking activities.

Cognitive thinking activities (e.g., analysing, concluding) are used to process subject matter. These activities result in a change in the student's knowledge. Affective thinking activities (e.g., attributing, motivating) relate to the way in which students manage or cope with their emotions during the learning process. These emotions can affect students' learning both positively and negatively. Regulative activities (e.g., planning, adjusting) are used to control the learning process and to direct the course

of learning. Oosterbaan et al.'s (2010) model seems to provide a more balanced view of reflection and effectively combines both cognitive and affective elements.

Taken in tandem, Dewey's (1916), Kolb's (1984) and Oosterbaan et al.'s (2010) models of reflection help to establish a few critical points. Reflection is a personal activity. This is because "only learners themselves can learn and only they can reflect on their own experiences" (Boud et al., 1994, p. 11). Teachers and others may lend assistance and contribute to this process but ultimately, the learner is in total control. Additionally, reflection includes a range of mental activities such as interpreting, conceptualising, analysing and planning. This has three key implications for students in the light of cognitive developmental theories.

Firstly, reflection is essentially a cognitive activity and therefore a student's ability to reflect on written individual feedback will necessarily be linked to their level of cognitive development. In general, as children get older they become more successful at engaging in reflective thinking (Robson, 2012). The implication of this is that older students are more likely to be able to engage in reflection as compared to younger students.

Secondly, upper primary students, who constitute the main focus of this study, fall within the approximate age range covered by Piaget's (1972) concrete operational stage. At this stage students generally think logically, flexibly and in an organised way. Thus, upper primary students can be expected to engage in logical reflective processes such as analysing and concluding. However, students may have difficulty engaging in more abstract reflective processes (e.g., considering how to adjust future work based on teacher feedback).

Thirdly, a student entering into the concrete operational stage may still be developing the ability to take on the perspectives of others (Piaget, 1954). Students may therefore find it challenging to manage their emotions and think objectively when reflecting on feedback. It could be concluded that upper primary students are generally capable of reflecting on teacher feedback. However, their level of cognitive development may have an impact on their ability to engage in reflective processes.

This then leads to the following discussion on how teachers can support and facilitate reflection in upper primary students.

### **2.5.3 Supporting reflection**

Welch (1999) has observed that it is not enough to tell students to ‘go and reflect’. Students may need to be supported and taught how to reflect. Some students may not find reflection easy whereas others will be able to manage the process well. Moon (2004) has identified that very often teachers who introduce reflective activities are likely to be those who have a good understanding of reflection themselves. Thus, they may not appreciate how some students can fail to comprehend reflective activity. It is therefore important for teachers to thoughtfully consider how reflection tasks are to be introduced to students, and to avoid assuming that all students will be eager and prepared to reflect. In practice, this could involve being ready to offer more support to certain students and to teach reflective skills (Moon, 2004).

Reflection strategies typically used in primary schools are varied and can include think-pair-share activities, journals or ‘thinking books’, and graphic organisers (Wilson & Murdoch, 2006). However, Yinger (1981) has identified that written reflection can be very powerful due to the way in which writing “forces people to think in ways that clarify and modify their ideas” (p. 2). This process could be described as “thinking aloud on paper” (Suriyon, Inprasitha, & Sangaroon, 2013, p. 586). Students who engage in this process become aware of their thoughts and provide evidence of their mental processes. A benefit of this is that written reflections can then serve as windows into students’ thinking and learning (Spalding & Wilson, 2002). Written reflections do not constitute the only form of reflection. However, written reflections appear to be well-aligned with the key focus of this study, namely, written teacher feedback. They are also appropriate to upper primary students considering that students of this age group are generally capable of using written language to capture their thoughts (Costa & Kallick, 2008).

One of the activities that may spearhead and scaffold student reflection is asking questions (Costa & Kallick, 2008; Duijnhouwer et al., 2012; Mason, 2013). Daudelin



(1996) has identified that questions are one of the most basic and powerful tools of the reflection process as they can open up possibilities, help to clarify meanings and encourage reflective thought. As such, written reflection frameworks that contain appropriate questions may support students during the reflection process. Poole, Jones and Whitfield (2013) have suggested that questions which seek to elicit an affective as well as cognitive response are particularly appropriate. Reflective prompts that encourage students to describe their immediate emotional response to feedback serve two purposes. Firstly, this empowers students and recognises their feelings (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Secondly, this allows students to separate their emotional response from rational thought. This facilitates analytical reflection, critical thinking and a questioning approach (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). It also aligns strongly with the affective thinking activities of Oosterbaan et al.'s (2010) model of reflection. Thus, although the focus of this research is not on emotions per se, it is recognised that emotions can influence students' ability to reflect rationally on feedback.

It has also been observed that certain general conditions may be necessary in order for reflection to occur. These can be categorised into internal conditions and external conditions. Internal conditions relate to the suspension of judgement, establishment of distance or perspective and acknowledgement of emotions. Each of these issues is connected to the other. Suspension of judgement involves a withholding of judgement until further inquiry (Moore, 2010). This can often be uncomfortable as it involves being willing to endure unrest and an unsettled internal state. Enduring this condition may be difficult for younger students. Another concept worth considering in relation to suspension of judgement is the notion of trust. In order for a person to suspend their judgement and be willing to receive feedback from another person, they must first have some degree of confidence in the person providing the feedback. Värlander (2008) identified that students must first believe in a teacher's good intentions to support them in their learning before they can accept help from the teacher. The concept of trust is closely connected to sociocultural theories and the contextual factor of teacher-student relationships.

The next internal condition pertains to establishing distance or perspective. This evokes an element of 'looking backwards' or stepping back from an experience to

ponder its meaning (Daudelin, 1996). Distance does not necessarily refer to physical distance, but also to the chronological or emotional distance necessary to gain a different perspective. Fiddler and Marienau (2008) identified that the quality of a person's reflection rests on their ability to seek out multiple perspectives without rushing into judgement. Distance requires a person to be sufficiently disconnected from an experience in order to consider it critically. As previously mentioned, students at Piaget's (1954) concrete operational may not be completely able to grasp distance or perspective due to egocentrism. This might very well prove to be an obstacle for students. Yet Piaget and Inhelder (1969) observed that children gradually become less egocentric when they interact more with others and with adults. This suggests that distance or perspective can be developed in students and that teachers can mediate the development of these abilities. Fisher (1998) has supported this view and identified that a student's reflective ability may not necessarily be related to age but rather to experience. In other words, the more experience a student has with reflection, the better they will be at reflecting.

The final internal condition relates to the acknowledgement of emotions. This condition draws attention to the idea that "the reflective process is a complex one in which both feelings and cognition are closely interrelated and interactive" (Boud et al., 1994, p. 11). Negative feelings about oneself can make it difficult to learn, distort perceptions, lead to misinterpretation and undermine persistent effort, whilst positive feelings can enhance learning, promote engagement and stimulate new learning (Boud et al., 1994). Therefore, the affective dimension should be taken into account in the reflective process even though it may not necessarily be the primary concern (Fiddler & Marienau, 2008; Moon, 2004).

External conditions that encourage reflection relate to circumstances outside of the individual, in particular, time and environment. With regard to time, some have suggested that it could be beneficial for teachers to intentionally design opportunities for students to reflect on feedback during class time (Dean et al., 2012; Gustafson & Bennett, 2002; Mutch, 2003; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). The assumption is that this would encourage students to engage with feedback since without this built-in time, students might not act on the feedback they receive (Tuttle, 2009). Whilst this could be debated, it does highlight the importance of setting aside time for reflection.

Costa and Kallick (2008) have gone further to suggest that the environment in which feedback is received should also be deliberately constructed and conducive to reflection, for example, reflection in a classroom setting could be facilitated by encouraging moments of silent thinking.

#### **2.5.4 Summary of reflection**

This section has explored the link between reflection and written feedback. Reflection involves cognition and thinking activities. It is closely connected to the cognitive theoretical models of teacher feedback outlined earlier in this chapter. The key underlying premise is that feedback will be of little educational value unless students reflect upon it (Duijnhouwer et al., 2012). Certain conditions support the process of reflection, for example, the suspension of judgement (Moore, 2010) and the acknowledgement of emotions (Boud et al., 1994). Research indicates that primary school students are capable of engaging in reflective processes (e.g., Bond & Ellis, 2013; Whitebread et al., 2005). However, cognitive theories of development suggest that students' capacity to engage in reflection may be moderated by their developmental level. Nevertheless, students can be taught and supported to reflect on feedback particularly through the use of reflective frameworks that contain question prompts.

## **2.6 Summary**

The preceding discussion has been structured around four key constructs that relate to the provision of written teacher feedback: theoretical perspectives, assessment, characteristics of written feedback, and reflection. To summarise, teacher feedback is supported by behaviourist, cognitivist and sociocultural learning theories. These theories provide assumptions that underpin the use of teacher feedback in school settings, and offer insights into how upper primary students can be expected to respond to feedback. It has been proposed that investigating feedback from all three theoretical perspectives will be more helpful than investigating feedback from one perspective alone as this would limit one's understanding of feedback (Hattie & Gan, 2011). Teacher feedback is typically situated within the ambit of assessment and

shares a close connection with assessment for/as learning. Two models were presented in this chapter: a model of formative feedback and a model of teacher feedback within an assessment context. These models will be used to guide the provision of written teacher feedback in this study.

Some disagreement exists in relation to what constitutes effective written teacher feedback. However, literature suggests several general principles that should be followed. Despite these recommendations, written teacher feedback is unlikely to have any effect on student learning unless it is accompanied by some form of reflective activity. It should be noted that literature pertaining to the third and fourth key constructs (i.e., characteristics of written feedback, and reflection) highlighted a significant gap in the research. Few studies exist that specifically investigate written teacher feedback and reflection in primary school contexts. Even lesser research has been conducted into written teacher feedback provided to a group of students (e.g., written whole-class feedback).

The four key constructs outlined in this chapter and the relationships that exist between them constituted the overall conceptual framework of this study (see Figure 2.6). This conceptual framework guided the creation of learning and teaching contexts within which written feedback was provided in this study. It informed the type of written feedback that was provided to students, and shaped the analysis of the data that was gathered. In the following chapter, attention will be given to detailing the specific methods by which this research was conducted.

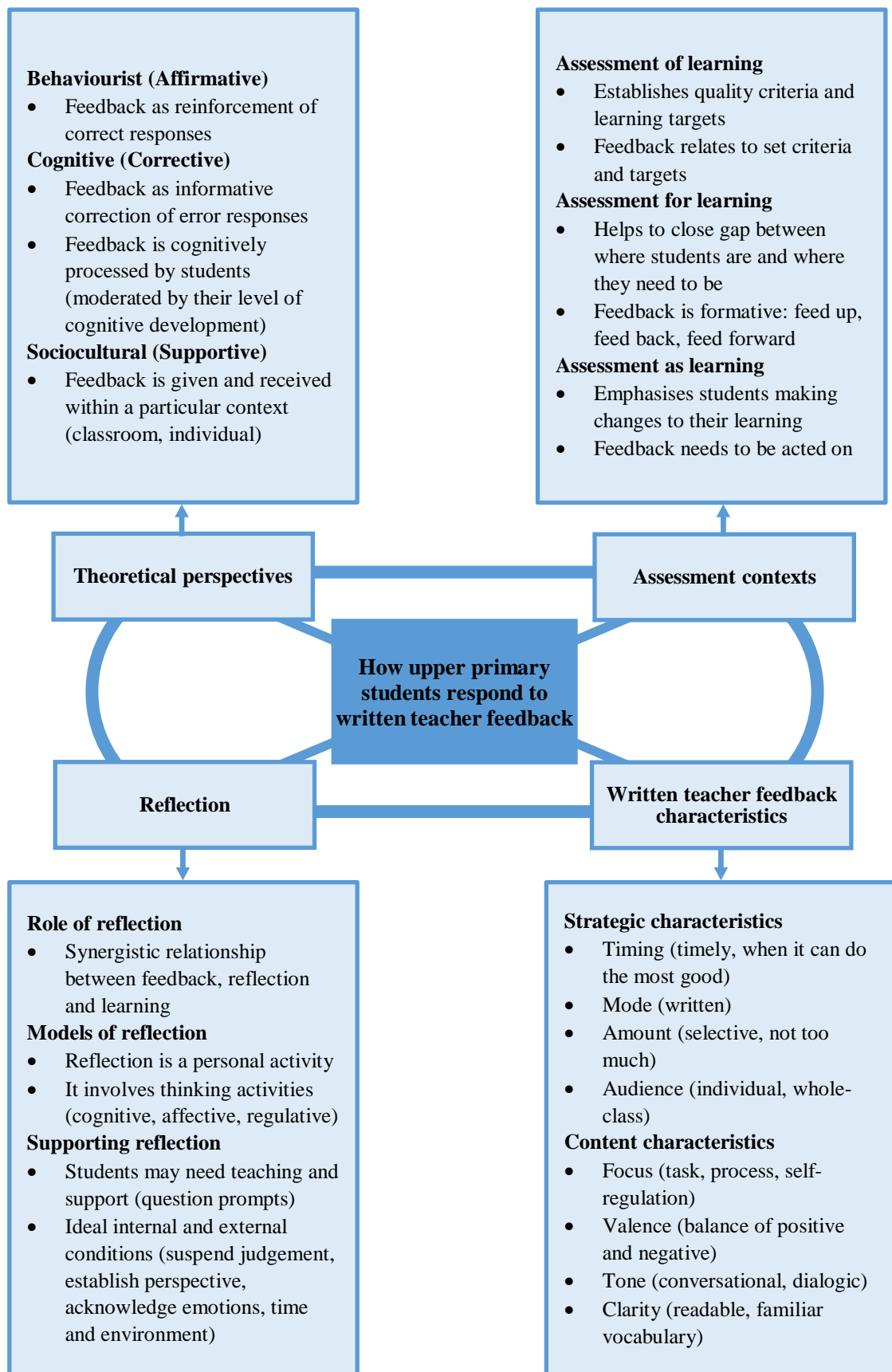


Figure 2.6. Conceptual framework of the study.

# Chapter Three

## Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the methodology used to address the research questions of this study. Grix (2010) has suggested that researchers should build from the foundational block of their own philosophical assumptions before progressing to general methodology and specific methods. A similar pattern will be followed in this chapter and it is anticipated that this will enable the reader to judge the logic of the decisions made as well as the coherence of this study.

In this chapter, the research design of this study will first be explained. This discussion will address underlying philosophical assumptions and reasons for the use of practitioner research and case study. Following this, the setting and participants of the research will be described. Within this description, attention will be given to the learning and teaching context of this study given the unique nature of practitioner research and the implications of the literature review in Chapter One. This will be followed by a detailed explanation of how data was collected and analysed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of key issues relating to the quality of the research as well as ethical considerations.

## 3.2 Research design

This section will outline how the research questions of this study were approached in terms of research design. It will address the philosophical assumptions that formed a basis for this study, and will provide a rationale for the use of practitioner research and case study. Before discussing the research design of this study, the aims and research questions outlined in Chapter One will first be revisited.

The aim of this study was to explore how upper primary music students reflected on and used written teacher feedback provided in a formative assessment context. This aim arose from the first-hand experiences of the teacher-researcher and her observations that although considerable effort was involved in crafting written feedback, students did not always use this feedback in desired ways. The incongruity between anticipated outcomes and actual outcomes therefore prompted the teacher-researcher to explore primary students' experiences of written teacher feedback. Five research questions were used to guide this study:

1. How do upper primary students reflect on written individual feedback received on a draft music project component?
2. How do upper primary students use written individual feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?
3. How do upper primary students reflect on written whole-class feedback received on a draft music project component?
4. How do upper primary students use written whole-class feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?
5. Why do upper primary students respond to feedback in the way that they do?

### **3.2.1 Philosophical assumptions**

The core philosophical premise of this study was that people, including students, experience reality in their own unique way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, reality is multidimensional and fluid rather than “a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured” (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). This aligned with a naturalistic and interpretivist paradigm or worldview. Naturalistic and interpretivist perspectives emphasise the role that individuals play in the construction of social reality as well as the importance of understanding a situation through the eyes of participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). This has significant implications particularly in relation to research with children.

Contrasting assumptions exist in relation to what kinds of valid knowledge can be produced about children and how this might take place. Traditionally, researchers avoided conducting research with children based on the belief that data obtained from them was unreliable (Kirk, 2007). Instead, children’s lives were explored through the views and understandings of adults (e.g., parents, caregivers) who spoke on children’s behalf. This approach has since been challenged by the perspective that children perceive the world in a different way to adults (Christensen & James, 2008). Therefore, if researchers wish to understand children’s experiences, it is vital to listen to children and allow them to speak for themselves.

The position taken in this study was that children are experts in their own lives (Gallagher, 2009). They can be competent participants in research and are able to provide their own valid accounts of how the world appears to them (Curtin, 2001). However, as is the case with any research participant, there is always some risk that children may not give a fully accurate or honest account. This risk can be reduced in various ways such as by developing a relationship of trust (Punch, 2002) and using triangulation techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The decision to involve children directly in this research was based on the fundamental premise that students experience written teacher feedback in unique ways. Therefore, in order to understand students’ responses to written teacher feedback it was necessary to hear about these experiences from their perspectives.



The underlying naturalistic and interpretivist philosophical assumptions of this study supported qualitative research. This broad type of research involves studying things in their natural settings and “attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4). A qualitative approach was used in this study as this matched the aim of exploring students’ personal reflections on and use of written teacher feedback. Given the contextualised nature of the research questions, a case study research design was conceived that utilised the teacher-researcher’s two places of work as research sites, and the teacher-researcher’s students as participants. These decisions will now be explained and justified.

### **3.2.2 Practitioner research**

Practitioner research refers to research situations where, as its name suggests, a practitioner is the researcher and where the research site is a professional context. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) have described practitioner research as an “overarching category of research” (p. 39). Acknowledgement of this perspective is vital as some confusion exists in relation to practitioner research and action research. Practitioner research in an educational context describes any kind of school- or classroom-based research that is conducted by practitioners. It is a general term that covers a wide range of methodologies and situations (Check & Schutt, 2012). In contrast, action research refers more specifically to research that is cyclic in nature and that has a distinctive social-change agenda (Mertler, 2014; Stringer, 2008). Based on this distinction, the objectives of this study aligned more with practitioner research rather than action research as it sought to capture the phenomenon of students’ responses to feedback rather than map cycles of change.

Three key considerations influenced the decision to utilise practitioner inquiry in this study. Firstly, the research questions of this study arose from a specific problem that the teacher-researcher had encountered in her own professional practice as a teacher. This problem related to the discrepancy between the potential positive effects of feedback as outlined in the literature (Hattie, 2009), and the observation that students did not always respond to feedback in desired ways. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009)

have identified that practitioner research is often based on unique research questions that “emerge from day-to-day practice and from discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs” (p. 42). Hence, practitioner research provided a logical avenue for systematically studying students’ reflections and responses to feedback within the natural context of the teacher-researcher’s own classes.

Secondly, it has been recognised that those who work in particular educational contexts have deep and significant knowledge about those situations (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This insider perspective enables practitioner-researchers to understand participants’ worlds in a way that outsiders would not (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994; Doecke, 2003). Practitioner research was therefore seen as an ideal way to generate insights into how and why students responded to written teacher feedback in certain ways. Drake and Heath (2011) have supported this stance by observing that unique knowledge and new ways of knowing can emerge from the confluence between a practitioner-researcher’s professional knowledge and their academic knowledge as a researcher.

Thirdly, the research questions and philosophical orientation of this study necessitated sustained, in-depth access to students over a period of time as well as the cultivation of trusting relationships with students. These critical criteria had already been met as a result of the teacher-researcher’s professional work as a teacher. Indeed, the level of rapport and trust that the teacher-researcher had developed with students would have been difficult to achieve in any other context. Issues of access and rapport are somewhat more pragmatic in nature. However, Radnor (2002) has identified they are nonetheless still potential advantages of practitioner research.

As is the case with all research designs, the strengths of a particular approach will naturally be accompanied by some limitations. Practitioner research is no different. The fact that a researcher is personally involved in the research setting brings unique challenges in relation to methodology and ethics (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). For example, teacher-researchers need to negotiate a balance between the dual role of teacher and researcher, and consider how to manage the threat of researcher bias given their closeness to the research setting. Valid criticisms could also be made in relation to how researching one’s own practice results in the development of local

knowledge rather than more useful public knowledge. Quality and ethical concerns such as these were given careful consideration and the ways in which these issues were addressed will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

Ultimately, it was determined that the advantages of practitioner research outweighed its limitations when considered in light of the purpose of this study. Practitioner research was viewed as a highly appropriate way to obtain unique and deep insights into students' reflections on written teacher feedback and as such, was employed in this study. With these understandings of practitioner research in mind, attention will now be turned to case study and the rationale for selecting this approach.

### **3.2.3 Case study**

Case studies are often used to study a phenomenon in a real-life context (Grauer, 2012). They are useful for finding answers to 'how' and 'why' questions within a particular setting, and are most helpful when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The issue of context was an important consideration in this study given the implications of the conceptual framework as outlined in Chapter Two. Student responses to written teacher feedback needed to be studied in a natural environment where assessment tasks, individual student characteristics, feedback characteristics, and classroom relationships could interact in a dynamic way. Case study was chosen for its capacity to take these features into account whilst retaining the holism and significance of real-life events taking place within a specific classroom context.

Furthermore, the research questions of this study called for the use of multiple forms of data collection. For example, in order to understand how students reflected on written teacher feedback, data needed to be collected directly from students (e.g., written reflections), and in order to understand how students used written teacher feedback, data needed to be collected from the work or artefacts that students produced. Thus, it was necessary to select a research approach that promoted the use of different sources of data. Case study was a fitting choice as it encouraged the use

of many sources of evidence and supported flexible methods of data analysis (Bassey, 1999; Yin, 2003).

Different authors have proposed several different approaches to case study (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In this research, a two-case study design (Yin, 2003) was chosen. This type of design falls under the broader category of collective case studies, also known as comparative case studies, multiple-case studies or multisite case studies (Bishop, 2010). The results from multiple-case designs are typically more compelling than single-case designs because of the use of replication logic, that is, the premise that the presence or absence of similar patterns in multiple cases can serve to corroborate, qualify or disprove findings (Yin, 2012). For this reason, Yin (2003) has suggested that using “even a ‘two-case’ design is therefore a worthy objective compared to doing a single-case study” (p. 19).

At the time of the study, the teacher-researcher was employed at two school sites and this made a two-case study possible. It was expected that by studying students in two separate settings and investigating similarities as well as differences, a more robust understanding would be gained of how upper primary students responded to written teacher feedback as opposed to studying only one school site. The benefits of a two-case study were also enhanced given that this type of case study was being coupled with practitioner research. As the teacher-researcher was the sole music teacher at both school sites, students at both schools were able to complete the same assessments (music history/appreciation projects) under the same learning/teaching conditions with the same teacher-researcher providing instruction and written feedback. This consistency across both school sites enabled the teacher-researcher to collect more comparable data. This reasoning was supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) who identified that comparability in the processes of a multiple-case study is vital as without this, cross-case comparisons can become unfeasible.

Two elements of case study require further explicating. Firstly, Stake (1995) identified two different orientations towards case study: intrinsic and instrumental. In intrinsic case studies, researchers are more interested in learning about the case itself whereas in instrumental case studies, they are more concerned about understanding a particular issue rather than the case. Overall, the main purpose of this research was to

learn how upper primary students responded to written teacher feedback (the issue). This corresponded strongly with an instrumental orientation towards case study. However, as this was a practitioner research study at two school sites, understanding the unique particularities of students at each school (the case) was also important. This resonated with an intrinsic orientation. Grandy (2010) has identified that a case study can be both intrinsic and instrumental in nature, and that it can sometimes be difficult to classify a case as purely one type or the other.

Secondly, Merriam (1998) suggested that case studies can have three different overall intents: descriptive, evaluative or interpretive. Descriptive case studies present accounts of a phenomenon under study and do not typically link these accounts to theory. Evaluative case studies focus on judging the success or worth of a particular program. Interpretive case studies describe a phenomenon and use these descriptions to develop conceptual categories that “illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held” (Merriam, 1998, p. 38). The anticipated outcome of this research corresponded with interpretive case study, that is, a case study intended to result in the development of conceptual categories relating to students’ responses to written teacher feedback. Narrowing down the type of case study to be conducted helped to ensure stronger alignment with the aims of this research. A broad overview of the research design of this study is shown in Figure 3.1. This diagram depicts the relationship between the research questions, philosophical assumptions and methodological choices of this study.

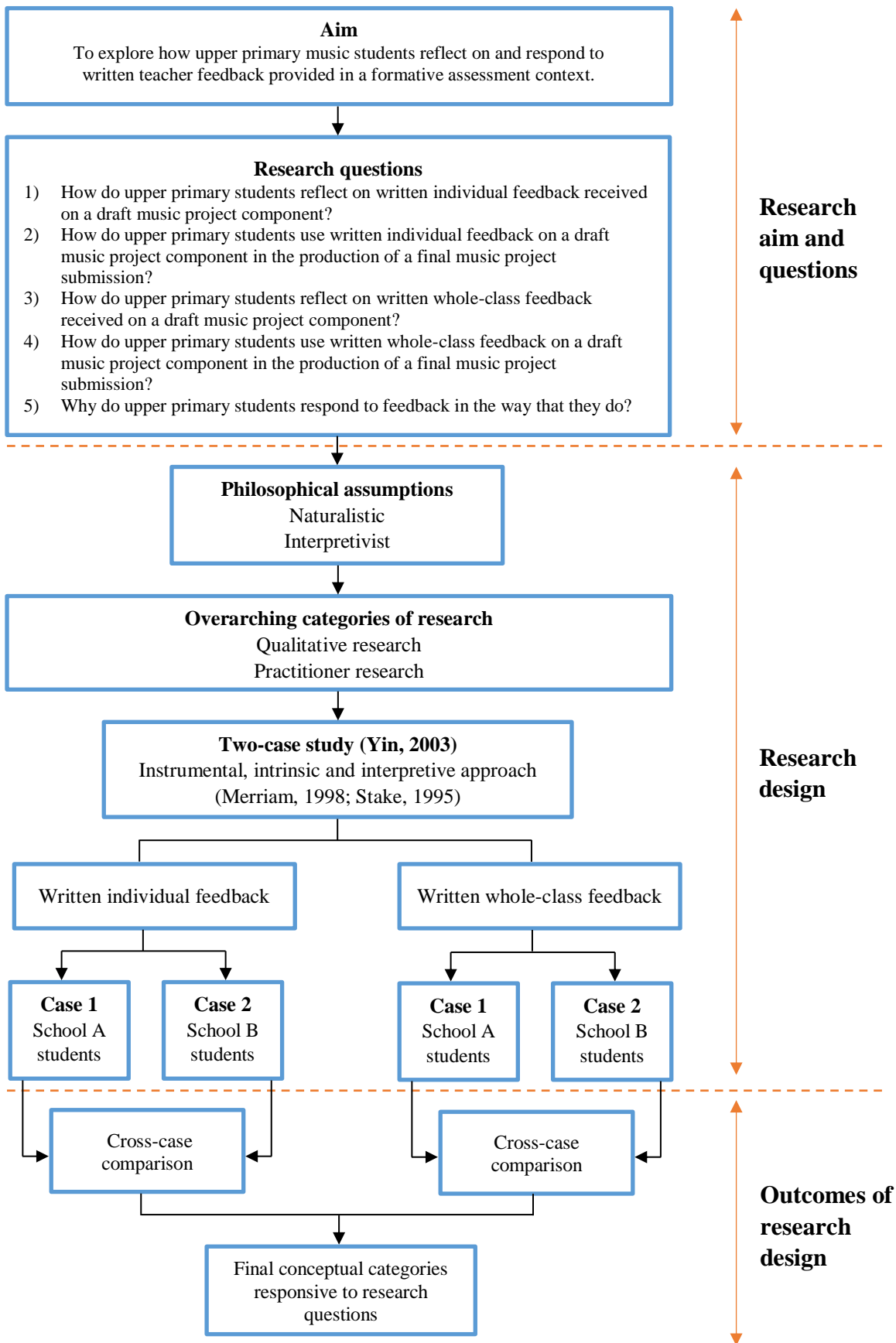


Figure 3.1. Overview of the research design of this study.

As shown in Figure 3.1, the first case in this study was defined as the upper primary students at one school site (i.e., School A) whilst the second case was defined as the upper primary students at a second school site (i.e., School B). Students' responses to two types of written teacher feedback were explored in this study: written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback (see section 2.4.1.3 for a more detailed explanation of both types of feedback). In order to explore students' experiences of both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback, two sequential investigations were planned. During one school term, students at both school sites received written individual feedback from the teacher-researcher. During the following school term, the same students at both school sites received written whole-class feedback from the teacher-researcher under the same conditions. This allowed data to be collected separately in relation to both types of written feedback and enabled different levels of cross-case comparisons to take place at a later stage.

This section has explained and provided a rationale for the use of a qualitative practitioner research, two-case study design. Various considerations informed the use of this research design. However, the primary rationale was that each of these methodological choices aligned closely with the aim and research questions of this study. A qualitative two-case study conducted by the teacher-researcher with her own students was therefore seen as being an appropriate and valuable way to investigate how upper primary students reflect on and use written teacher feedback. The following section will describe the setting and participants of this study.

### **3.3 Setting and participants**

Case study research is conducted within a specific bounded context. Understanding this context is critical as it can have an effect on the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2003). This section will provide a thorough description of the school sites, participants, as well as learning and teaching context of this study. These three aspects align strongly with sociocultural perspectives on feedback and the emphasis that these perspectives place on contextual considerations (see Chapter Two). The descriptions in this section will also help to create a clearer picture of the research setting and will assist the reader in drawing ‘naturalistic generalizations’ (Stake, 1995) at a later stage.

#### **3.3.1 School sites**

The selection of school sites for this study was based on convenience as well as the considered decision to undertake practitioner research. Hence, this study was conducted at two school sites where the teacher-researcher was employed as a teacher. As explained previously, these school sites will be referred to as School A and School B. The two schools in this study were two separate primary school campuses (Kindergarten - Year 6) of an independent coeducational college. The college had been established in Western Australia for fifty years and espoused a religious-based education that promoted Christian values. Although the ethos and general operations of both School A and School B were similar, the demographics of student families and the number of years the teacher-researcher had been employed at each school varied. Music was a compulsory subject at both schools for all students in Year 1 to Year 6.

School A was located in a mixed residential, industrial and semi-rural suburb south-east of Perth, Western Australia. The population density of the local government area was approximately 9 persons per hectare. Due to the fact that both School A and School B operated as two campuses belonging to a single college, it was not possible to obtain a separate Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value for each school. Instead, an average ICSEA value was obtained from three



other primary schools within the vicinity of each school. The primary schools located around School A had an average ICSEA value of 924 according to data provided by the My School website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2018). This was below the national ICSEA benchmark of 1000. This indicates that students who attended School A were likely to have had a below-average level of educational advantage taking into account factors such as parents' occupations and education as well as the school's geographical location and proportion of indigenous students (ACARA, 2015). School A had a population of 222 students and the teacher-researcher had been the sole music teacher at this school for nine years.

School B was located in an older residential suburb south of Perth. The population density of the local government area was approximately 15 persons per hectare. Three primary schools located within the vicinity of School B had an average ICSEA value of 1022 according to data provided by the My School website (ACARA, 2018). This indicates that students at School B were likely to have had an average level of educational advantage. School B had a population of 231 students and the teacher-researcher had been the sole music teacher at this school for two years.

To summarise, School A and School B were similar types of schools in that they were both independent coeducational schools that provided religious-based education. School A was located in a semi-rural area whereas School B was located in an established residential suburb. Students in School A were likely to have had a below-average level of educational advantage, whilst students in School B were likely to have had an average level of educational advantage. The teacher-researcher had been the sole music teacher at School A for a longer time than School B. It was anticipated that the data collected from School A and School B would be quite similar given that both school types were identical (i.e., independent, religious-based, coeducational). The characteristics of School A and School B are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Characteristics of School A and School B*

	School A	School B
Type of school	Independent, religious-based, coeducational	Independent, religious-based, coeducational
Location	Mixed residential, industrial, semi-rural	Residential
Population density of local government area	9 persons / hectare	15 persons / hectare
Average ICSEA value of three surrounding primary schools	924	1022
Student population	222	231
Number of years teacher-researcher was music teacher at school	9	2

*Note.* ICSEA = Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage.

### 3.3.2 Participants

Sampling of participants in this study was purposive and convenient. As this research was concerned with upper primary students, participants were specifically sampled from the upper primary (i.e., Year Five and Year Six) classes at School A and School B. Students in Year Five were aged 10-11 and students in Year Six were aged 11-12. Each school site had one Year Five class and one Year Six class. However, School B also had one split Year Four/Five class. After considering the organisational difficulties and classroom challenges that would be involved in conducting research with only the Year Five students in this split class, a decision was made not to sample students from this particular class. For instance, it was envisaged that inviting only the Year Five students to participate in the research may have caused the Year Four students in this class to feel neglected or unfairly treated.

Detailed procedures for seeking and obtaining informed consent from participants will not be elaborated on at present. This discussion will be reserved for the section on ethical considerations later in this chapter (see section 3.7). However, a brief description of how participants were recruited will be provided here. Before conducting the study, the teacher-researcher first gained university ethics clearance. Following this, the teacher-researcher obtained formal consent to undertake research at the school sites from the gatekeeper (Principal) at School A and School B. The teacher-researcher then invited all students in the Year Five and Year Six classes at each school site to participate in the study. Each student and their parents/carers received an information letter and a consent form. The invitation to join the study as well as the distribution of information letters and consent forms took place during one normal classroom music lesson in the school term preceding the study.

At School A, a total number of 47 students were invited to join the study and from this number, 18 (38%) students chose to participate ( $n = 18$ ). At School B, a total number of 45 students were invited to join the study and of this number, 16 (36%) students agreed to participate ( $n = 16$ ). All participating students took part in this study with parent/carer consent. Table 3.2 shows the total number of students in each Year Five and Year Six class at each school as well as a breakdown of the students who agreed to participate in this study ( $N = 34$ ).

Table 3.2

*Breakdown of Students Who Agreed to Participate in the Study*

	Class	Total number of students in class	Number and percentage of students who participated in study	Number of girls who participated in study	Number of boys who participated in study
School A	Year 5	28	11 (39%)	6	5
	Year 6	19	7 (37%)	5	2
School B	Year 5	22	9 (41%)	5	4
	Year 6	23	7 (30%)	4	3
Total		92	34 (37%)	20	14

Background information was collected from participating students. This information was collected given that the conceptual framework of this study had highlighted the importance of capturing sociocultural and contextual variables (e.g., student interest in a subject, relationship with their teacher). Background information about students was collected via a Likert scale self-description that was included at the end of the first data collection instrument used in this study. (See section 3.4.2.1 for more information about this data collection instrument.) The Likert scale self-description was modelled on a general learning and attitudinal questionnaire for primary school students (Tinson, 2009). However, the original questionnaire was adapted to align with the music context of this study. Figure 3.2 presents the Likert scale self-description that students completed.

7. Read each sentence. Then circle or highlight the face which best describes you.

	Definitely No	No	Sort Of	Yes	Definitely Yes
I like music.					
I am good at music.					
I like doing music projects.					
I try hard in music.					
I find it easy to learn in music.					
I get along well with my music teacher.					
My family likes me to do well in music.					

Figure 3.2. Likert scale self-description.

It should be emphasised that data generated from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions was intended to provide general background information about the participants in the study rather than statistical data. This information had value in providing characteristics of the cohorts in general, and in allowing contextual factors to be given some consideration throughout this study. The Likert scale self-description as shown in Figure 3.2 prompted students to identify their level of interest in the subject of music (*I like music, I like doing music projects, I try hard in*

*music, My family likes me to do well in music*), their level of ability in relation to music (*I am good at music, I find it easy to learn in music*), and their relationship with the teacher-researcher (*I get along well with my music teacher*). These items focussed on areas of interest that had arisen from the literature review of this study. Students responded to each item based on a five-point rating scale.

Obtaining background information from students via a Likert scale self-description enabled the teacher-researcher to better understand students' personal experiences of the subject of music. This was in keeping with the philosophical assumptions of this study. Information from these Likert scales will now be presented in order to provide an overall profile of the participants from School A and School B. This will allow the reader to construct a preliminary understanding of each case. Possible implications of these profiles will be addressed later in the findings of this study (see Chapters Four and Five).

#### ***3.3.2.1 Profile of participants from School A***

On the whole, the profile of participants from School A was fairly consistent. Table 3.3 shows that students from School A generally showed a strong interest in music and tried hard in the subject. Although most students felt that they were average at music, they typically had a positive orientation towards the subject and their experiences of the subject. Students in School A identified that they generally had a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Table 3.3

*Responses to Likert Scale Self-Descriptions from Students in School A*

	Description	Definitely no	No	Sort of	Yes	Definitely yes
Interest in music	I like music.			11%	22%	67%
	I like doing music projects.		11%	6%	44%	39%
	I try hard in music.			6%	33%	61%
	My family likes me to do well in music.			6%	28%	66%
Ability in music	I am good at music.			39%	33%	28%
	I find it easy to learn in music.		6%	28%	38%	28%
Relationship with music teacher	I get along well with my music teacher.			6%	33%	61%

*Note.*  $n = 18$

**3.3.2.2 Profile of participants from School B**

Table 3.4 shows that the profile of participants from School B was more varied compared to School A. One student in particular had marked ‘definitely no’ for each item in the Likert scale self-description. This was an atypical response. Overall, students from School B showed an average level of interest in music and generally were not keen on doing music projects. Most students in this school believed that they were good at music. However, it was interesting to observe that this was not so for a small group of students who identified that they found it difficult to learn in music. Students in School B generally felt that they had a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Table 3.4

*Responses to Likert Scale Self-Descriptions from Students in School B*

	Description	Definitely no	No	Sort of	Yes	Definitely yes
Interest in music	I like music.	6%			28%	66%
	I like doing music projects.	6%		38%	44%	12%
	I try hard in music.	6%		9%	60%	25%
	My family likes me to do well in music.	6%	6%	6%	13%	69%
Ability in music	I am good at music.	6%		19%	56%	19%
	I find it easy to learn in music.	6%	13%	9%	22%	50%
Relationship with music teacher	I get along well with my music teacher.	6%		6%	25%	63%

*Note.*  $n = 16$

In summary, the profile of participants from School A showed that students in this school typically had a more positive stance towards music. They liked doing music projects and tried hard in music. However, most students at this school believed that they had an average level of ability in relation to music. Students in School B demonstrated less interest in music and a less positive response to the subject. However, most students believed that their ability level in this subject was high. Two additional interesting points of difference could be seen in the profile of participants from School B: (a) one student in School B provided responses to the Likert scale self-description that were entirely negative, and (b) School B had a higher representation of students who identified that they struggled to learn in music. It was expected that these points of difference would have an impact on the data collected (e.g., some students at School B would demonstrate a more limited understanding of written teacher feedback and of assessment tasks in general). This was given consideration during data analysis.

### **3.3.3 Learning and teaching context**

According to sociocultural perspectives on feedback, the interaction of contextual factors creates a unique setting that must be looked at in order to fully understand what happens in the feedback process (Lee, 2014). For example, the instructional setting of feedback, the nature of the learning task, and the teacher's approach to feedback could have an influence on the feedback process (Goldstein, 2001; Ruiz-Primo & Li, 2013). The present section will therefore provide a thorough description of contextual factors such as these. Understanding the learning and teaching context of a study is also important in relation to practitioner research. Given the unavoidable intersection of the teacher and researcher roles, it is imperative that teacher-researchers are open and clear about the pedagogical decisions made during a study. As Drake and Heath (2011) have observed, this is part of the reflexive process that is so vital in practitioner research. This section will provide an overview of the learning and teaching context of this study, and chronologically detail key learning and teaching events that took place during each school Term.

#### ***3.3.3.1 Overview of learning and teaching context***

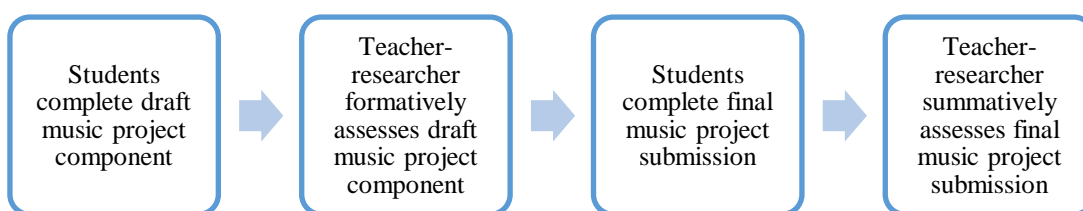
This research took place in the context of Year Five and Year Six compulsory classroom music lessons during Term 2, 2016 (April-July) and Term 3, 2016 (July-September). From henceforth, these school terms will be referred to as Term A and Term B respectively. Classroom music lessons were held once a week in the music room of the school for the duration of one hour. This was a school requirement. Music lessons in Term A and Term B included theory (music history/appreciation) and practice (singing and instrumental work). Each term had ten weeks and hence each class had ten music lessons per term.

During each term, students completed a music history/appreciation project to demonstrate their understandings of a set piece of music. One music history/appreciation project was completed in Term A, and another music history/appreciation project was completed in Term B. All students in the Year Five and Year Six music classes at both School A and School B completed the same



music history/appreciation projects as part of their normal program of learning. However, only consenting students' data was utilised in this study ( $N = 34$ ).

Music history/appreciation projects were completed in two stages. In the first stage, students produced a 'draft music project component' which they submitted to the teacher-researcher for formative assessment. Students received written individual feedback from the teacher-researcher in Term A and written whole-class feedback from the teacher-researcher in Term B. In the second stage, after having received written teacher feedback on their draft music project component, students completed a 'final music project submission'. They then submitted this to the teacher-researcher for summative assessment. Figure 3.3 illustrates this process.



*Figure 3.3.* Flowchart of the assessment process in this study.

### ***3.3.3.2 Learning and teaching context: Term A***

In Term A, students at both school sites studied a piece of music called 'Kakadu' by the composer Peter Sculthorpe. To demonstrate their understanding of Peter Sculthorpe and 'Kakadu', students completed a music history/appreciation project in the form of a digital poster. This music history/appreciation project was an assessment task with a 30 percent weighting towards students' final marks for Semester 1. Students were required to provide responses to five items in their music history/appreciation projects. Table 3.5 outlines these five items whilst Appendix A identifies the Western Australian syllabus objectives (School Curriculum and Standards Authority [SCSA], 2014a) addressed by these items.

Table 3.5

*Description of Items in Music History/Appreciation Project for Term A*

Item no.	Item description
1	Title and composer
2	Why did the composer write this piece?
3	Draw a listening map of the first six minutes of the piece (from 0:00 to about 6:16). Listen to the music and identify sections in the music. Then describe the sound of each section.
4	Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of <i>Kakadu</i> . Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.
5	Use this template to show what your poster will look like.

During the first three weeks of Term A, students at both school sites participated in learning activities about ‘Kakadu’ and completed a four-page draft music project component (see Appendix B). This draft music project component required students to conduct research on the composer Peter Sculthorpe, listen critically to ‘Kakadu’ and provide draft responses to the five items outlined in Table 3.5. The draft music project component consisted of scaffolded task sheets. This scaffolded design was necessary given the age and developmental level of upper primary students.

Students were also given a copy of the assessment criteria for their music project (see Appendix C). Assessment criteria provided students with standards against which their performance could be compared (Brookhart, 2008; Nicol & McFarlane-Dick, 2006) and was in keeping with assessment for learning principles (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wiliam, 2010). The assessment criteria were explained verbally by the teacher-researcher during one music lesson. In addition, an exemplar of average quality was displayed and discussed. Students marked the exemplar as a class using the given assessment criteria. This practice agreed with Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) concept of feeding up as it allowed students to gain clarity about the learning goals. Pedagogical decisions such as these corresponded with literature on

assessment (see Chapter Two). They also enabled the teacher-researcher to meet system requirements for fair and educative assessment practice as mandated by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA, 2014b).

In the fourth week of Term A, students used the assessment criteria to self-assess their draft music project component. This was done by completing a self-assessment section that had been included after each item in the draft music project component (see Figure 3.4 for an example). The inclusion of the assessment criteria below the relevant draft music project component item was designed to support students at Piaget’s concrete operational stage in that it enabled students to make logical links between the assessment criteria and the pertinent item in the draft music project component. Encouraging students to self-assess their work aligned with Earl’s (2003) concept of assessment as learning.

1) Why did the composer write this piece?

Peter Sculthrope received a phone call from Manny Papper an anaesthesiologist from America, he asked if Peter could write a song for his wife. Peter kept saying I don't have the time so Manny kept putting the payment higher. Peter asked what she was like, Manny said she is so Beautiful. He knew what he had to do and say.

Self-assessment section replicating relevant assessment criteria

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very complete explanation.</li> </ul>

Figure 3.4. Example of a completed self-assessment section from a student’s draft music project component in Term A.

After engaging in self-assessment, students submitted their draft music project component to the teacher-researcher for formative assessment and written individual feedback. The teacher-researcher provided written individual feedback to students by handwriting comments directly on each student's work (see Figure 3.5 for an example).

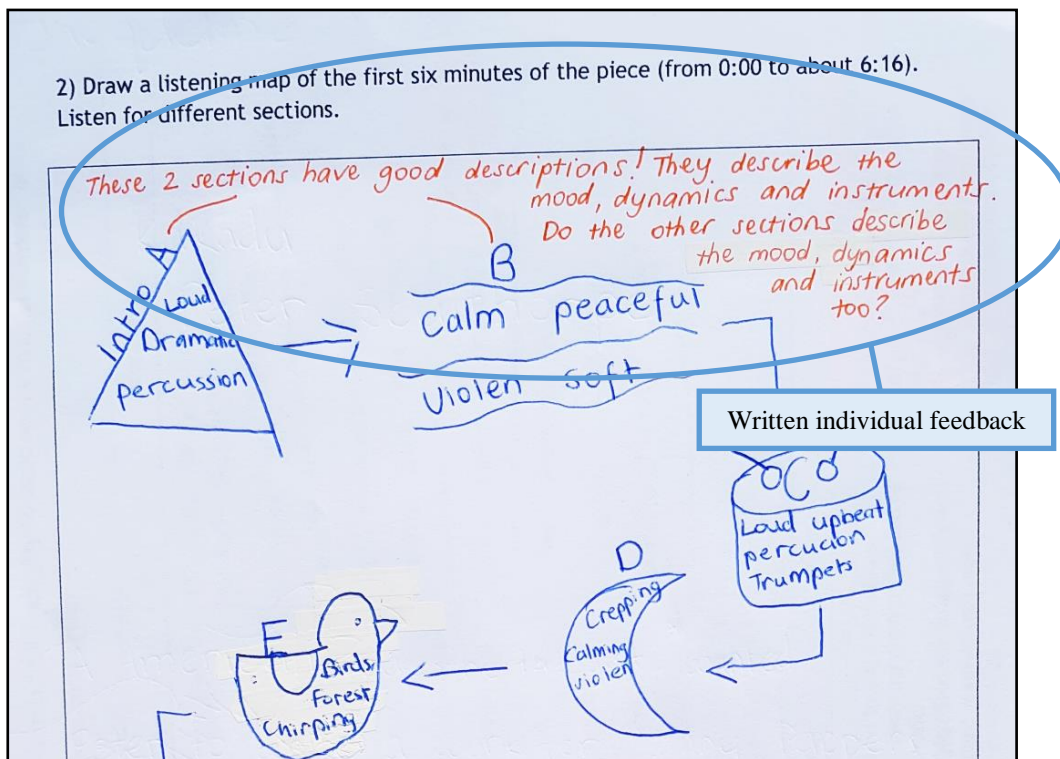


Figure 3.5. Example of written individual feedback provided to students in Term A.

Written individual feedback provided to students agreed with recommendations for best practice as discussed in the literature review of this thesis. For example, in accordance with Hattie and Timperley (2007), written individual feedback focussed on either the task, process or self-regulation level and avoided drawing attention to students' self (e.g., 'Good girl, you are so smart!'). It provided a mixture of positive and negative comments in order to create a balance between validation and constructive criticism (Agius & Wilkinson, 2014; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Feedback was phrased in a conversational and dialogic way to empower students and encourage them to actively engage with their work (McGrath et al., 2011; Parr & Timperley, 2010). Furthermore, developmental theories were taken into account in that the written individual feedback provided was designed to be appropriate for

students at Piaget's concrete operational stage. For instance, written individual feedback supported the use of logical thinking by identifying what students had done well and then encouraging them to do the same in other situations. This approach to feedback provision also aligned with the model of formative feedback presented in Figure 2.3.

In the fifth week of the term, the teacher-researcher returned students' draft music project components to them with written individual feedback. The timing of this feedback enabled students to make corrections and clarify expectations before submitting their final music project submissions for summative assessment. This was in keeping with recommendations in the literature pertaining to the importance of timely feedback, delivered when it can do the most good for students (Brookhart, 2008; Carless, 2007; Shute, 2008).

Before students received their draft music project components with written individual feedback, the teacher-researcher briefly introduced the feedback process by explaining that she had read students' work and had written some comments on their work. Students were then instructed to read the written individual feedback independently and to speak to the teacher-researcher if they had any questions. Students had the opportunity to ask the teacher-researcher questions after receiving written individual feedback as they completed their final music project submissions during class time. As an example of this, students in this study raised their hand and asked the teacher-researcher for help during class time. These informal interactions took the form of one-on-one conversations. Students were also able to speak to the teacher-researcher about the feedback they received during two subsequent music lessons before submitting their final music projects for summative assessment.

In the seventh week of Term A, students handed in their final music project submissions and received final marks on their music projects in the following week. Table 3.6 summarises the learning and teaching context of Term A.

Table 3.6

*Learning and Teaching Context of Term A*

Week of Term A	Student actions	Teacher-researcher actions
1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in learning activities relating to 'Kakadu' by Peter Sculthorpe.</li> <li>Completed draft music project component.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed assessment criteria (rubric) and marked an exemplar with the class.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged in self-assessment.</li> <li>Submitted draft music project component for formative assessment (written <i>individual</i> feedback).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided written <i>individual</i> feedback on each student's draft music project component.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received written <i>individual</i> feedback from teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly introduced feedback process before handing out written <i>individual</i> feedback.</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed final music project submission.</li> </ul>	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted final music project submission for summative assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marked students' final music project submissions.</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received marked final music project.</li> </ul>	

**3.3.3.3 Learning and teaching context: Term B**

The learning and teaching context of Term B was similar to Term A. However, in Term B students at both school sites studied a piece of music called 'Rhapsody in Blue' by the composer George Gershwin. To demonstrate their understanding of George Gershwin and 'Rhapsody in Blue', students completed a music history/appreciation project in the form of a digital slideshow. This music history/appreciation project was an assessment task with a 30 percent weighting towards students' final marks for Semester 2. Students were required to provide responses to five items in their music history/appreciation projects. Table 3.7 provides a description of these five items and Appendix A outlines the Western Australian syllabus objectives (SCSA, 2014a) addressed by these items.

Table 3.7

*Description of Items in Music History/Appreciation Project for Term B*

Item no.	Item description
1	Title and composer
2	Why did the composer write this piece?
3	Draw a listening map of the piece. (Please use the Herbie Hancock and Lang Lang version.) Listen to the music and identify sections in the music. Then describe the sound of each section.
4	Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting framework to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> . Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.
5	Use this template to show what each slide in your good copy is going to look like. You do not have to use all the slides.

During the first three weeks of Term B, students at both school sites participated in learning activities relating to ‘Rhapsody in Blue’ and completed a four-page draft music project component (see Appendix D). This draft music project component required students to conduct research on the composer George Gershwin, listen critically to ‘Rhapsody in Blue’ and provide draft responses to the five items listed in Table 3.7. As with Term A, the draft music project component consisted of scaffolded task sheets that were designed to be developmentally appropriate to Year Five and Year Six students.

The teacher-researcher also provided students with a copy of the assessment criteria for the music project (see Appendix E). Assessment criteria were explained verbally by the teacher-researcher during one music lesson, and an exemplar of average quality was displayed and discussed. Students marked the exemplar as a class using the assessment criteria given. As with Term A, these pedagogical decisions accorded with recommendations in the literature (see Chapter Two) and allowed the teacher-researcher to meet system requirements for fair and educative assessment practice (SCSA, 2014b).



In the fourth week of Term B, students used the assessment criteria to self-assess their draft music project component (see Figure 3.6 for an example). This mirrored what they had done in Term A. After engaging in self-assessment, students submitted their draft music project component to the teacher-researcher for formative assessment and written whole-class feedback.

3) Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting framework to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.

	Plus	Minus	Interesting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This piece is unique &amp; creative, with many instruments, it has 2 different themes or styles of music.</li> <li>Each part has a completely different tempo, in some pieces this will annoy me but I am satisfied @ the end of this.</li> <li>This is a very good piece, I can't imagine what he would be able to do if it was NOT a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The form of this piece doesn't seem very organized, it, for me, sounds a little weird, but this also gives some uniqueness.</li> <li>The trombone with the wah-wah mute is creative, it should have had more of this.</li> <li>Some people don't like the parts that are scary, it scares them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Its quite interesting how Gershwin decided to put 2 styles in 1 piece, Jazz, classical</li> <li>The instruments are very interesting, especially</li> </ul>	
Musical Elements	<p><b>Just learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (minimal response).</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Getting there</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (narrow response).</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Got it</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (relevant response).</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expert</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (thoughtful and insightful response).</li> <li>Described the music clearly and accurately.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology all of the time.</li> </ul>

Self-assessment section replicating relevant assessment criteria

Figure 3.6. Example of a completed self-assessment section from a student's draft music project component in Term B.

To provide written whole-class feedback to students, the teacher-researcher completed two steps. Firstly, the teacher-researcher made notes as she read through the draft music project component of every student in each class at both schools. Secondly, the teacher-researcher used these notes to compile a one-page A4 handout with written whole-class feedback for each class at each school (see Figure 3.7). The feedback that was included in this handout was based on what students in each class had commonly done correctly and incorrectly. Appendix F contains a complete record of all written whole-class feedback handouts provided to students at both school sites.



## Year 6 Feedback - Rhapsody in Blue

### Title and Composer

- Double-check your spelling.

### Question 1 - Why

- This was done quite well!

### Question 2 - Listening map

- If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.
- Make sure every section in your listening map describes three different musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood).
- Use dot points instead of full sentences. This will fit better on your good copy.

### Question 3 - PMI chart

- Check that your sentences make sense. Try reading each sentence out loud or asking a friend what they think.
- Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word “because”. This will help you show better thinking.
- Make sure you have 3-4 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.

### Question 4 - Layout

- Try not to include additional information like “About the composer” or “About Lang Lang”. It’s a nice idea but you will not be marked on this. 😊
- Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.

*Figure 3.7.* Example of written whole-class feedback handout provided to students in Term B.

Like the feedback provided in Term A, the written whole-class feedback given to students in Term B aligned with recommendations for best practice as found in the literature. For example, it focussed on the task, process or self-regulation level (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), supported assessment as learning (Earl, 2003), and encouraged students to actively engage with their work (McGrath et al., 2011; Parr & Timperley, 2010). However, it should be noted that less balance was achieved

between the provision of positive and negative feedback as per the recommendations in the literature (e.g., Agius & Wilkinson, 2014). The teacher-researcher found that she was limited in her ability to provide positive whole-class feedback especially when most students in a class had not done well in relation to a particular aspect of the draft music project component. For example, the whole-class feedback depicted in Figure 3.7 shows that only one item of positive feedback was given to students in this class (Question 1 – Why). This had some impact on the findings of this study.

In the fifth week of the term, students' draft music project components were returned to them with the one-page A4 written whole-class feedback handout that the teacher-researcher had prepared. Before distributing students' draft music project components and the written whole-class feedback handout, the teacher-researcher introduced the feedback process. The teacher-researcher explained that she had read students' work but instead of writing comments directly on students' work, she had written comments for the whole class on a separate piece of paper. The teacher-researcher provided students with a general explanation about written whole-class feedback (i.e., what it was and how to use it). This was done to familiarise students with written whole-class feedback seeing as this was a new type of feedback for students. That said, the teacher-researcher did not read through the handout with the class in order to maintain similar conditions to how written individual feedback was given during Term A.

Students were instructed to read the written whole-class feedback independently and to speak to the teacher-researcher if they had any questions. As with Term A, students had the opportunity to seek feedback clarification from the teacher-researcher after receiving written whole-class feedback whilst they were working on their final music project submissions during class time. Students typically raised their hand and asked for help from the teacher-researcher as the teacher-researcher walked around the classroom when the class was engaged in independent work. Like Term A, students were also able to speak to the teacher-researcher about the feedback they received during two subsequent music lessons before they submitted their final music projects for summative assessment.

In the seventh week of Term B, students handed in their final music project submissions and received their final marks in the following week. Table 3.8 outlines the learning and teaching context of Term B.

Table 3.8

*Learning and Teaching Context of Term B*

Week of Term B	Student actions	Teacher-researcher actions
1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in learning activities relating to 'Rhapsody in Blue' by George Gershwin.</li> <li>Completed draft music project component.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed assessment criteria (rubric) and marked an exemplar with the class.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged in self-assessment. Submitted draft music project component for formative assessment (written <i>whole-class</i> feedback).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed all students' draft music project components and made notes.</li> <li>Compiled notes into a one-page A4 written <i>whole-class</i> feedback handout.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received written <i>whole-class</i> feedback from teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained to the class what written <i>whole-class</i> feedback was and how to use it.</li> <li>Distributed a one-page A4 written <i>whole-class</i> feedback handout to the class.</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed final music project submission.</li> </ul>	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted final music project submission for summative assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marked students' final music project submissions.</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received marked final music project.</li> </ul>	

In summary, the learning and teaching context of this study took place during two consecutive school terms. In Term A, Year Five and Year Six students at both School A and School B participated in learning activities relating to 'Kakadu' by Peter Sculthorpe. They completed a draft music project component on this piece of music and received written individual feedback on their draft work from the teacher-researcher. Provision of feedback was timed to give students the opportunity to use the feedback they received in the production of their final music project submissions. In Term B, Year Five and Year Six students at both schools participated in learning activities on 'Rhapsody in Blue' by George Gershwin. They completed a draft music project component on this piece of music and received written whole-class feedback from the teacher-researcher. As with Term A, students were able to use this feedback in the production of their final music project submissions. Feedback in both Term A and Term B was therefore provided within a formative assessment setting.

The learning and teaching context of this study aligned with general recommendations for best practice as outlined in the literature review of this thesis. For example, assessment rubrics and exemplars were used to clarify assessment criteria (Brookhart, 2008), written teacher feedback was provided based on Hattie and Timperley's (2007) model of formative feedback, and the timing of feedback allowed students to use the feedback they had received to improve their future work (Carless, 2007). Pedagogical decisions such as these were informed by literature on assessment and feedback (see Chapter Two). They also corresponded with system requirements for fair and educative assessment practice (SCSA, 2014b). Both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback were provided to students in the same teaching and learning context.

Other pedagogical choices were designed to meet basic principles of teaching, learning and assessment as established by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA, 2014b). For example, in order to create a classroom environment that supported student learning, it was necessary for the teacher-researcher to maintain standard classroom practices such as engaging in normal teacher-student interactions (e.g., introducing feedback, answering student questions), and allowing students to converse with one another as they worked on their music history/appreciation projects. Simply providing students with an assessment task and

written teacher feedback alone without any additional classroom support would have been unacceptable in a primary school setting. However, it should be reiterated that the classroom support provided to students at both school sites was the same during Term A and Term B. As such, students at both school sites received written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback in comparable and consistent classroom environments.

This section has described the setting and participants of this study in detail. It has provided background information about the two school sites and 34 participants involved in the study. It has also outlined the learning and teaching context of this research, giving attention to how the provision of written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback in this study fit within a larger program of learning. Taken together, these descriptions will help readers to better understand the bounded context of this two-case study. The next section will explain how data was collected in this study.

### **3.4 Data collection**

Case study research does not have a specific method of data collection. Instead, it encourages the use of any method which is most appropriate and practical to the study at hand (Bassegy, 1999). The first part of this section will provide a general overview and timeline of the data collection process of this study and will briefly introduce the data collection instruments used. The second part of this section will present a more detailed report on each of the data collection instruments and will explain how they were operationalised.

#### **3.4.1 Overview of data collection process**

This study was a two-case study that comprised of two sequential investigations into written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. Data was collected from two school sites (i.e., School A and School B) during two consecutive school terms. The collection of data over two school terms corresponded with the learning

and teaching context of the study described in the preceding section. Identical data collection processes were employed during each school term at each school site. It was envisaged that this consistency in data collection would facilitate analysis.

Data collection during each school term was divided into two phases. The first phase of data collection focussed primarily on obtaining student reflections after they had received written feedback on their draft music project components but before they had submitted their final music projects for summative assessment. In other words, this data collection took place ‘post-feedback’. The second phase of data collection involved eliciting student reflections on feedback after they had submitted their final music projects for assessment and received their final marks. This phase of data collection could be described as ‘post-final marks’.

The intention of this two-phase approach was to allow comparisons to be made between how students planned to use feedback and how they actually used feedback. It also generated a clearer picture of students’ responses to feedback, taking into account the draft-final nature of the learning task. Doing so enabled the teacher-researcher to better “capture the case under study in its complexity and entirety” (Yazan, 2015, p. 142). Figure 3.8 presents a timeline showing the two phases of data collection within each school term.

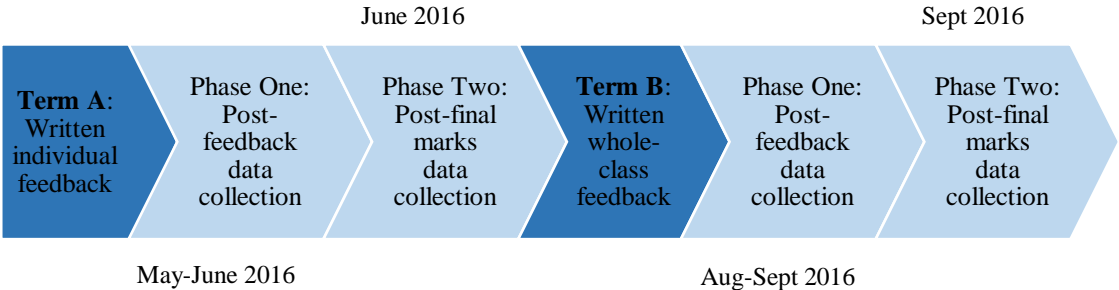


Figure 3.8. Timeline of data collection.

### 3.4.2 Data instruments

The preceding discussion outlined the broad process of data collection. In this section, explanations will be provided in relation to the data collection instruments used in this study. It should be reiterated that each instrument was employed twice: once in Term A (when investigating written individual feedback), and once in Term B (when investigating written whole-class feedback). The instruments used in this study were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, a teacher-researcher journal and artefacts.

#### 3.4.2.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were the key instrument used to obtain student reflections on written teacher feedback. As mentioned in Chapter Two, reflection is a personal mental activity. Thus, in order to gather data it was necessary to bring students' mental activity to light and access their thoughts. Spalding and Wilson (2002) have identified that written reflections can serve as windows into students' thinking and learning. Written reflection in the form of questionnaires was therefore an effective way to capture students' thinking on paper (Suriyon et al., 2013). Data from questionnaires was digitised and a database was created for each student using word-processing software. Three different questionnaires were designed for this study and all participants completed every questionnaire. It should be noted that the teacher-researcher developed all three questionnaires used in this study. However, questions included within an instrument may have been derived from an existing framework. This will be acknowledged where appropriate.

##### *Questionnaire 1*

*Questionnaire 1* was the primary written reflective instrument used in this study. It was essentially a reflection framework that elicited students' immediate post-feedback reflections and as such, was implemented during the first phase of data collection. *Questionnaire 1* comprised of a two-page reflection framework that contained seven items. These included a set of six reflective questions and one Likert scale self-description component (see Appendix G). Simple graphics were used to make this questionnaire accessible to students and as engaging as possible. Barker

and Weller (2003) have identified that considerations such as these are important when creating instruments for children.

The six reflective questions included in *Questionnaire 1* were adapted from Quinton and Smallbone’s (2010) feedback reflection framework. As Quinton and Smallbone’s (2010) feedback reflection framework was designed for university students, modifications were needed to ensure that the questions were age-appropriate for Year Five and Year Six students, and aligned to the research questions of this study. For example, Quinton and Smallbone’s (2010) reflective question of “Based on this feedback what actions could I take to improve my work for another assignment?” (p. 129) was modified to “Tick the box which best describes what you will do next. If you like, you can write your own description on the line.” This modification simplified the language for younger students, changed the focus of the question to suit the purpose of this study, and provided some support for students to identify what steps of action they would take next. The six reflective questions included in *Questionnaire 1* also corresponded with Oosterbaan et al.’s (2010) model of reflection as discussed in Chapter Two. Table 3.9 presents the six reflective questions included in *Questionnaire 1* together with the relevant reflective thinking activity according to Oosterbaan et al.’s (2010) model.

Table 3.9

*Reflective Questions in Questionnaire 1 and Thinking Activities Addressed*

Reflective question	Thinking activity (Oosterbaan et al., 2010)
1) What is feedback?	Cognitive
2) How did the feedback make you feel? What did you think when you read the feedback?	Affective
3) What feedback do you agree with? (Explain why.)	Cognitive
4) What feedback do you disagree with? (Explain why.)	Cognitive
5) Was the feedback what you had expected? (Explain why.)	Cognitive
6) Tick the box which best describes what you will do next. If you like, you can write your own description on the line.	Regulative



As can be seen in Table 3.9, the reflective questions in *Questionnaire 1* were largely open-ended. The open-ended nature of the questions was intended to allow students to reflect on feedback using their own words (Cohen et al., 2011). However, as this was a semi-structured questionnaire, it is acknowledged that students' reflections on feedback were elicited in a somewhat prescribed way. This approach was necessary as it was foreseen that upper primary students would experience difficulty engaging in reflection without adequate support. As Welch (1999) has observed, it is not enough to tell students to go and reflect. Students need some sort of structure or template for reflection that will help to guide them through a meaningful reflective process. This was particularly applicable to the upper primary students in this study who were not accustomed to formally reflecting on feedback.

The Likert scale self-description component included at the end of *Questionnaire 1* was modelled on a general learning and attitudinal questionnaire for primary school students (Tinson, 2009). It did not constitute part of students' reflections on feedback but instead was designed to obtain background information about students. This component contained seven items rated on a 5-point scale and elicited students' self-reported descriptions about their interest in music, level of ability in music, and relationship with the music teacher (i.e., teacher-researcher). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, data derived from this component was not intended to directly inform answers to the research questions. Instead, it was designed to address some of the contextual considerations that had emerged from the literature review in Chapter One.

Students completed *Questionnaire 1* immediately after receiving and reading the written teacher feedback provided on their draft music project component. It was completed during one normal music lesson by all students in each class. However, only consenting students' data was utilised in this study ( $N = 34$ ). A brief explanation was first provided by the teacher-researcher regarding the purpose of the reflection and what students should do when they had finished writing their reflections. *Questionnaire 1* was completed without discussion with other students. Students were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. However, some needed more time than this. Students were told to be honest as their reflections would not count

towards their grades and there would be no repercussions from the teacher-researcher.

### *Questionnaire 2*

*Questionnaire 2* contained three open-ended questions intended to investigate potential reasons for students' use or non-use of feedback (see Appendix G). This questionnaire was included as a supplement to *Questionnaire 1* after it was felt that more data would be needed to address Research Question 5 of this study (i.e., 'Why do upper primary students respond to feedback in the way that they do?'). This questionnaire was also implemented during the first phase of data collection (i.e., post-feedback).

In terms of design, *Questionnaire 2* was formatted as a one-page Y chart in order to replicate a type of graphic organiser familiar to primary school aged students. The use of a Y chart design was intended to be developmentally appropriate for students in Piaget's concrete operational stage as its unique structure encouraged students to engage in flexible thinking about a topic (Dirksen, 2014). Bennett and Rolheiser (2006) have also identified that the use of organisational frameworks such as Y charts can enhance the level of thinking and participation in students.

This questionnaire was completed by students one week after *Questionnaire 1* and was administered in the same manner as *Questionnaire 1* during a normal music lesson. However, students were only given 10 minutes to complete it as it contained a fewer number of questions. This time frame was appropriate for the completion of three questions given that students were given approximately 20 minutes to complete seven questions in *Questionnaire 1*.

### *Questionnaire 3*

*Questionnaire 3* was a two-page instrument that contained seven items (see Appendix G). In contrast to *Questionnaire 1* and *Questionnaire 2*, it was employed during the second phase of data collection (i.e., post-final marks). The main purpose of this questionnaire was to investigate which written feedback items students decided to use or not use and the reasons for their decisions. Exploring students'

reasons post-final marks helped to further illuminate the regulative thinking activities (Oosterbaan et al., 2010) that students engaged in during the feedback process.

In order to obtain the data needed, open-ended questions were utilised to encourage students to explain their reasons in their own words (Cohen et al., 2011). Once again, simple tables and graphics were used to make the instrument accessible and appealing to upper primary students (Barker & Weller, 2003). This questionnaire also elicited information on students' general use and perceptions of feedback. These general items enabled the teacher-researcher to check if students' responses to feedback during this study were comparable to their typical response to feedback in other school subjects. *Questionnaire 3* was administered in the same manner as *Questionnaire 1* during a normal music lesson and students were given 20 minutes to complete it.

#### ***3.4.2.2 Semi-structured interview***

A semi-structured interview was conducted with every student in this study during the first phase of data collection (i.e., post-feedback). Students participated in a semi-structured interview after they had completed *Questionnaire 1* and *Questionnaire 2*. The main purpose of the semi-structured interview was to give students the opportunity to verbally reflect on feedback. Verbal reflection on feedback generated more extended responses from students and enabled the teacher-researcher to gain deeper insights into their perspectives on feedback through “purposeful conversation” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96).

An additional purpose of the semi-structured interview was to triangulate data from students' written reflections (i.e., *Questionnaire 1* and *Questionnaire 2*). This helped the teacher-researcher to assess if students were providing consistent responses to questions. Although a range of interview formats exist, a semi-structured interview format was used in this study as data from students needed to be compared and contrasted in a relatively systematic way. Semi-structured interviews allowed the teacher-researcher to explore students' thoughts on feedback methodically whilst

also retaining some degree of flexibility in order to pursue topics that arose spontaneously (Cohen et al., 2011).

Five main questions were planned in advance to ensure that the relevant aspects of the research problems were covered (see Table 3.10). The first question was a non-threatening ‘grand tour’ question (Creswell, 2012) that queried how students’ music projects were coming along. Subsequent questions addressed students’ thoughts about the feedback they received, how they planned to use the feedback and their perceptions about feedback in general. Additional ‘follow-up’ and ‘probe’ questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) were also employed during the interview to encourage students to further explain topics that they had introduced. The five main questions asked during the semi-structured interview aligned with the research questions of this study as well as general understandings of reflective thinking. The wording of these questions was appropriate to students’ age and developmental level. Table 3.10 presents these questions along with the relevant reflective thinking activity as per Oosterbaan et al.’s (2010) model of reflection.

Table 3.10

*Five Main Questions of Semi-Structured Interview and Thinking Activities Addressed*

Main question	Reflective thinking activity (Oosterbaan et al., 2010)
1) How is your music project coming along?	Cognitive
2) What do you think feedback means?	Cognitive
3) Tell me about the feedback you received on your draft?	Cognitive / Affective
4) Will you use any of this feedback in your final music project?	Regulative
5) How do you usually feel about the feedback you receive at school?	Affective

The semi-structured interview was also used as an opportunity to clarify any unclear or interesting responses that students had provided in *Questionnaire 1* and *Questionnaire 2*. For example, one student had stated in *Questionnaire 1* that she

disagreed with feedback comments “*that didn’t need to be there*”. This was an interesting response so the teacher-researcher made a note of this in her interview notebook and followed up on this response during the student’s semi-structured interview.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a quiet room on the school grounds during school time with permission from the respective principals at each school. Times for interviews were negotiated with students’ classroom teachers so as to minimise any disruption of learning. During interviews, the teacher-researcher sat on the same type of chair as the student and when interviews took place in a classroom, they were conducted away from the teacher’s desk. Atkins and Wallace (2012) have identified this as being an important consideration when trying to reduce the power differential between interviewer and participant. Interviews began with reminders of confidentiality and the assurance that what students said would not affect their marks or change what the teacher-researcher thought about them. Students were also asked to choose a pseudonym for themselves in their first semi-structured interview (i.e., Term A). The teacher-researcher explained the purpose of the interview and informed students that they could stop the interview at any time. Students were asked to tell the teacher-researcher if they did not understand a question and it would be said again in a different way (Curtin, 2001). Overall, the interview was conducted in a way that positioned students as having important and interesting things to say and the teacher-researcher as having something to learn from what they said.

Concerns could be raised as to how open and honest students were during semi-structured interviews given that they were being interviewed by their teacher. Judging from students’ generally candid responses and the ability of some to refer to the teacher-researcher in the third person, lack of openness or honesty did not seem to be an issue. If anything, the teacher-researcher found that their existing relationship with students made obtaining in-depth data an easier process. This was particularly noticeable in the more free and open manner that students in School A conversed with the teacher-researcher given their longer relationship and greater familiarity with her. Radnor (2002) has supported this by observing that existing rapport and trust can encourage participants to “say what they really feel” (p. 32).

The teacher-researcher's ability to grasp students' language and to communicate in a way which students would understand was also an added advantage (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Curtin, 2001). The main challenge was that the teacher-researcher needed to remain aware of personal presuppositions and to treat "familiar territory as if it were a foreign country" (Gillham, 2005, p. 71) in order to hear the meaning of what students were saying. The teacher-researcher attempted to do this by rephrasing students' answers and asking if this was an accurate interpretation of what they were saying.

Interviews were recorded on a digital recording device and were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service provider. These transcripts were subsequently reviewed by the teacher-researcher for accuracy. The teacher-researcher also took notes during the semi-structured interview in an interview notebook. Each interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes. This agreed with Curtin's (2001) recommendations for interviewing children and also helped to ensure that students were not absent from their class for too long.

#### ***3.4.2.3 Teacher-researcher journal***

Throughout the first and second phase of data collection, the teacher-researcher informally observed students during their normal music lessons and recorded these observations in a teacher-researcher journal. This journal took the form of a digital word-processing document that contained dated entries organised in chronological order. The purpose of the teacher-researcher journal was to record any interesting events or insights that occurred during music lessons, particularly from the time that students received written teacher feedback on their draft music project component to the time that they received final marks on their final music project submissions.

Two types of informal observations were made in the teacher-researcher journal. Firstly, the teacher-researcher recorded events and occurrences that she witnessed firsthand such as questions or comments posed by students about feedback, interesting peer interactions that took place in relation to feedback and students' reactions to feedback. It is acknowledged that these informal observations were

inevitably selective. In spite of this, the use of a teacher-researcher journal enabled the teacher-researcher to record unique or noteworthy events that occurred and valuable contextual data that would not otherwise have been captured by questionnaires, semi-structured interviews or artefacts. This provided additional insights into students' characteristics and their responses to feedback. Secondly, the teacher-researcher documented her own personal reflexive thoughts in the teacher-researcher journal. These were kept separate from observable data through the use of brackets or italics. This helped to avoid the mixing of evidence and interpretation (Yin, 2012). The use of a teacher-researcher journal is particularly encouraged in practitioner research (Check & Schutt, 2012; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

In keeping a teacher-researcher journal and recording informal observations of students, the teacher-researcher took on the dual role of participant-observer. This created some tensions in that fulfilling 'participant' or teaching duties placed constraints upon the teacher-researcher's ability to observe students. Likewise, fulfilling 'observer' obligations had the potential to steal "time and energy away from the more important activity of teaching" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 42). As the teacher-researcher experienced some difficulty in juggling these two roles, she decided to write observations down as brief notes when students were engaged in independent work, and then fully type up these notes in the teacher-researcher journal as soon as possible after each lesson. In total, participating students in Year Five and Year Six classes from Schools A and B were informally observed during six music lessons in Term A and Term B. This equated to 48 one-hour informal observations over the course of the study.

#### ***3.4.2.4 Artefacts***

Artefacts were items that students and the teacher-researcher had produced as part of the normal learning and teaching program that were relevant to this study. Artefacts consisted of students' draft music project components (including written individual feedback from the teacher-researcher), students' final music project submissions, and written whole-class feedback handouts prepared by the teacher-researcher. Collection of these artefacts enabled the teacher-researcher to construct a more accurate

understanding of how students used written teacher feedback. This was important as what students said they would do with the feedback they received was not always what they actually did. Digital photographs were taken of each student's draft music project components and digital copies were made of each student's final music project submissions (see Appendix H for examples). Digital copies were made of the written whole-class feedback handouts that the teacher-researcher had prepared for each class (see Appendix F).

In summary, this section has outlined the process as well as the instruments of data collection employed in this study. Data relating to students' responses to written individual feedback was gathered from both school sites during Term A. Data pertaining to students' responses to written whole-class feedback was gathered from both school sites in Term B. The data collection process and instruments used at each school site during each school term were identical. This resulted in more comparable findings between each case and allowed some additional comparisons to be made between the two types of written teacher feedback of interest in this study. The next section will explain how the data collected in this study was analysed and interpreted.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

Merriam (2009) has identified that in two-case or multiple-case study designs, two stages of data analysis are required. In the first stage, each case is treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Once a full picture of each case is obtained, the second stage of data analysis can then take place. This involves comparing findings from both cases in a cross-case analysis (Chmiliar, 2010). In a way, this two-stage process mirrors Stake's (1995) concept of intrinsic and instrumental orientations towards case study (see section 3.2.3). To borrow Stake's (1995) terminology, the first stage of analysis could be described as 'intrinsic analysis', or analysis that is primarily interested in understanding individual cases (i.e., students at School A and School B). The second stage of analysis could then be described as 'instrumental analysis', or analysis that is more focussed on issues of interest rather than individual



cases. From henceforward, the terms ‘intrinsic analysis’ and ‘instrumental analysis’ will be used to describe the process of data analysis in this study.

Intrinsic analysis was first conducted at the individual case level to investigate how students at each school site responded to written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. This was then followed by an instrumental analysis which synthesised issues of interest that had emerged from both school sites. Finally, conclusions were drawn in order to address to the research questions of this study. These final conclusions will be presented in Chapter Six. Figure 3.9 provides an overview of the data analysis process employed in this study.

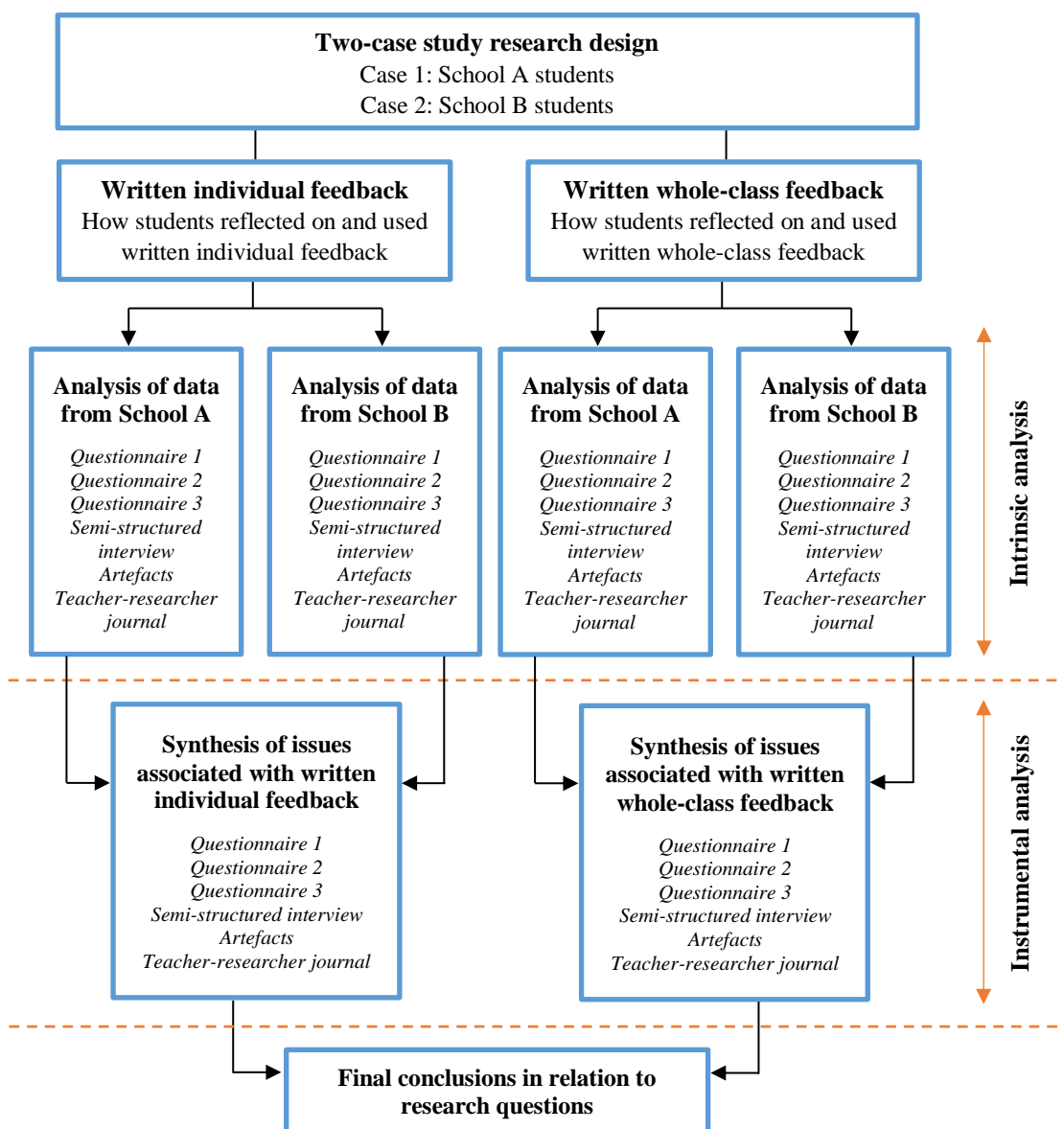


Figure 3.9. Overview of the data analysis process in this study.

The process of data analysis was similar to the process of data collection in that data pertaining to written individual feedback was analysed separately from data pertaining to written whole-class feedback. This initial separation was in keeping with the research questions of this study. However, some incidental comparisons between both types of written feedback were made during instrumental analysis. The following sections will describe in more detail the analytical steps that were taken in relation to intrinsic analysis and instrumental analysis.

### **3.5.1 Intrinsic analysis**

Intrinsic analysis focussed on understanding the individual cases (i.e., students at School A and students at School B). Given that two different types of written teacher feedback were being studied in this research, intrinsic analysis was conducted twice: once in relation to written individual feedback, and once in relation to written whole-class feedback. The process of intrinsic analysis was essentially the same for both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. However, one small difference related to the analysis of artefacts. Artefacts pertaining to written whole-class feedback were analysed slightly differently given the differing nature of the feedback provided. This will be explained in more detail in section 3.5.1.3.

Data was collected in this study via questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, artefacts, and a teacher-researcher journal. The main bulk of data was generated from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This data was text-based and contained students' own words and reflections on written teacher feedback. Thematic analysis was used to reduce and interpret this information. Data from artefacts and the teacher-researcher journal were handled differently due to the unique nature and purpose of these instruments. Analysis of each type of data will now be described more thoroughly.

### *3.5.1.1 Analysis of data from questionnaires*

Three questionnaires were used to gather data on how students reflected on and used written teacher feedback (i.e., *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2* and *Questionnaire 3*). Data from each questionnaire was analysed thematically following a three-step process of coding, categorising and identifying themes. Lapadat (2010) has identified that thematic analysis is a systematic approach to analysing qualitative data as it helps to reduce data into a workable form and reveal overarching patterns. Thematic analysis was therefore used to reduce the data collected from each questionnaire into a manageable form, and to systematically and meaningfully identify key themes pertaining to how students reflected on written teacher feedback. The three-step process of thematic analysis will now be described in more detail.

In the first level of analysis, data from each questionnaire was transcribed into word-processing documents and coded using the ‘Comment’ function of the word-processing software. Coding was a lengthy and cyclical process that involved reviewing students’ data several times and identifying meaningful units of analysis. The unit of analysis was a single idea which could have been either part of a sentence, one sentence or a few connected sentences. This approach to thematic analysis accorded with Merriam’s (2009) recommendations for identifying meaningful segments or units of data during qualitative data analysis. Each unit of data was given a code in the form of a short phrase that summarised the main idea in the data. These codes were re-worded summaries of what students had written and usually centred around a key term or phrase that students had used. Codes were typically phrased in the first person in order to retain the reflective nature of students’ comments.

In the second level of analysis, codes that conveyed similar ideas were grouped into categories. One- or two-word summaries were used as category names, and definitions were developed for each category. These definitions enabled the teacher-researcher to establish parameters for each category and helped to facilitate more consistent analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As alluded to in Chapter One, the development of categories was shaped by the conceptual framework of this study. For example, several key concepts and terms from the conceptual framework were

utilised in the naming of categories (e.g., ‘information’, ‘correction’, ‘emotions’). However, it should be noted that the conceptual framework did not pre-determine the categories used. Rather, it served as a lens through which the teacher-researcher approached the interpretation of data.

In the third level of analysis, similar categories were clustered into themes. Once again, the development and naming of themes was shaped by the conceptual framework of this study. All three levels of thematic analysis were cross-checked via peer debriefing (Merriam, 2009; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). This involved one of the teacher-researcher’s supervisors reviewing each set of analysed data, and providing an external check on the development of codes, categories and themes. The purpose of this review was to assess whether the analytical decisions made were plausible based on the raw data. Peer debriefing will be further discussed in the section on quality criteria (see section 3.6.1).

At this point, it should be noted that one of the reflective questions in *Questionnaire 1* (i.e., reflective question 6) required students to describe what they would do with the feedback they received. Students were given the option of selecting from four given responses or writing their own response. Data collected from reflective question 6 was subjected to simple frequency analysis and displayed in a graph (see Appendix I) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Apart from this, all other data collected from *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, and *Questionnaire 3* was subjected to the three-step process of coding, categorising and identifying of themes. This allowed key thoughts and concepts from students’ reflections on written individual feedback to be distilled from the data in a logical and meaningful way. This three-step process of thematic analysis was also employed for data collected from semi-structured interviews.

### ***3.5.1.2 Analysis of data from semi-structured interview***

Data from students’ semi-structured interviews was transcribed by a professional transcription service provider. The transcripts were reviewed and checked for accuracy by the teacher-researcher as she listened to audio recordings of each semi-

structured interview. Transcripts were then subjected to thematic analysis following the same three-step process outlined in the preceding section. That is, data was sorted into codes, categories, and themes in order to identify key ideas (Lapadat, 2010).

In the first level of analysis, meaningful units of data were first identified in the interview transcripts. The unit of analysis was a single idea that may have been either part of a sentence, one sentence, several connected sentences, or a segment of dialogue. Each unit of analysis was given a code in the form of a short phrase that summarised the main idea in the data. These codes were re-worded summaries of what students had said and typically centred on a key term or phrase that students had used. Codes were phrased in the first person in order to preserve the reflective nature of students' comments. Coding of data constituted the first level of analysis. In the second level of analysis, codes that communicated similar ideas were grouped together to form categories. Brief labels and a definition were developed for each category. In the third level of analysis, similar categories were clustered into themes. This three-step process of thematic analysis was shaped by the conceptual framework of this study and was checked through a process of peer debriefing (Merriam, 2009; Nowell et al., 2017).

### ***3.5.1.3 Analysis of data from artefacts***

The term 'artefacts' refers to items produced by students and the teacher-researcher as part of the normal learning and teaching program that were relevant to this study. During Term A, these artefacts were students' draft music project components (containing written individual feedback from the teacher-researcher) and students' final music project submissions. During Term B, these artefacts were students' draft music project components, written whole-class feedback handouts, and students' final music project submissions. Artefacts were analysed in order to determine if and how students had used the written feedback they received. As mentioned previously, analysis of artefacts from Term A was slightly different to the analysis of artefacts from Term B given the differing nature of the written feedback provided. As such, separate descriptions of the process will now be provided.

### *Term A: Written individual feedback*

In Term A, artefacts pertaining to written individual feedback were analysed following a two-step process. Firstly, comparisons were made between each student's draft music project component, the written individual feedback they received, and their final music project submissions. This enabled the teacher-researcher to identify which feedback items were used by students. Tables were created for each student showing all the written individual feedback items that students had received on their draft music project component (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Colour-coding was used to indicate how students had used each feedback item (e.g., fully used, partially used, did not use). It should be noted that the criteria for colour-coding was not predetermined. Instead, this had emerged naturally from the data gathered. Appendix J provides an example of this analysis.

Secondly, data from these tables were then collated into one graph per school site. These graphs revealed patterns in students' overall feedback use and enabled the teacher-researcher to sort students into groups. For example, one group of students used all the feedback they received whilst another group of students hardly used any feedback. The teacher-researcher then created a 'meta-matrix' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to cross-check each group of students with the categories that had emerged during thematic analysis of text-based instruments (i.e., *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3*, semi-structured interview). Significant categories for each student were identified based on the frequency of their responses in these instruments. This information was then entered into the meta-matrix. The purpose of cross-checking this data was to explore potential common characteristics of students in each group. Graphs and meta-matrices that were developed as a result of this analysis will be presented in the findings chapters of this thesis (Chapters Four and Five).

### *Term B: Written whole-class feedback*

Analysis of artefacts during Term B differed slightly to Term A. This was due to the fact that written whole-class feedback was provided to students instead of written individual feedback. The implication of this was that only some items of written whole-class feedback might have been applicable to a particular student whilst other

items of feedback might not have been applicable. The analysis of artefacts gathered during Term B reflects this unique property of written whole-class feedback.

Analysis of artefacts took place in two ways. Firstly, comparisons were made between each student's draft music project component, the written whole-class feedback they received, and their final music project submissions. This enabled the teacher-researcher to identify how written whole-class feedback items had been used by students. The applicability of feedback items to each student's work was taken into account during this analysis. Tables were created for each student showing written whole-class feedback items that students had received (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Colour-coding was then used to indicate how students had used each feedback item (e.g., fully used, partially used, did not use). The criteria for colour-coding was not predetermined. Instead, this had emerged naturally from the data gathered. See Appendix J for an example of this analysis.

Secondly, data from these tables was collated into one graph per school site. These graphs helped to shed light on patterns in students' overall written whole-class feedback use and enabled the teacher-researcher to sort students into groups. Students were not expected to use or make any changes to their work in response to non-applicable feedback items. Hence, the focus during this stage of analysis was on how students responded to applicable feedback items. A meta-matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was then used to cross-check each group of students with the categories that had emerged from thematic analysis of previous instruments (i.e., *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3*, semi-structured interview). Significant categories for each student were identified based on the frequency of their responses in these instruments. This information was then recorded in the meta-matrix. The purpose of cross-checking this data was to investigate potential common characteristics of students in each group. Graphs and meta-matrices that resulted from this analysis will be presented in the findings chapters of this thesis (Chapters Four and Five).

#### ***3.5.1.4 Analysis of data from teacher-researcher journal***

Data from the teacher-researcher journal consisted of chronological, informal observations that the teacher-researcher had made of students during regular music lessons. It also included the teacher-researcher's own reflective comments. These were kept separate from observational data through the use of brackets or italics. The chronological entries in the teacher-researcher journal included questions that students had asked regarding the feedback they received and any interesting events or discussions that took place around feedback.

Data from the teacher-researcher journal was intended to provide supplementary information about how students reflected on and used written individual feedback. As such, this data was not thematically analysed. Instead, data from the teacher-researcher journal was reorganised from chronologically dated entries (containing observations of multiple students) to observations pertaining to individual students. The purpose of sorting data according to individual students was to enable the teacher-researcher to easily reference information about particular students during data analysis. For example, the teacher-researcher was able to check which students asked questions about the feedback they had received, and identify any events or behaviours that may have had an impact on findings. This information supplemented data collected from other instruments (Koshy, 2005). Data from the teacher-researcher journal that was of interest or that related to significant points were referred to in the findings of this thesis.

This section has outlined how intrinsic analysis of data was conducted. It has explained how data collected from each of the instruments in this study was analysed and interpreted. The following section will explain how instrumental analysis of data was accomplished.

#### **3.5.2 Instrumental analysis**

During instrumental analysis, findings from School A and School B were compared and synthesised. Less emphasis was placed on the individual cases themselves, and more emphasis was given to developing broader cross-case conclusions in relation to



issues of interest. Given that two different types of written teacher feedback were being studied in this research, instrumental analysis was conducted on two occasions: once in relation to written individual feedback, and once in relation to written whole-class feedback (see Figure 3.9). The process of instrumental analysis was identical on both occasions.

Instrumental analysis was based on the data collection methods used in this study. The original intent was to compare findings from each instrument from both school sites (e.g., compare *Questionnaire 1* findings from School A with *Questionnaire 1* findings from School B in order to produce synthesised *Questionnaire 1* findings from both cases). However, intrinsic analysis of *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and semi-structured interview data revealed the presence of very similar repeated themes. As such, the approach to instrumental analysis was modified. Findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview from each school site were analysed in a collective way. That is, all questionnaire and semi-structured interview findings from School A were compared with all questionnaire and semi-structured interview findings from School B. This resulted in synthesised findings from all questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from both cases. Findings from artefacts were analysed separately given the different type of data that resulted from this instrument (see section 3.5.1.3 for more information).

Instrumental analysis was accomplished through the use of meta-matrices in accordance with Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to qualitative multi-case analysis. Meta-matrices were essentially tables that juxtaposed findings from both school sites. One meta-matrix was constructed for questionnaires and the semi-structured interview whilst another meta-matrix was constructed for artefacts. Themes that had emerged during intrinsic analysis were used as the main organisational framework in meta-matrices. This approach was taken given that the same themes regularly appeared in relation to both School A and School B, thus making them ideal units of comparison. Issues of interest associated with each theme were then entered into the relevant cell in a meta-matrix. The resulting meta-matrix enabled the teacher-researcher to identify broad similarities and general patterns that cut across both schools. It also allowed the teacher-researcher to identify any differences and consider possible contextual explanations for these variances. All

meta-matrices resulting from instrumental analysis will be presented in the findings chapters of this thesis (Chapters Four and Five). Findings from the teacher-researcher journal were not instrumentally analysed via a meta-matrix given the informal and supplementary nature of this data.

In summary, data analysis in this study took place in two stages (intrinsic analysis and instrumental analysis) in relation to two types of written teacher feedback (written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback). Intrinsic analysis of data from School A and School B produced findings in relation to how students from each school site reflected on and used written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. Instrumental analysis compared results from both school sites and focussed on synthesising key issues associated with written individual and written whole-class feedback. This two-stage approach was in keeping with two-case study methodology (Chmiliar, 2010; Merriam, 2009). In the next section, issues pertaining to the quality of this research will be addressed.

### **3.6 Quality criteria**

Research quality is traditionally judged in relation to the concepts of validity and reliability. However, some have argued that conventional understandings of validity and reliability are not entirely compatible with the philosophical orientations of qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Miller, 2008). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested four terms, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, as being alternative equivalents to the traditional terms of internal validity, reliability, objectivity and external validity. Whilst these terms convey somewhat parallel concepts, they highlight philosophical differences between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. They allow “qualitative researchers the freedom to describe their research in ways that highlight the overall rigor of qualitative research without trying to force it into the quantitative model” (Given & Saumure, 2008, p. 895). Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four criteria for qualitative research will be used to consider the quality of this study.

### **3.6.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to how well findings from a research study match reality (Merriam, 2009). In this study, the concern was for the teacher-researcher to ensure that the experiences and perceptions of students were represented accurately and honestly. Three key strategies were employed to increase the likelihood of this occurring: prolonged engagement at the research sites, peer debriefing, and data triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In relation to prolonged engagement, the teacher-researcher had been working at both School A and School B in the years preceding the study. The extended time spent immersed in the school sites meant that the teacher-researcher was a familiar face and had cultivated relationships with students. Credibility was increased given that the teacher-researcher possessed more than a passing understanding of the research contexts and had built sufficient trust with students for them to feel comfortable in honestly sharing their thoughts with her. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify that this contributes to promoting greater confidence in findings.

Peer debriefing was specifically employed during the process of intrinsic data analysis. This process involved one of the teacher-researcher's supervisors reviewing all sets of analysed data, and providing an external check on the development of codes, categories and themes based on the raw data gathered. The purpose of this review was to assess whether the analytical decisions made were plausible, thus increasing the credibility of the findings (Merriam, 2009). Some have advised against using a supervisor to conduct the peer debriefing process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, others have argued that peer debriefing by a supervisor is a valid and inbuilt part of the doctoral process (Merriam, 2009). The teacher-researcher found that the peer debriefing conducted by her supervisor was valuable as it allowed her to obtain a critical view of her interpretation and analysis of participants' data.

Finally, data triangulation was built into the research design to ensure that accurate information was obtained from students. This involved using multiple sources (i.e., questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, artefacts, teacher-researcher journal) and then cross-checking data from these sources to validate what students were saying. Consistency in overall patterns of data and reasonable explanations for differences

helped to enhance the credibility of findings (Patton, 1990). In addition, care was taken to ensure that the use of multiple sources was not arbitrary, but rather “aimed at corroborating the same fact or phenomenon” (Yin, 2003, p. 99). This was done by making certain each source of information was aligned to particular research questions. Table 3.11 provides a clearer picture of how this was achieved.

Table 3.11

*Research Questions and Triangulation of Data Collection Instruments.*

Research question	Data collection instrument		
1) How do upper primary students reflect on written individual feedback received on a draft music project component?	Questionnaire 1	Semi-structured interview	Teacher-researcher journal
2) How do upper primary students use written individual feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?	Artefacts	Questionnaire 3	Teacher-researcher journal
3) How do upper primary students reflect on written whole-class feedback received on a draft music project component?	Questionnaire 1	Semi-structured interview	Teacher-researcher journal
4) How do upper primary students use written whole-class feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?	Artefacts	Questionnaire 3	Teacher-researcher journal
5) Why do upper primary students respond to feedback in the way that they do?	Questionnaire 3	Questionnaire 2	Semi-structured interview

Triangulation and the use of multiple instruments allowed the teacher-researcher to cross-check student responses for accuracy and to identify any inconsistencies. It also helped to mitigate one of the potential risks of practitioner research, namely, that students might be inclined to say what they thought the teacher-researcher wanted to hear. The likelihood of this occurring was decreased as students’ thoughts were obtained through multiple sources over a period of time.

### **3.6.2 Dependability**

Dependability relates to the consistency of results obtained from a study. Defining what constitutes consistency in qualitative research is problematic given the underlying assumption of multiple realities (Norum, 2008), the instrumental role of the researcher in interpreting data (Patton, 1990), and the changing nature of phenomena (Shenton, 2004). Merriam (2009) therefore identified that consistency or dependability in qualitative research should be assessed in relation to whether the findings of a study are in fact consistent with the data presented. To address this issue, care was taken to maintain detailed records of the data collection and data analysis processes used in this study (i.e., an audit trail). Various components of this audit trail have been included in this thesis (e.g., tables and meta-matrices in Chapters Four and Five). It was envisioned that this would allow readers to authenticate the findings of this study and track the pathway that the teacher-researcher took to arrive at her conclusions.

### **3.6.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent to which findings from a study are truthful and free from researcher bias. Tensions exist in relation to this criterion, as any form of qualitative research is inherently subjective and interpretive in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Practitioner research and case study research are particularly prone to researcher bias because of the closeness of the practitioner-researcher to the research context, and the active role the researcher plays throughout data collection and analysis. In this study, the challenge for the teacher-researcher was finding a balance between subjectivity and an appropriate level of objectivity or critical distance in order to maintain research integrity. Mohr (2001) has aptly referred to this as “disciplined subjectivity” (p. 7). This was achieved through the use of reflexivity.

Reflexive notes were made in the teacher-researcher journal during data collection. They were also included as comments in tables and copies of student data during data analysis. Figure 3.10 provides an example of reflexive comments made during data analysis.


st needs, um, it	 <b>Kimberley Goh</b> Personal elements, based on themselves, affective activities.  This theme is gradually getting clearer and more developed. You can see the progression from the two Questionnaires to the Interview. What does this suggest? Students are individuals - they respond to feedback differently because of individual and personal differences?
next thing to do	
y, how does that	

Figure 3.10. Example of reflexive comments made during data analysis.

The teacher-researcher found that systematically writing reflexive notes as bracketed comments next to relevant sections was more helpful for reference and analytical purposes rather than the keeping of a separate diary. Reflexive notes were useful in bringing to light the teacher-researcher's personal assumptions and biases. The results of this were twofold. First, it made the teacher-researcher more cognisant of her own predispositions and therefore better enabled the teacher-researcher to seek alternative explanations. Reflexivity thus contributed to presenting a fairer interpretation of participants' perspectives and experiences (Check & Schutt, 2012). Second, it served as an open record of the teacher-researcher's thoughts and positions throughout the research process. Merriam (2009) has identified that this is important as it enables others to understand the researcher's influence on the research and how they arrived at particular interpretations of data.

### 3.6.4 Transferability

Transferability is concerned with how far the findings from a study can be applied to other contexts. The characteristics of both practitioner research and case study research make them particularly susceptible to claims of lack of transferability. Indeed, many debates exist as to if and how this can actually be achieved. Some authors entirely reject the notion of generalisation as being antithetical to the goals of qualitative research whilst others argue that research is meaningless if findings from one study cannot be applied to another situation (Schofield, 2002). In an effort to address the latter concern, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested that while producing universal laws is not a defensible outcome for qualitative research, studies

in one situation can indeed speak to or help form a basis for judgement about other situations. It is therefore imperative that researchers provide enough descriptive data to allow audiences to determine if findings from a study are applicable and fitting in their situation. This strategy has been referred to as ‘reader or user generalizability’ (Merriam, 2009) and ‘naturalistic generalization’ (Stake, 1995). Hence, in this study, transferability was attended to through the provision of detailed descriptions of the research contexts, including research settings, participants and research design. These descriptions were included earlier in this chapter and it is hoped that they will enable readers to judge the relevance of the findings to their own contexts.

To summarise, Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four criteria for qualitative research were used to evaluate the quality of this study. These criteria were: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Potential weaknesses in the research design of this study were identified in light of these four criteria and specific strategies were used to address these areas of weakness. Table 3.12 provides an overview of how research quality was attended to in this study. Closely related to the matter of research quality is the matter of research ethics. This will be discussed in the ensuing section.

Table 3.12

*How Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) Quality Criteria were Addressed in this Study*

Potential weakness of study	Strategies used to address potential weakness	Quality criteria addressed
Data inaccuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prolonged engagement at the research sites</li> <li>• Data triangulation</li> <li>• Peer debriefing</li> </ul>	Credibility
Unreliable conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit trail</li> <li>• Data triangulation</li> <li>• Peer debriefing</li> </ul>	Dependability
Researcher bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflexivity</li> <li>• Audit trail</li> </ul>	Confirmability
Situational uniqueness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed description of research setting and participants</li> </ul>	Transferability

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

There were several ethical issues and concerns which required consideration before commencing as well as during this study. Key concerns arose primarily from the fact that this was a practitioner research study and that children were involved as participants. The ethical considerations addressed in this section demonstrate that due consideration was given to the values of “respect for human beings, research merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence” (National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC], 2007, p. 9) as outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Ethical issues will be described below in relation to: access and informed consent, confidentiality and privacy, protection from potential harm, and duality of roles.

#### **3.7.1 Access and informed consent**

One of the foremost concerns from the outset of this research was the need to ensure that students did not feel coerced into participating in the research as a result of their pre-existing relationship with the teacher-researcher (Gorman, 2007). In this regard, considerations relating to access and informed consent were given significant attention. In the year preceding the planned start of the study, the teacher-researcher met informally with the principals of School A and School B to discuss the prospect of conducting research at the school and what this would involve on the part of the principal, classroom teachers and students. Both principals expressed their interest in the study and were supportive of the teacher-researcher’s intent to undertake practitioner research in the school.

University ethics clearance was obtained from the university’s Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: RDHU-03-16), and formal permission was then sought from the principals of School A and School B. Principals were provided with an information letter outlining details about the study and were given a consent form to complete if they were willing to allow the study to proceed (see Appendix K). After consent from the principals was received, the teacher-researcher introduced the study to the Year Five and Year Six students at School A and School B. This was



done during a normal music lesson, one school term before the study was due to proceed. As an experienced teacher, the teacher-researcher explained the purpose of the study and what it would involve in a way that students could understand. Care was taken to inform students that they did not have to take part if they did not want to, and if they did choose to take part but later changed their minds, they could pull out from the study. Students were also told that their decision would have no effect on their grades or their relationship with the teacher. During this time, the teacher-researcher answered any questions that students had about the study.

After this verbal explanation, the teacher-researcher distributed information letters and consent forms for students to take home and discuss with their parents/carers (see Appendix K). These documents reiterated what the teacher-researcher had verbally explained and were written in language appropriate to students aged 10-12. Given that students were also children and of developing maturity, parent/carer consent was required in addition to student consent before students were allowed to participate in the study (NHMRC, 2007). These measures were taken to maximise respect for students and minimise the risk of coercion.

### **3.7.2 Confidentiality and privacy**

Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of participants. Students selected their own pseudonyms during their first semi-structured interview in Term A and these were used to de-identify data collected during the study. For the duration of fieldwork, a cross-linked code was stored in a separate location to the data being collected (i.e., in a locked cabinet in the teacher-researcher's home). This code was destroyed once all data had been collected and coded with pseudonyms. Furthermore, the professional transcription service provider that was used guaranteed information privacy.

During the course of the semi-structured interviews, some students mentioned personal information that could potentially enable others, especially from within the small school community, to work out their identity. For example, one student

mentioned both his parents' occupations. To protect the identity of this student, these were replaced with appropriate phrases in the interview transcript:

*“It’s a good mark for one. And the second thing is like, my mum is a [name of occupation] and my dad is kind of a, like, an [name of occupation] so it’s like, I kind of try to impress my mum.”*

### **3.7.3 Protection from potential harm**

The majority of data was collected during regular classroom music time as part of the normal learning and teaching program. In other words, all students in the Year Five and Year Six classes at School A and School B completed the music history/appreciation projects, received written teacher feedback, and completed reflective questionnaires as part of their normal course of learning. However, only consenting students' data was collected for this study. As such, the research was minimally intrusive and did not draw undue attention to either participating students or non-participating students.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participating students. These interviews were scheduled in cooperation with students' classroom teachers so as to create as little disruption as possible to their classroom timetable. Interviews were limited to 20 minutes to ensure that students were not absent from their class for an extended period of time. Furthermore, as students were unobtrusively withdrawn from their class one student at a time, little difference would have been perceived between the participating and non-participating students in any given class.

### **3.7.4 Duality of roles**

The final ethical concern related to the duality of the teacher-researcher role. It was foreseen that as the teacher-researcher was wearing two hats, ethical issues could arise as a result of conflicting roles and responsibilities. Drake and Heath (2011) referred to this as one of the challenges of “inhabiting the hyphen” (p. 25) and highlighted the need for teacher-researchers to develop “multiple integrities” (p. 31). To prepare for this, the teacher-researcher engaged with literature on this topic before

the study commenced. This engagement with literature should be evident from the discussion in the present section of this chapter as well as the section on practitioner research (see section 3.2.2). The teacher-researcher also: (a) drew upon her own prior experience and (b) utilised critical reflection during the study.

Prior experience in conducting practitioner research enabled the teacher-researcher to pre-empt potential ethical issues. For example, it was anticipated that juggling two roles would have an impact on the teacher-researcher's time and energy. In this regard, organisation and planning were carefully managed so as to minimise the negative effects that fulfilling a dual-role would have on the teacher-researcher's capacity as both a teacher and as a researcher. For example, curriculum programming, resource creating, and organisation of school music performances were done in advance so as to leave sufficient time and energy for data collection and data analysis tasks. Conversely, preparation for data collection (e.g., photocopying of instruments, scheduling suitable interview dates and times with classroom teachers) was done ahead of time so as not to detract from teaching responsibilities.

In addition to this, critical reflection was used to address ethical issues that were unanticipated. For example, as mentioned previously, the teacher-researcher encountered difficulties as she informally observed students during music lessons. After the initial few informal classroom observations, it became evident that the teacher-researcher's observer responsibilities were impinging on her teaching responsibilities. This challenge had not been foreseen. However, reflexivity enabled the teacher-researcher to recognise the problem and make an ethical decision to write down observations as brief notes before fully typing up these notes in the teacher-researcher journal as soon as possible after each lesson. In this way, a balance was struck between maintaining research integrity as well as professional integrity. Drake and Heath (2011) have contended that whilst the teacher-researcher role can be challenging, it is this very merging of functions that enables researchers to develop "their unique and applicable perspective on their research project" (p. 32).

To summarise, key ethical considerations in this research related to the participation of children and the use of practitioner research. Appropriate measures (e.g., seeking informed consent from parents/carers and school gatekeepers as well as children

themselves) were taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has outlined the methodology of this study. A rationale was provided for the use of a qualitative practitioner research, two-case study approach to investigate how upper primary students reflected on and used two different types of written teacher feedback: written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. In light of the methodology and literature review of this study, emphasis was placed on describing the setting, participants and learning and teaching context of this research. Care was taken to be as thorough as possible in order to provide the reader with background information that would enable them to evaluate the findings of this study and assess the applicability of these findings to their situation.

To investigate the research questions of this study, multiple data collection instruments were used. Students' reflections on written teacher feedback were gathered in both written and spoken form through the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Students' use of written teacher feedback was also investigated through these reflections. However, this was corroborated through the collection and analysis of artefacts (draft music project components, final music project submissions, written whole-class feedback handouts). A teacher-researcher journal was used to record events and discussions of interest that would not otherwise have been captured by the aforementioned data collection instruments.

Data gathered during this study was primarily text-based and as such thematic analysis was the main type of analysis used. However, other methods of analysis were also employed, for example, simple frequency analysis and artefact analysis. The use of multiple data collection instruments as well as a flexible approach to data analysis accorded well with case study methodology (Bassegy, 1999; Yin, 2003). This enabled the teacher-researcher to construct a more complete picture of how upper primary students responded to written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. Decisions surrounding the collection and analysis of data were guided by

the research questions, theoretical framework and broad research approach of this study.

Many of the quality and ethical issues that emerged in relation to the design of this study were associated with the use of case study methodology, the participation of children and the dual role that the teacher-researcher held during this study.

However, issues such as these were given careful consideration to ensure the quality of this research and the wellbeing of participants. The following chapter in this thesis will present the first set of findings from this research.

# Chapter Four

## Findings: Written Individual Feedback

### 4.1 Introduction

Two types of teacher feedback were of interest in this study: written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. This chapter will focus on findings pertaining to written individual feedback. As explained in Chapter One, written individual feedback refers to feedback provided by a teacher to individual students (i.e., feedback comments written directly on individual students' work). In this study, written individual feedback was provided to students within the context of a music history/appreciation project. Students at School A and School B completed a draft component of a music history/appreciation project on the musical work 'Kakadu' composed by Peter Sculthorpe during Term A (see section 3.3.3 for a full description of the learning and teaching context of this study). This draft music project component was submitted to the teacher-researcher for formative assessment and students at both school sites received written individual feedback on their work. This chapter will present findings in relation to how students reflected on the written individual feedback they received, and how they used this feedback in the production of a final music project submission.

Findings in this chapter will be reported in three sections. Findings from School A will be put forward first followed by findings from School B. Finally, a synthesis of findings from both school sites will be outlined in keeping with two-case study methodology (see Figure 4.1 for a visual representation). This structure corresponds with the processes of intrinsic and instrumental data analysis outlined in Chapter Three (see section 3.5).

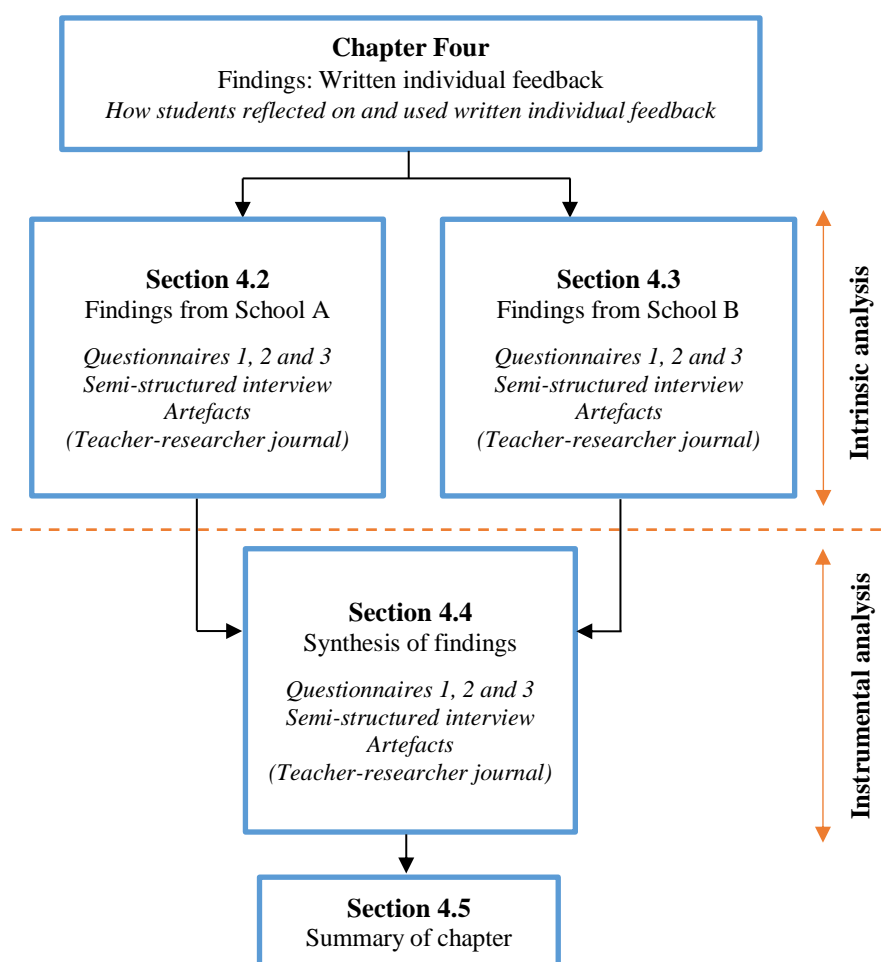


Figure 4.1. Structure of Chapter Four.

In this chapter, quotations from students will be indicated by double quotation marks and italicised text. Quotations from the teacher-researcher journal and examples of written individual feedback provided by the teacher-researcher will be presented with double quotation marks but without italicisation in order to clearly distinguish teacher-researcher data from student data.

## **4.2 School A: Written individual feedback**

This section will present findings from School A in relation to written individual feedback. It should be noted that every participant in School A completed all questionnaires, participated in a semi-structured interview and submitted all artefacts ( $n = 18$ ). Findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview will be presented first as these instruments generated similar data. This will be followed by a presentation of findings from student artefacts. Data from the teacher-researcher journal will not be reported separately as the purpose of this instrument was to provide supplementary information about how students responded to written individual feedback (see section 3.5.1.4 for more information). Instead, supplementary data from the teacher-researcher journal will be included within the context of other instruments where appropriate.

### **4.2.1 Findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interview**

Data collected from each questionnaire and the semi-structured interview was analysed separately following a three-step process of coding, categorising and identifying themes. (See sections 3.4 and 3.5 for a more complete description of each instrument as well as the process of data collection and analysis.) The results of this analysis have been summarised and presented in tables within the following pages. Table 4.1 shows findings from *Questionnaire 1*, Table 4.2 presents findings from *Questionnaire 2*, Table 4.3 summarises findings from *Questionnaire 3*, and Table 4.4 displays findings from the semi-structured interview. Each table shows the codes, categories and themes that resulted from thematic analysis and also indicates the number of units of data that comprised each theme and category. Unifying themes that arose from the data will be explained in detail after the presentation of tables.



Table 4.1

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 1 Data (School A, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...
		That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I don't disagree because I know that I will get better marks if I follow feedback."</i> - Serena	I will get better marks	
<i>"Feedback is comments that help you improve what you are doing &amp; what you are trying to achieve."</i> - Russell	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 16)
<i>"This will be quite helpful when I continue my good copy."</i> - Bardon	It is helpful	
<i>"Feedback is when someone gives information or ideas on what you could do or have already done."</i> - Olive	It is information	
<i>"Feedback is someone else's opinion [sic] on your work."</i> - Tanisha	It is someone's opinion	Information (n = 16)
<i>"I knew that there was most likely to be a mistake."</i> - Tanisha	I knew I made a mistake	
<i>"I can see where I went wrong now."</i> - Charlie	I see where I went wrong	Correction (n = 22)
		Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 54)

<i>"I messed up a bit so I felt a bit embarrassed [sic]" - Madeline</i>	I have negative feelings		Personal responses to feedback <i>Students' personal responses to feedback</i> (n = 20)
<i>"The feedback made me feel proud of myself. Especially the listening map because I put a lot of time &amp; effort into it." - Russell</i>	I have positive feelings	Emotions (n = 10)	
<i>"I thought it would be worse than it turned out to be." - Daniel</i>	I expected to do worse	Expectations (n = 6)	
<i>"I expected to get a lot right because I got what most of the questions meant." - Barack</i>	I expected to do better		
<i>"I trust the teacher." - Daniel</i>	I trust the teacher	Social context (n = 4)	
<i>"I will use some of the feedback but I will turn it into my own words." - Jake</i>	I will use some of the feedback	Action (n = 3)	
<i>"I will use all of the feedback but I will perobably [sic] need some help." - Dove</i>	I need more help		Processing of feedback <i>Students' processing and use of feedback</i> (n = 15)
<i>"The feedback on 'Why did Peter Sculthorpe wrote [sic] the piece' was good feedback but I think that I don't need to add anything more." - Jonathan</i>	I decide whether or not to use it		
<i>"I'm not going to finish." - Michelle</i>	I might not finish on time	Evaluation (n = 6)	
<i>"It was very onest [sic] with what you siad [sic] wich [sic] I liked!" - Dove</i>	It is honest		
<i>"I just can't find the instrument family Sculthorpe used to create the bird sounds." - Curry</i>	I do not know the answer		
<i>"I will use some of the feedback. The reson [sic] I said some is because sometimes I don't understand the feedback." - Tara</i>	I do not understand	Understanding (n = 6)	
<i>"I agreed with the feedback because it all made sense what I made mistakes on." - Lizzie</i>	I understand		

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 4.2

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 2 Data (School A, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I think they give me feedback so I know what I get right and wrong"</i> – Barack	I know what I got right and wrong	Correction (n = 5)	Student perceptions <i>Perceptions of the purpose and usefulness of feedback</i> (n = 26)
<i>"So you know what mistakes you might of [sic] made. And that you don't keep making the same mistake again."</i> - Jake	It points out mistakes		
<i>"Good encouraging feedback could help."</i> - Alison	It helps to encourage me	Encouragement (n = 3)	
<i>"To help you improve and get better in learning."</i> - Tanisha	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 18)	
<i>"I think teachers give you feedback because there [sic] telling you some suggestions you could use for your project/assignment [sic]."</i> - Madeline	It gives me suggestions		
<i>"The feedback I can do."</i> - Tara	I can do it	Ability (n = 4)	Student considerations <i>Considerations and factors that affect response to feedback</i> (n = 27)
<i>"If the feedback is beond [sic] my abilty [sic] to do"</i> - Tara	It is beyond my ability		
<i>"By thinking about the feedback and trying to figure out if you want to use it or not."</i> – Alison	I decide whether or not to use it	Evaluation (n = 15)	
<i>"If you disagree with the feedback given."</i> – Curry	I disagree with it		
<i>"Feedback that I start thinking I don't like."</i> – Madeline	I do not like it		

<i>"Personally [sic], if I really like the idea I had I'll try to still do it but incorporat [sic] some of the feedback into it." – Charlie</i>	I like my idea	
<i>"If the feedback is incorrect." - Tanisha</i>	It could be wrong	
<i>"Feedback might stop me if I have to do a lot and I don't have much time to complete it." - Lizzie</i>	It depends on time	Time (n = 3)
<i>"If I don't understand [sic] what it means." – Tanisha</i>	I do not understand it	
<i>"Feedback that is easy to understand &amp; feedback that does not just take 2 steps forward but little by little" - Nels</i>	It needs to be easy to understand	Understanding (n = 5)

*Note.* n = number of coded units of data

Table 4.3

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 3 Data (School A, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes... That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I put in more info for why did Peter write Kakadu? I used it because I wanted to get a better mark."</i> - Serena	I wanted to get better marks	Improvement (n = 33)
<i>"Yes so I can improve for next time round."</i> - Daniel	I wanted to improve	
<i>"In one of the parts she said it was not right, so I listened to it again &amp; found the correct answer."</i> - Nels	I wanted to correct my mistakes	Correction (n = 12)
<i>"I always use feedback because sometimes you need a second pair of eyes to show you something wrong with your work."</i> - Curry	It showed me what was wrong	
<i>"I have to reasearch [sic] again to get the correct answer but that's being lazy."</i> - Nels	I had to do more research	Work and time (n = 3)
<i>"I coundn't [sic] finish it on time"</i> - Tara	It depended on time	
<i>"I thought the rest was good enough."</i> – Madeline	I thought my work was good enough	Evaluation (n = 4)
<i>"If the person giving you feedback is the same person marking it, I will never ignore it."</i> – Curry	It was from the teacher	
<i>"Some teachers can be harsh with feedback."</i> – Michelle	Teachers can be harsh	Social context (n = 6)
<i>"I didn't understand it."</i> – Tara	I did not understand it	
<i>"I made my listning [sic] map smaller because it was something I could understand."</i> - Tara	I understood it	Understanding (n = 7)

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 4.4

*Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Data (School A, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I know that I can change it and that could give me a better mark in music." - Jake</i>	It helps me get better marks		
<i>"I accept every feedback because, like, if I don't have feedback, I don't know what to improve on." - Lizzie</i>	It helps me improve		
<i>"To also maybe learn some new things if I look at my work and then I look at the feedback and I'm like, 'Oh yeah, I didn't know that!'" - Dove</i>	It helps me learn	Improvement (n = 53)	
<i>"The feedback I get in school is helpful. It's like when for maths you need a calculator. A calculator is always there to help you. It's just like feedback when, like, you've written something. Feedback is like a calculator in maths, it helps you when you think." - Lizzie</i>	It is helpful		Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 103)
<i>"It's kind of like a type of communication between the teacher and the student, if it's from a teacher to a student." - Bardon</i>	It is a type of communication		
<i>"So, it's kind of good to get feedback so that you know what you're, like, doing and you can hear from someone else's perspective." - Jake</i>	It is someone else's perspective on my work	Information (n = 16)	
<i>"It shows in which parts that I'm not doing super well in but before I see it I think I'm doing very well and then I see it and I'm just like, 'Oh'." - Daniel</i>	It tells me how I am going with my work		

<i>"I see the errors there that I didn't see before."</i> – Lizzie	I see my mistakes		
<i>"I think it's a good thing so, like, you can know what you got wrong"</i> - Barack	It is good to know what I got wrong	Correction (n = 34)	
<i>"I think you should every now and then have a 'Good job' or 'Great' or 'Well done' thing but most of your things should be correction."</i> - Tanisha	It should point out positive things as well as errors		
<i>"I feel very confident about handing it in."</i> - Jonathan	I feel more confident		
<i>"I get really stressed."</i> – Olive	I feel stressed		
<i>"I feel happy and encouraged to do better work."</i> – Alison	I feel happy		
<i>"I felt quite proud."</i> - Russell	I feel proud		
<i>"Some people in my class are quite emotional. So, it depends on how hard they take criticism and how harsh you could say that criticism is."</i> Interviewer: How do you think you take criticism? <i>"I think I take it quite well."</i> - Tanisha	I take criticism well	Emotions (n = 21)	Personal responses to feedback <i>Students' personal responses to feedback</i> (n = 77)
<i>"Some teachers can go overboard with feedback and they can just— so they start writing good feedback and then they get worse and they put kids down so I think that's one reason that kids don't use that feedback because it's, like, un-encouraging them, like, it's putting them down."</i> – Michelle	It can be discouraging		
<i>"Feedback that is repeated. So sometimes, like, in like, a good copy that has many questions, it might, like, have, like, feedback that is one thing, and on the next page it said the same thing over again and I get really annoyed at that sometimes"</i> - Michelle	Repeated feedback is annoying		

<p><i>"I'm just going to say this, but I know that I'm not, like, the smartest in my class. So, if I at least get, like, over fifty or something, like, I'm still happy that I passed or whatever."</i> – Charlie</p>	<p>I do not expect to do very well</p>	
<p><i>"I actually expected a lot more errors than I actually got. That, that doesn't mean that I was expecting to do poorly, but I just lower my expectations so that if I do get, like, I lower my brain to tell me, then I wouldn't be too sad about it."</i> - Curry</p>	<p>I did better than expected</p>	
<p><i>"I remember I needed to fix up a few things when I handed in my draft so I expected quite a bit of it."</i> – Tanisha</p>	<p>I expected feedback in some areas</p>	<p>Expectations (n = 20)</p>
<p><i>"I feel like, um, I thought I got it right but I can do better and I thought I got quite a lot of stuff but actually I didn't."</i> – Barack</p>	<p>I thought I would do better</p>	
<p><i>"I know that if I try my absolute hardest then... I wouldn't be telling myself 'Well, I could have done way better than that, if I had just put a little bit more effort in'... Some of it is maybe just my own competitiveness... I just like, you know, to get the best marks, in a way. [Laughs] Like, not the best marks, but at least good marks because I'm always aiming for at least over 90%."</i> – Curry</p>	<p>I aim to do well</p>	
<p><i>"And the second thing is, like, my mum is a [name of occupation] and my dad is kind of a like an [name of occupation], so it's like, I kind of try to impress my mum."</i> – Jake</p>	<p>I want to impress my parents</p>	<p>Parents (n = 2)</p>



<p><i>"No, it doesn't really bother me but except, like, if it's just straight to the point thing: 'You did this wrong. You should have changed it' [slaps hand]... because sometimes if you really want to get the feedback into them, you have to, like, break it so they actually read it, like, so they continue reading it. If they get, like, one really, like, kind of mean then they just might stop reading it" – Bardon</i></p>	<p>I do not like feedback that is straight to the point</p>	<p>Preferences (n = 16)</p>
<p><i>"But, like, with the negative [feedback], sort of make it, like, tell them what they have to do but, um, like make it sound positive as well. Make it sort of tell them what to do and make it, like, positive together... [For example,] if you were doing, um, if you had a test and then you got feedback on it, and the teacher's, like, 'Oh, you did well, you got this much out of however much and you did well, so you can keep on practising and maybe you might get to a high level next time' or something like that." - Olive</i></p>	<p>I prefer feedback phrased in a positive or encouraging way</p>	
<p><i>"Well, maybe [teachers could] make a slot of time where we can— where you can, um, go to your teacher and ask for help on the feedback or maybe ask her to explain some of the feedback that she gave." – Curry</i></p>	<p>I would like the teacher to talk to me about the feedback</p>	
<p><i>"You wouldn't, like, change the student's work as you would change your own work as in, maybe you might work the whole thing differently and from a different perspective but since it's the student's work you can only, like, give feedback on the stuff that, you know, if they changed it, it would still be their work." – Curry</i></p>	<p>It should not change my work too much</p>	
<p><i>"The teachers are trying to help me." – Charlie</i></p>	<p>I know teachers are trying to help me</p>	<p>View of teacher (n = 18)</p>
<p><i>"Some teachers can go overboard when they have favouritism. So, a person might be, like, they've done that question really bad and the teacher, but the teacher likes them so the teacher might give, like, really good feedback." – Michelle</i></p>	<p>Teachers can show favouritism</p>	
<p><i>"I decided you know what's best and you know what's correct" – Tanisha</i></p>	<p>The teacher knows best</p>	
<p><i>"I've done something that is good and that you like." – Madeline</i></p>	<p>The teacher liked my work</p>	

<i>"I asked my dad and he helped me with it and I asked him how could I change that to make it, like, more realistic." - Dove</i>	I ask for help		
<i>"I sometimes do this. I sometimes go to another peer or the teacher and get them to have a look over it. I'd just ask, 'Do you think this is, um, right? Do you think I have fixed my mistakes that I made?'" - Tanisha</i>	I ask someone to check my corrections		
<i>"And the feedback in the listening map with the 'dramatic', I changed that a little bit." – Jonathan</i>	I make changes		
<i>"I sometimes read what I've written using the feedback, like, changing it in my mind but not changing it on the computer screen or the paper so I get an idea of what it's going to sound like and look like." - Jonathan</i>	I make mental changes	Action (n = 44)	Processing of feedback Students' processing and use of feedback (n = 93)
<i>"I've researched it a bit and I found that there's this way you can make, like, a harmonic sound, artificial harmonic sound. It sounds kind of like a seagull... That took about thirty minutes to, you know, get enough information to, you know, kind of back up my theory." – Curry</i>	I put in time and work		
<i>"I tried to think of ways to, like, input it into my good copy." – Charlie</i>	I try to use it		
<i>"If I think I don't need it, I just won't do it." - Madeline</i>	I do not think I need it		
<i>"I check with myself to see if it's right, then yeah, I just input it... If it's wrong, honestly, I'll just ignore it honestly." - Russell</i>	It could be wrong		
<i>"So, like, you might not want to use it because it interferes with your plans and you think your plans are quite good." – Bardon</i>	It interferes with my plans	Evaluation (n = 23)	
<i>"So I might just go, uh, I'll just cut off those ones and I'll do these ones so I have less stuff to do." – Michelle</i>	It is too much work		

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<p><i>“I think describe it a bit better, because... sometimes I get confused like, ‘Oh, what does this mean?’ But if you, like, if the teachers explained it more I think that would be a bit easier to understand.” - Charlie</i></p>	<p>Clear explanations help me understand</p>	
<p><i>“Sometimes I didn’t quite understand it.” - Lizzie</i></p>	<p>I do not understand</p>	
<p><i>“Write it in a way that we can understand but also a way that doesn’t make us look like—make us sound like we’re really stupid. You have to make sure it’s at the perfect level otherwise people will be thinking ‘Great, now my teacher thinks I’m stupid’ or ‘Well, my teacher is too smart for me because it looks like gibberish’.” - Tanisha</i></p>	<p>I need feedback that is just at my level</p>	<p>Understanding (n = 26)</p>
<p><i>“I understand it” - Nels</i></p>	<p>I understand</p>	

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*Note.* n = number of coded units of data.

As evidenced in the analysis shown in the preceding tables, similar themes emerged from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. For example, the themes of ‘student perceptions’ (*Questionnaire 2*) and ‘advantages of feedback’ (*Questionnaire 3*) echoed ideas pertaining to the theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ (*Questionnaire 1* and semi-structured interview). This suggested that students’ reflections on written individual feedback were fairly stable and consistent. It also suggested that data saturation was being reached as few new categories of data appeared in relation to each instrument (Saunders et al., 2018). Collectively, data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview revealed three unifying themes:

1. students’ perspectives on feedback,
2. students’ personal responses to feedback, and
3. students’ processing of feedback.

Each of these themes will now be explained in greater detail.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback***

The theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ contained data that related to students’ views of feedback and the purpose of feedback. Students’ written reflections showed that their perspectives on feedback centred around the conceptual categories of (a) ‘improvement’, (b) ‘information’, and (c) ‘correction’.

##### *Improvement*

Data in the category of ‘improvement’ emphasised the way in which written individual feedback enabled students to improve and do better in their work. Students used written individual feedback because they believed that it would help them “*do better the next time I do it*” and “*improve for next time round*”. Students explained that they would not know what to improve on without feedback. Thus, written individual feedback was seen as a helpful tool or resource:

*“It’s like when for maths you need a calculator. A calculator is always there to help you. It’s just like feedback when, like, you’ve written something. Feedback is like a calculator in maths, it helps you when you think.”*

Although students consistently identified that written individual feedback helped them to improve, it was interesting to observe that improvement was linked to various end-points. For example, students believed that written individual feedback ultimately enabled them to “*learn some new things*”, “*gain more marks*”, or “*understand concepts [sic]*”. Not surprisingly, obtaining better marks was the main consideration for students. In other words, they responded to written individual feedback because they thought that it would help them achieve a higher grade in their “*good copy*” or final music project submission. For example, when Tanisha was asked what made her want to use feedback, she stated: “*Um, just like the, the aspiration you could say to try and get, like, top marks as you will hear from a few students I think.*”

### *Information*

The category of ‘information’ highlighted the way in which feedback told students about something or provided them with information. In this study, written individual feedback was teacher-given and as such, students generally associated feedback with a teacher’s “*opinion*” or “*thoughts*”. For example, one student explained, “*Feedback is the thoughts of your teacher about your work, used to tell you how you are going. If you should add, takeaway or review parts of your work.*” Interestingly, students observed that their view of their work was not necessarily on par with what was expected. As Daniel reflected:

*“It shows in which parts that I’m not doing super well in but before I see it I think I’m doing very well and then I see it and I’m just like, ‘Oh’.”*

Students also reflected on feedback as “*a type of communication*”. Students considered the differences between feedback as written information and feedback as spoken information. They explained that written feedback was time-efficient because students could “*read it straight away*” rather than waiting for the teacher “*to pull them over*” and talk to them. They identified that spoken feedback was generally “*easier to understand*” but sometimes “*harder to take*” because it was “*kind of like saying it straight to your face*”. Although the focus of this study was not on spoken feedback, students’ spontaneous comments about the differences between written

and spoken feedback were interesting and served to highlight the different ways that students received feedback information.

### *Correction*

Data belonging to the category of ‘correction’ related to the way in which written individual feedback identified areas of work that were incorrect or that were not necessarily wrong but could be improved. Students reflected on the role of feedback in helping them to recognise and correct mistakes in their work. They explained that it enabled them to “*see the errors there that I didn’t see before*”. This could have been due to their being unaware of an error, not checking their work carefully, or simply wanting to believe that their work was good. It was interesting to observe that students who successfully corrected mistakes generally engaged in additional work such as reading a resource or listening to the set musical work again.

An awareness of the corrective function of feedback featured strongly in students’ reflections. They recognised that written individual feedback pointed out “*faults*” or “*mistakes*” in their work and made suggestions to correct these areas. As Jake observed, “*you know what mistakes you might of [sic] made*” and “*you don’t keep making the same mistake again.*” However, students also highlighted two issues in relation to the corrective function of feedback. Firstly, they explained that feedback was more helpful when it told them exactly what was wrong and explained how to correct the error. They also felt that the corrective function of feedback needed to be balanced with the identification of positive aspects of their work. In other words, students wanted to receive both affirmative (positive) as well as constructive (negative) comments. As one student reflected:

*“I just like the feedback that tells me my mistakes so I can change them and it is nice to have an occasional ‘Good job’ or ‘Well done’ on it or you might think, ‘Oh, the teacher is just showing me my mistakes. They don’t think I’ve done anything good.’”*

#### ***4.2.1.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback***

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ highlighted the personal way in which students responded to written individual feedback. Data showed that students responded to written individual feedback based on their personal (a) ‘emotions’, (b) ‘preferences’, (c) ‘expectations’, (d) ‘view of teacher’, and (e) ‘parents’.

##### *Emotions*

The category of ‘emotions’ related to the feelings that students experienced when receiving written individual feedback. In general, two types of emotional responses were evident in students’ reflections:

1. a negative emotional response to constructive feedback (i.e., feedback that indicated errors and provided advice on what to do next), and
2. a positive emotional response to affirmative feedback (i.e., feedback that indicated correctness or identified what a student had done well).

Negative emotions included feelings such as being annoyed, discouraged, embarrassed and upset. These feelings were generated in response to written individual feedback that identified errors or that suggested areas for improvement. For example, Madeline “*felt a bit embarrassed [sic]*” about mistakes that she had made and Tara felt “*a bit upset*” at “*harsh*” feedback that said her work was “*not good enough*”. However, Tara qualified this by explaining that when feedback provided her with guidance and was achievable, she felt fine. Positive emotions included feeling “*happy*”, “*excited*”, “*very confident*”, “*less worried*” and “*proud*”. Students experienced these types of feelings when written individual feedback identified what they had done well.

The differences in emotional responses between students was quite striking. For example, some students (e.g., Tara) demonstrated a highly emotional response to written individual feedback whilst others explained that they felt comfortable receiving any type of feedback. They took criticism “*quite well*” and were not “*emotional*” about it. As one student reflected, “*I just read it and think, ‘Okay, this is what I need to do.’ There’s no point of making your mind think of it badly.*” Another small group of students felt highly stressed when they felt that they were

unable to use written individual feedback. This was usually the result of multiple factors (e.g., too difficult to understand or use, insufficient time).

### *Preferences*

Data belonging to the category of ‘preferences’ related to students’ likes and dislikes with regard to feedback. Three sets of responses were evident in this category. One set of responses focussed on a preference for written individual feedback to be delivered in a “*positive*”, “*encouraging*” or “*really gentle*” way rather than “*straight to the point*”. Some students linked this preference to their own personal characteristics (e.g., being sensitive and easily upset).

The second set of responses focussed on a preference for written individual feedback to be accompanied by follow-up discussions with the teacher. Interestingly, students expressed a wish for the teacher to be the one to initiate this dialogue. For example, they wanted the teacher to allocate “*a slot of time*” for feedback discussions with individual students. They wanted the teacher to “*pull them to the side and say ‘Can I read your feedback to you?’*”. They wanted the teacher to approach students with an offer of help and to “*talk the feedback*” with them. One student explained that they would like the teacher to initiate discussions about feedback because sometimes they felt “*too scared to go up to the teacher*” to ask questions about the feedback they received. This was an interesting finding.

The third set of responses focussed on a preference for written individual feedback that did not change students’ original work too much. Students wanted to retain ownership of their work. They did not want feedback that changed their work so much so that it became their teacher’s work. This was particularly important to boys who explained that they did not like written individual feedback that told them “*that they should write it like this*” or that gave them “*pretty much all of their ideas*”.

### *Expectations*

The category of ‘expectations’ related to students’ expectations of written individual feedback as well as to students’ expectations of themselves as individuals. In relation to their expectations of written individual feedback, students expected constructive feedback because they knew that they had not done as much as they could have or



because they were unsure about their original responses. For example, one student explained:

*“Definitely, in the PMI chart I knew that I needed to add a few more points so I definitely wasn’t too shocked that I saw that... I thought myself that I didn’t add enough and also in the ‘Why did he do it’ section, I knew that I needed to add a bit more but again I didn’t have time.”*

In general, students thought they had done better than expected. For example, one student *“expected a lot more incorrect things”* and another thought that they would have *“done really bad in all of them”*. Students typically interpreted how well they had done based on the type of feedback they received. For instance, receiving affirmative feedback or a limited amount of constructive feedback was equated with having done well.

Students also responded to written individual feedback in light of the general expectations they had of themselves. These were typically high expectations. Students with high personal expectations exhibited a sense of *“competitiveness”* and expressed a desire *“to do my best in school”*. For instance, one student explained that they tried their *“absolute hardest”* with regard to schoolwork and were *“always aiming”* to achieve a top result so that *“I wouldn’t be telling myself, ‘Well, I could have done way better than that if I had just put a little bit more effort in.’”*

#### *View of the teacher*

Data in the category of ‘view of the teacher’ pertained to students’ perceptions of the teacher. Students generally believed that teachers *“actually care for their students”*, *“teachers just want me to do my best”*, and teachers were trying to *“teach”* or *“help”* them learn. Surprisingly, two students reflected on their general experiences in school and identified that teachers could be *“biased”* and show *“favouritism”* to certain students. They therefore believed that feedback from teachers could not always be trusted. For example, Tanisha stated, *“They can’t just because if they like one student, and they don’t like another, they can’t say that everything is good about one student and bad about another... if they have favourites and are super strict with*

*everybody else, you don't really care about the feedback because you don't even know if it's honest".*

Students explained that they would respond to written individual feedback because of the position of the teacher and their level of trust in her. For example, they used phrases like *"Miss Goh's more experienced than me and knows the topic better,"* and *"I trust the teacher."* They deferred to the teacher as they believed she was more experienced and, in her position as a teacher, was more likely to be correct. In spite of this, it was interesting that students decided to use feedback even though they thought their original answer was correct simply because they knew that the teacher providing it would ultimately be the one assessing their final music project submission. As one student put it, *"I'd rather go with my teacher's opinion because she's the one that's going to mark it,"* and *"If the person giving you feedback is the same person marking it, I will never ignore it."* Reflections such as these emphasised the social setting of written individual feedback. Students considered who was providing them with feedback as well as the broader context of feedback.

#### *Parents*

The final category of 'parents' related to students' consideration of their parents. This category contained data from just one student. When receiving feedback, Jake reflected on how happy and impressed his parents would be with the comments he received. He wanted to *"try to impress my mum"*.

#### **4.2.1.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback**

The theme 'processing of feedback' emphasised the thinking and acting processes that students engaged in when responding to feedback. This theme contained three categories: (a) 'understanding', (b) 'evaluation' and (c) 'action'.

### *Understanding*

The category of ‘understanding’ contained data that emphasised cognitive understanding or comprehension. Data showed that students sought to make sense of the written individual feedback they received. Bardon’s reflection on the feedback he received demonstrates this sense-making process. He reflected, *“I can understand [sic] why Miss Goh wrote this. I can see all the points she wrote about it.”* Not surprisingly, students identified that their use of written individual feedback was dependent on their understanding of it. In other words, if they did not understand the feedback they received, they would not use it.

Understanding feedback was a particularly significant issue for certain students. For example, Tara repeatedly emphasised that she would not use feedback that she could not understand. In her reflections, she stressed her *“need to understand things”* in order to make improvements. Lack of understanding was sometimes connected to the words or terminology used in feedback, particularly when students did not understand a subject very well. As one student explained:

*“I think, like, say if there was someone who doesn’t really understand whatever subject it is, they need to put it in more basic words so they can understand it... or someone who really understands the subject and they get it, like, all the time, you can put it in more words that would be more related to the subject”.*

Students identified that simple, descriptive and clear explanations helped them to understand feedback better. However, they also highlighted the idea that teachers needed to know them and what they were capable of. Feedback needed to be just at the right level for them. An explanation that Nels provided in relation to this was particularly illuminating. She explained that feedback was helpful when it was *“easy to understand”* and when it moved her forward *“little by little”* rather than jumping too far ahead. She drew a small diagram to illustrate her thoughts (see Figure 4.2).

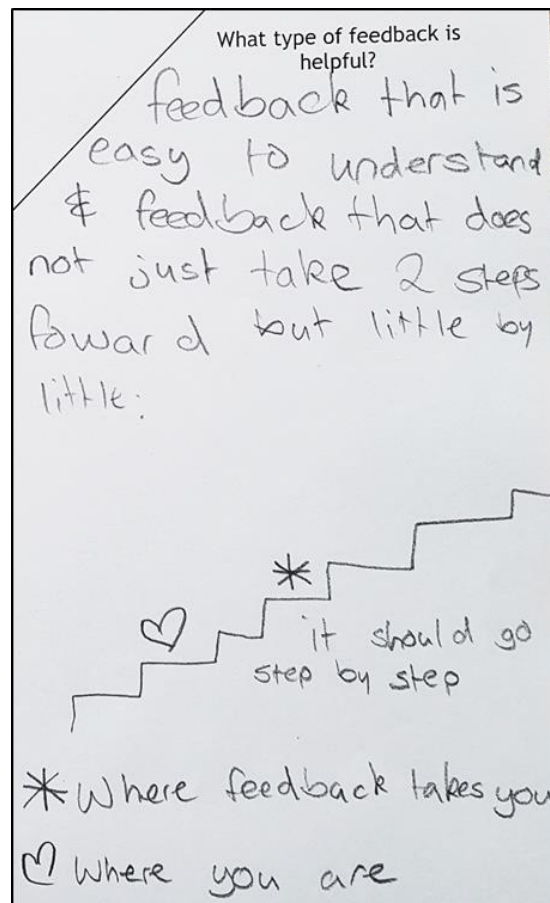


Figure 4.2. Nels' diagram from Questionnaire 2, Term A.

### Evaluation

The category of 'evaluation' related to the way in which students evaluated or appraised the feedback they received. Three key findings were present in the data. Firstly, a sense of autonomy and independence was evident in students' evaluative responses. Students made judgements about the accuracy of feedback (e.g., if it was "true" or "marked right") and its alignment with their ideas or plans. For example, some students stated that they might not use written individual feedback if the teacher's ideas conflicted with their own ideas. As one student explained, they would not use feedback if "you see your work one way and the teacher sees it another way. You may have done something on purpose and the teacher dosean't [sic] really like [it]." Other students explained that if they really liked their original idea, they would make a compromise by retaining their original work but trying to "incorprat [sic] some of the feedback into it". Still others thought that their work was fine the way it was and therefore did not want to the use the feedback. As Madeline stated, "If I

*think I don't need it, I just won't do it" and "I think mine is already fine. It's fine the way it is. I don't really need it."*

Secondly, students evaluated feedback in relation to the amount of work or time that would be involved in using feedback. They explained that if feedback created *"too much work to do"*, they would say to themselves, *"I'll just cut off those ones and I'll do these ones... so I have less stuff to do"* or they would try to *"break it back down to something that barely changed it"*. Students essentially considered the cost involved in using written individual feedback. Yet, it was interesting that a few students ultimately chose to use the written individual feedback they received despite the additional work required whilst others cited lack of time as a reason for not using certain feedback items.

Thirdly, students evaluated written individual feedback based on their personal beliefs about their own capacity or ability. For example, Tara stated that she would not use feedback *"If the feedback is something I can't do"* and *"If the feedback is beond [sic] my abilty [sic] to do"*. It was interesting that students who had self-reported a high level of ability in relation to music also had similar considerations (see section 3.3.2.1 for more information about Likert scale self-descriptions). For example, Curry explained that he might not use feedback if *"it is a problem too hard for you to solve by yourself"*. Thus, evaluation of feedback based on ability was evident amongst a spectrum of students – those who had self-reported high levels of ability in relation to music as well as those who had not.

### *Action*

The final category of 'action' pertained to actions that students took or would take in response to written individual feedback. Reflection on 'action' was evident in students' responses to *Questionnaire 1* and the semi-structured interview. However, due to the timing of these instruments, students generally reflected on action to lesser degree in *Questionnaire 1* as compared to their semi-structured interview (see Section 3.4 for more information about the data collection process). Data from *Questionnaire 1* related more to students' future plans as this instrument was completed immediately after students had received written individual feedback. They reflected on their future actions in a specific as well as general way. For example,

Dove explained that she would “*poot [sic] more intreaging [sic] sounds*” in her listening map. This plan of action was linked directly to a specific item of written individual feedback that Dove had received. Others reflected more generally on their future actions: “*I will use some of the feedback but I will turn it into my own words.*” As mentioned in section 3.4.2.1, planning for future action was also explicitly included as part of *Questionnaire 1* as students were required to describe what they would do with the written individual feedback they received. Students were given the option of selecting from four given responses or writing their own response. Data collected from this question showed that most students identified that they would use all or some/most of the written individual feedback they received (see Appendix I). Madeline’s response was anomalous as she was the only student who indicated that she did not think she would use any of the written individual feedback she had received.

Data from students’ semi-structured interviews showed that students usually acted on the written individual feedback they received by making changes to their work and fixing areas that needed adjustment. It was interesting to observe that one group of students invested a substantial amount of time and work in order to respond to written individual feedback. For example, they listened to a music recording again, did research to figure out the answer to a question posed in feedback, and re-read resources on a topic. This was frequently time-consuming. As one student explained:

*“I’ve researched it a bit and I found that there’s this way you can make, like, a harmonic sound, artificial harmonic sound. It sounds kind of like a seagull... That took about thirty minutes to, you know, get enough information to, you know, kind of back up my theory.”*

Students generally tried to use or “*input*” the written individual feedback they received but if they were not able to use it, they would either delete their original work or leave it as it stood. An alternative strategy that students employed was to use “*some*” of the feedback or change their work “*a little bit*” as a way of compromise.

Students also identified that they would ask for help if they did not understand the written individual feedback they received. Some students had established a hierarchy of help that moved from thinking about the feedback on their own, to asking a peer, and finally asking the teacher for help. As explained in Chapter Three, data from the

teacher-researcher journal was used to cross-check findings relating to questions that students asked about written individual feedback. Observations recorded in the teacher-researcher journal showed that four out of a total of eighteen students asked the teacher-researcher questions about the written individual feedback they received. It was interesting that some students who said they had difficulty understanding feedback and who said they would ask the teacher-researcher for help did not actually end up doing so (e.g., Tara, Charlie, Michelle).

#### **4.2.1.4 Summary**

Findings from *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview contained similar repeated ideas. Three unifying themes could be identified in the data collected: ‘perspectives on feedback’, ‘personal responses to feedback’, and ‘processing of feedback’. Data pertaining to the theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ showed that students in School A reflected strongly on how written individual feedback helped them to improve. This improvement was linked to a variety of end-results (e.g., good grades, new learning, better understanding). However, the main concern for students in School A was the achievement of good grades or marks. Students recognised that written individual feedback gave them an opportunity to correct errors or weak areas in their work. However, they believed that constructive feedback needed to tell them exactly what they should do to improve, and it needed to be balanced with affirmative feedback. Students also reflected on how written individual feedback provided them with information about their work and progress. They considered the differences between feedback as written communication and spoken communication.

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ emphasised the personal ways in which students responded to written individual feedback. For example, students responded to feedback based on their personal emotions, expectations, preferences and views of the teacher. In general, students’ emotions were usually linked to the type of feedback they had received (i.e., positive emotions were associated with affirmative feedback whilst negative emotions were associated with constructive feedback). It was interesting to observe that some students responded to written

individual feedback more emotively than others. Data belonging to this theme also drew attention to the significance of students' personal characteristics in relation to the feedback process. For instance, some students had high expectations of themselves, some students were sensitive and easily upset, and some took criticism quite well. These personal features affected the way that students responded to written individual feedback. Students also had personal preferences with regard to written individual feedback. Three sets of preferences emerged from the data: (a) a preference for feedback to be phrased in a positive and encouraging way, (b) a preference for follow-up discussions with the teacher, and (c) a preference for feedback that did not change their work too much. Students' personal views of the teacher were an additional consideration when reflecting on written individual feedback. Students generally believed that teachers were trying to help them. They tended to defer to the teacher because they were aware that the teacher would be the one assessing their final submissions. However, a minority of students felt that teachers could be biased and show favouritism in the feedback they provided.

In relation to the theme of 'processing of feedback', data showed that students processed the written individual feedback they received by evaluating it, trying to understand it and acting on it. Students who evaluated written individual feedback generally identified that they did not use feedback for a variety of reasons (e.g., if it was wrong, interfered with their plans, or was too much work). Students tried to understand written individual feedback and make sense of it. However, unclear explanations and confusing terminology hindered students' understanding. Students identified that teachers needed to know their students and what they were capable of in order to provide them with understandable feedback. Students acted on written individual feedback in different ways. They generally tried to use the written individual feedback they had received and stated that they would ask for help if they did not understand it. However, this did not always take place. Some students expended whatever time and work was necessary to act on feedback whereas others who felt unable to use feedback (e.g., not enough time, confused) employed strategies such as utilising only some of the feedback items they received.



## 4.2.2 Findings from artefacts

Artefacts consisted of students' draft music project components (including written individual feedback from the teacher-researcher) and students' final music project submissions. Data from artefacts were analysed following a two-step process of comparison and collation (see section 3.5.1.3 for more detailed information about the data analysis process). Artefacts from School A showed that students received an average of seven items of written individual feedback on their draft music project component. On average, two of these items were affirmative in nature (e.g., "The comments in these sections show good thinking, Lizzie. Good job for using music terminology!") whilst five of these items were constructive in nature (e.g., "Good description of mood (spooky) and instruments. I think you could also describe the tempo and dynamics. Try to do this for all the sections. It will help you show better listening skills."). It should be noted that constructive feedback may have been prefaced with a positive or affirming comment. However, the main purpose of the feedback was to improve or correct an aspect of the student's work. Feedback items such as these were therefore identified as being essentially constructive. Students were not expected to use or make any changes to their work in response to affirmative feedback items. Hence, the focus during analysis was on how students responded to constructive feedback items. Data showed that students had different types of responses to constructive feedback.

### 4.2.2.1 Types of responses to feedback

Students responded to an item of constructive feedback in one of four ways. It was interesting to observe that students did not always respond to every item of constructive feedback in the same way. Students either *fully used* a feedback item, *partially used* a feedback item, did *not use* a feedback item or *deleted* their original work in response to a feedback item (see Figure 4.3). Each of these responses will now be explained in more detail. (See Appendix L for a full record of how students used each feedback item they received.)

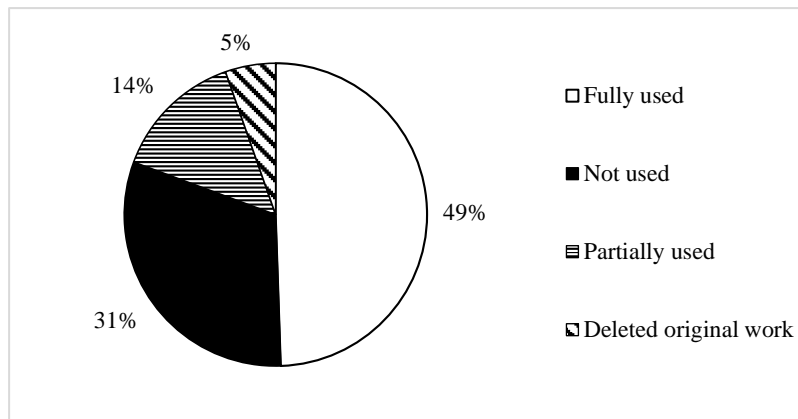


Figure 4.3. Types of responses to constructive feedback items (School A, Term A) ( $n = 93$ ).

### *Fully used*

Students fully used an item of feedback when they completely applied the feedback they received to improve their work. For example, Curry received the following feedback from the teacher-researcher on his draft music project component:

“Good comments here. You talked about the instruments, mood, form and dynamics. What do you think about the tempo? Did it match the idea of Kakadu?”

Curry fully used this item of feedback by adding a statement that discussed the tempo of the music and his thoughts about whether it matched the idea of Kakadu.

Most feedback items that were fully used required relatively straightforward changes. For example, students answered simple prompting questions such as “Who gave these instructions?” and responded to brief comments like “One section is missing between B and C.” However, it was interesting to observe that certain students fully used feedback items that required more substantial changes or application to multiple parts of their work. For instance, Tanisha received the following comment on her listening map:

“Good description of tempo, mood and instruments. What was the dynamic like? Try to include this information in each section. It will help you show better listening skills.”

Tanisha listened to the piece of music again, and described the dynamic for each of the six sections in her listening map. This involved thorough checking of her work.

### *Partially used*

Students partially used an item of feedback when they applied feedback to some extent. For example, Serena received the following feedback on her draft music project component:

“Maybe try to include information about the tempo and dynamics you hear in each section. This will help you show good listening skills.”

Serena partially used this item of feedback by adding information about the tempo to some but not all of the sections in her listening map. She also did not add any information about the dynamics to any section in her listening map. Items of feedback that students partially used generally required students to apply feedback to more than one part of their work and necessitated careful checking. They also tended to contain several suggestions or ideas. For example, Nels received the comment:

“You’re on the right track, Nels! Here are a few more ideas: Did the introduction have a fast or slow tempo? Do you think this matched the idea of Kakadu? Did the piece start loud or soft? Do you think this was a good idea?”

Nels partially used this item of feedback by responding to only the first two questions.

Several reasons could be suggested as to why students partially used feedback items based on the categories that emerged during thematic analysis of students’ questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Students may have partially used an item of feedback if they liked their original idea and had only incorporated some of the feedback into their work as a way of compromise. Alternatively, students may not have understood all the feedback, or may have felt that they did not have enough time to fully use all the feedback. These reasons could help to explain the partial use of feedback items especially those containing multiple suggestions or ideas.

### *Not used*

Students did not use an item of feedback when they did not make any changes in response to the feedback provided. For example, Dove received the following feedback comment on her draft music project component:

“Great start, Dove! You have some super ideas here. Here’s another one: What was the tempo of the music? Do you think it matched the idea of ‘Kakadu’?”

Dove did not use this feedback in any way. Items of feedback that were not used by students did not demonstrate any noticeable patterns. Some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “This looks easy to understand. I wonder if adding some pictures would help to make it look more interesting?”) whilst others required more substantial changes (e.g., “Try to include some information about the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in each section. This will help you show good listening skills.”). In either case, students who received these comments did not use the item of feedback they received.

As with feedback that was partially used, several reasons could be suggested as to why students did not use feedback items. These reasons relate primarily to the categories of ‘evaluation’ and ‘understanding’ as identified in the thematic analysis of students’ questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Students may not have used an item of feedback because they believed that they did not need it (e.g., their work was fine the way it was, the feedback was incorrect), or because they did not understand it.

#### *Deleted original work*

Students deleted their original work when they removed the part of their work to which feedback referred. For example, Serena received the following comment on her draft music project component:

“I’m not quite sure what you mean. Could you explain this a little more?”

Serena responded by deleting the sentence to which this item of feedback referred.

Deleting original work was less commonly used by students in comparison to the preceding three responses. Reasons for deletion of work could be related to students’ ability to use the feedback. For example, during their semi-structured interview, one student explained that they would try to use the written individual feedback they received but if they could not “*make it happen*” then they would “*either just leave it or just would delete it*”. With this understanding of students’ four types of responses

to constructive feedback in mind, attention will now be turned to general patterns in students' use of written individual feedback.

#### 4.2.2.2 *Patterns in feedback use*

Data pertaining to the feedback use of each student in School A was collated into a graph (see Figure 4.4). This graph showed the frequency of types of responses to constructive feedback for each student, and allowed general patterns in students' feedback use to be identified.

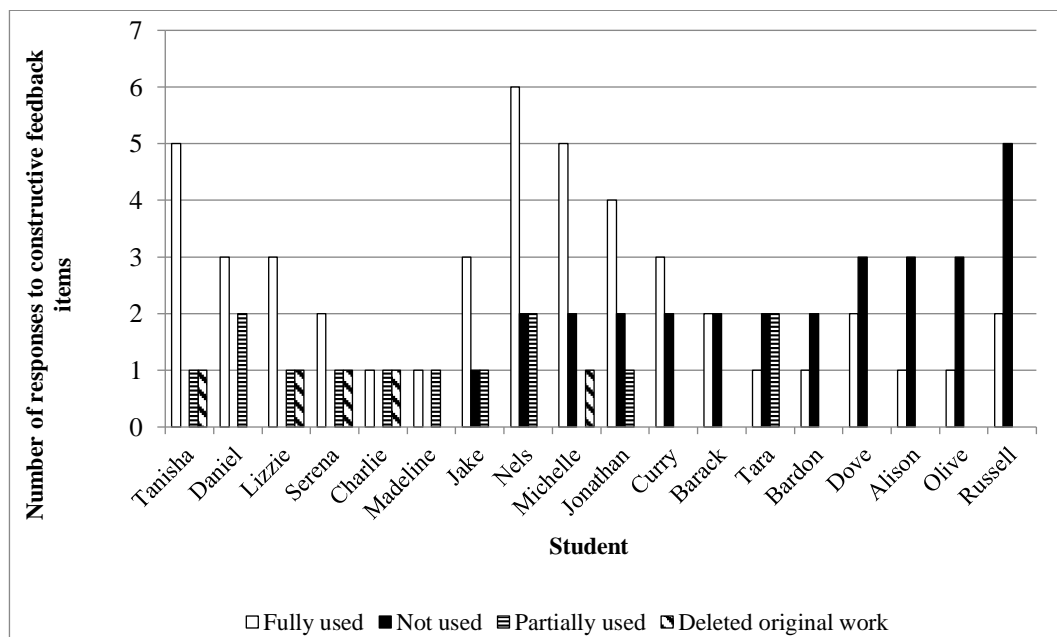


Figure 4.4. How students used constructive feedback items (School A, Term A).

Figure 4.4 indicates the presence of three broad groups of students. The first group of students used every item of constructive feedback they received in some way (i.e., Tanisha, Daniel, Lizzie, Serena, Charlie, Madeline). For example, students may have fully used some feedback items, partially used some feedback items, or deleted their original work in response to a feedback item. It was interesting that no student fully used every item of feedback they received. However, it was also interesting to note that whilst students in this group fully used feedback items that required simple changes, they also fully used feedback that necessitated more substantial changes or application to multiple parts of their work.

The second group of students mostly used the constructive feedback they received (i.e., Jake, Nels, Michelle, Jonathan, Curry, Barack, Tara). The number of feedback items they used was usually greater than the number of feedback items they did not use. For example, Figure 4.4 shows that Jake, Nels, Michelle, Jonathan and Curry fully used most of the feedback items they received but did not use one or two feedback items. Students in this group tended to fully use only straightforward items of feedback, or feedback that required them to make simple changes to their work.

The third group of students hardly used the constructive feedback they received (i.e., Bardon, Dove, Alison, Olive, Russell). The items of feedback they did not use outweighed the number of items that they did use. This showed that students in this group generally did not make use of written individual feedback. Feedback items that students did not use demonstrated no clear patterns. As mentioned previously, some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “This looks easy to understand. I wonder if adding some pictures would help to make it look more interesting?”) whilst others required more significant changes (e.g., “Try to include some information about the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in each section. This will help you show good listening skills.”).

Once the three groups of students had been identified, general characteristics of students in each group were explored. This was accomplished by cross-checking the students in each group against the categories of data that had emerged during thematic analysis of *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview (e.g., ‘improvement’, ‘evaluation’, ‘understanding’). A meta-matrix was constructed to assist in this analysis (see Table 4.5). Significant categories for each student were identified based on the frequency of their responses in the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This data was displayed in the meta-matrix. In other words, the categories that had the highest number of units of data for each student were identified (i.e., top 1-3 categories), and the student’s name was entered into the appropriate cell in the meta-matrix. This approach was taken as the student had focussed on these categories repeatedly, and therefore it was likely that these issues were of more significance to the student.

Table 4.5

*Meta-Matrix Showing Groups of Students and Significant Categories of Data (School A, Term A)*

Categories of Data from Thematic Analysis															
	Improvement	Information	Correction	Encouragement	Emotions	Expectations	Preferences	Social context	Parents	View of teacher	Ability	Evaluation	Work and time	Action	Understanding
<b>Group 1: Used all feedback</b>	Serena Lizzie Daniel Charlie		Serena Lizzie Daniel Tanisha									Madeli.		Serena Lizzie Tanisha	Madeli. Charlie
<b>Group 2: Mostly used feedback</b>	Jake Barack Jonathan Nels Michelle Curry	Jake	Jake Barack Curry		Michelle	Barack	Tara			Tara		Jonathan Michelle		Nels Curry	Nels Tara
<b>Group 3: Hardly used feedback</b>	Dove Alison Olive Bardon Russell		Dove Bardon Russell		Olive							Alison Bardon Russell		Dove	Olive

*Note.* Madeli. = Madeline.

Table 4.5 shows that students in Group 1 generally focussed on the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’, ‘action’ and ‘understanding’. Students in this group recognised that written individual feedback helped them to improve and were concerned about achieving better marks. They recognised mistakes that they had made and were able to correct these errors. Having said this, some students in this group did not always understand the written individual feedback they received and felt that clearer explanations were needed. Students in Group 1 acted upon written individual feedback by asking for help, making changes to their work, and putting in whatever time and effort was necessary. Data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions (see section 3.3.2.1) revealed that students in Group 1 generally self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 2 typically emphasised the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’, personal responses to feedback (i.e., ‘emotions’, ‘expectations’, ‘preferences’, ‘view of teacher’), ‘evaluation’, and ‘action’. As with the previous group, students in Group 2 recognised that written individual feedback helped them to improve and reported that they used written individual feedback to get better marks. They were generally able to recognise the mistakes that they had made. It was interesting to observe that students in this group demonstrated more personal responses to written individual feedback compared to the other groups. For example, some students responded to written individual feedback emotively and expressed a preference for gentle encouraging feedback. Students in Group 2 also considered how much work would be involved in using written individual feedback. However, they differed in their responses. Some selectively used feedback in order to avoid doing too much work, whilst others put in the necessary time and effort to use feedback. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group typically self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.



Students in Group 3 generally stressed the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’, and ‘evaluation’. They recognised that written individual feedback helped them to improve, and identified what they had done right and wrong. Interestingly, students in this group did not focus on using written individual feedback to achieve better marks and did not emphasise taking action in response to feedback. This differed to the previous two groups. Students also engaged more in evaluating the written individual feedback they received. They reported that they would not use written individual feedback if it interfered with their plans, if they thought they did not need it, and if they decided that it was wrong or just “*miscellaneous information*”. According to data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions, students in Group 3 generally self-reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

#### **4.2.2.3 Summary**

Artefacts collected during this study showed that students in School A used constructive written individual feedback in one of four ways. They either *fully used* the feedback, *partially used* the feedback, *did not use* the feedback or *deleted their original work* in response to the feedback. Collating the data from each student revealed three groups of students:

1. students who used all written individual feedback,
2. students who mostly used written individual feedback, and
3. students who hardly used written individual feedback.

Each group of students demonstrated certain characteristics. Students in Group 1 generally made good use of the written individual feedback they received. They fully used feedback items that required simple changes. However, they were also likely to fully use feedback that necessitated more substantial change or application to multiple sections of their work. Students in this group typically used written individual feedback to improve and achieve better marks. They did not have very personal responses to feedback and focussed more on ‘action’ instead. For example, students asked for help, made changes to their work, and put in whatever time and

effort was necessary. They also generally self-reported a strong interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 2 mostly made good use of the written individual feedback they received. Like the previous group, they were also interested in using written individual feedback to improve and achieve better marks. However, they tended to fully use feedback items that required only straightforward simple changes. Students in this group considered how much work would be involved in responding to written individual feedback. They also generally exhibited a more personal response to feedback. For example, they responded to feedback based on their ‘emotions’, ‘expectations’, ‘preferences’, and ‘view of the teacher’. Students in Group 2 commonly self-reported a strong interest in the subject of music, a moderate level of ability in relation music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 hardly used the written individual feedback they received. However, no clear trends were evident in relation to the types of feedback items that they did not use. Some feedback items required simple and straightforward changes whereas other feedback items necessitated more significant changes. In either case, students did not use the feedback they received. Students in this group recognised that written individual feedback helped them to improve but the achievement of good marks was not a main concern for them. Instead, students in Group 3 engaged more noticeably in ‘evaluation’ of feedback. For example, they explained that they would not use written individual feedback if it interfered with their plans, or if they thought they did not need it. Students also tended to self-report a moderate to high level of interest in the subject, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher. This concludes the presentation of results from School A. The following section will address results from School B.

### **4.3 School B: Written individual feedback**

In this section, findings from School B will be outlined in relation to written individual feedback. Every participant in School B completed all questionnaires,

participated in a semi-structured interview and submitted all artefacts ( $n = 16$ ). Presentation of findings from School B will be structured as for School A (see section 4.2). That is, data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview will be outlined first followed by data from student artefacts. Data from the teacher-researcher journal will not be reported separately as the purpose of this instrument was to provide supplementary information about how students responded to written individual feedback (see section 3.5.1.4 for more information). Instead, supplementary data from the teacher-researcher journal will be introduced in the context of other findings where appropriate.

#### **4.3.1 Findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interview**

Data collected from *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview were analysed separately following a three-step process of coding, categorising and identifying themes. (See sections 3.4 and 3.5 for a more complete description of each instrument as well as the process of data collection and analysis.) The results of this analysis have been summarised and presented in tables within the following pages. Table 4.6 shows findings from *Questionnaire 1*, Table 4.7 presents findings from *Questionnaire 2*, Table 4.8 summarises findings from *Questionnaire 3*, and Table 4.9 displays findings from the semi-structured interview. Each table indicates the codes, categories and themes that resulted from thematic analysis and also shows the number of units of data that comprised each theme and category. Unifying themes that arose from the data will be identified and elaborated on after the presentation of tables.

Table 4.6

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 1 Data (School B, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I think feedback is important so that students know what they could do better in and improve."</i> - Izzy	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 7)	Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 38)
<i>"I think this is useful feedback."</i> - Jeremy	It is useful		
<i>"Feedback is when someone is telling you something about your work."</i> - Steph	It tells me about my work	Information (n = 14)	
<i>"Feedback is someone else's [sic] opinion on your work."</i> - Alleana	It is someone's opinion		
<i>"I knew I was wrong with the listening map."</i> - Steph	I knew I was wrong	Correction (n = 17)	
<i>"I missed out some points."</i> - Zelda	I missed some things		
<i>"Sad, I don't know [sic], hard, not interested [sic], need help, I can't do it."</i> - Neymar	I have negative feelings	Emotions (n = 9)	
<i>"I felt glad that I did well and glad that I got encouragement"</i> - Izzy	I have positive feelings		
<i>"I thought that I could have done better"</i> - Alleana	I could have done better	Expectations (n = 8)	
<i>"That I was doing better than [sic] normal. I also thought my standards were high."</i> - Zelda	I did better than expected		

<i>"No, it wasn't what expected because I thought that I did a really good job." - Samantha</i>	I thought I would do better		
<i>"Miss Goh is an experienced music teacher and I respect her feedback." - Alleana</i>	I respect the teacher		
<i>"Last thing I thought... I have them SKILLSSSS!!! ☺ My mum will be happy! ☺" – Zelda</i>	My parents will be happy	Social context (n = 3)	
<i>"I'll take what she's said and use it in my good-copy." - Jeremy</i>	I will use it	Action (n = 2)	
<i>"I don't disagree with any because I think that they are all right." - Ducky</i>	I think it is right		
<i>"I disagree with the feedback for Qu. 3. because I think that in the minus section I did include [sic] my reasons." - Ivy</i>	I disagree with it	Evaluation (n = 6)	Processing of feedback <i>Students' processing and use of feedback</i> (n = 13)
<i>"I wasn't quite sure with part of it though..." - Ivy</i>	I do not understand		
<i>"I don't know what feedback is." - Belle</i>	I do not know what feedback is	Understanding (n = 5)	
<i>"I agree with all the feedback because [it] makes sence [sic]." - Jeremy</i>	It makes sense		

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 4.7

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 2 Data (School B, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"They give us feedback to correct us" - Steph</i>	It corrects mistakes	Correction (n = 6)	Student perceptions <i>Perceptions of the purpose and usefulness of feedback</i> (n = 30)
<i>"Feedback that shows me CLEARLY what I did right or wrong" - Ivy</i>	It tells me what I got right and wrong		
<i>"They give us feedback to encourage us" - Steve</i>	It encourages me	Encouragement (n = 7)	
<i>"Mabey [sic] ideas for plans that can be helpfull [sic] and, umm... telling what the students can do later on." - Katie</i>	It gives me ideas	Improvement (n = 17)	
<i>"I think teachers give us feedback because they want to help us get good marks in every way possible" - Samantha</i>	It helps me get good marks		
<i>"Helpful feedback tells what you should improve on, how to improve and what things are good and you should do more often." - Sakura</i>	It helps me improve		
<i>"If you disagree with the feedback given, you may choose not to use it." - Izzy</i>	I disagree with it	Evaluation (n = 8)	Student considerations <i>Considerations and factors that affect response to feedback</i> (n = 16)
<i>"If I think the feedback is wrong I won't use it." - Steph</i>	It could be wrong		
<i>"Things that would prevent me to use the feedback would be that they are not uplifting and are too negative." - Alleana</i>	It is too negative	Tone (n = 4)	
<i>"I will be honest. I'm not quite shure [sic], mabey [sic] so that the students will know better for next time?" - Katie</i>	I do not know what feedback is	Understanding (n = 4)	
<i>"If it was too hard to do, or it didn't make sense." - Ivy</i>	It does not make sense		

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 4.8

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 3 Data (School B, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I put in more tempo, mood and dynamics words in my listening map so I would get a better score than just average." - Samantha</i>	I wanted to get better marks	Improvement (n = 26)	Advantages of feedback <i>Potential benefits and advantages of feedback</i> (n = 44)
<i>"I usually use feedback to improve my work." - Izzy</i>	I wanted to improve		
<i>"It helps my work." - Alleana</i>	It was helpful		
<i>"I used the feedback about needing to describe the mood, tempo, texture, dynamics etc. for every box because I could see I needed to add more for different sections." - Ivy</i>	I could see my mistakes	Correction (n = 18)	
<i>"Yes, to correct that I did wrong." - Ducky</i>	I wanted to correct my mistakes		
<i>"[I like feedback] In large amounts that show me everything good or bad." – Ivy</i>	It showed me what I got right and wrong		
<i>"I couldn't finish [sic] it." - Katie</i>	I could not finish it	Work and time (n = 5)	Considerations relating to feedback <i>Considerations and concerns when responding to feedback</i> (n = 20)
<i>"Because I didn't have to change any or take away any, only adding." - Zelda</i>	It was easy to add		
<i>"Sometimes they tell me what to do, too much." – Izzy</i>	It can be too much to do		

<i>"The only thing that I sometimes don't like about feedback is that sometimes the teacher tells you something that you don't want to do!" – Sakura</i>	I did not want to do it	Evaluation (n = 4)
<i>"I used it because I knew it will be important in my project." - Katie</i>	I thought it was important	
<i>"I usually do use feedback because the feedback is from the teacher who assigned the work so I should use the feedback to their likings." – Sakura</i>	I wanted the teacher to like my work	Social context (n = 1)
<i>"I didn't understand it." – Jeff</i>	I did not understand it	Understanding (n = 10)
<i>"I used all of the feedback because all of it made sense." – Sakura</i>	It made sense	

*Note.* n = number of coded units of data.



Table 4.9

*Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Data (School B, Term A)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I think it's just to make the project better and to get good marks"</i> - Chloe	It helps me get better marks	Improvement ( <i>n</i> = 41)	Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> ( <i>n</i> = 87)
<i>"I can see that I could improve it that way and I could make it better like that."</i> - Ivy	It helps me improve		
<i>"I just see it as helpful."</i> – Jeremy	It is helpful		
<i>"Basically, there were some areas where it told me I had ideas and it told me how I could expand that idea more."</i> - Jeremy	It gives me ideas or suggestions	Information ( <i>n</i> = 17)	
<i>"...like sticking to the rubric sort of, just reminding me of things that I should do."</i> – Chloe	It reminds me of the rubric		
<i>"Things that are specific, um, things that tell me exactly what I should do."</i> – Sakura	It tells me exactly what I need to do		
<i>"I think that, like, [teachers] should [provide feedback] because it's good for the students to see what they are looking for and that they should, um, they should get a better idea of what information they need."</i> – Chloe	It tells me what teachers are looking for		

<i>"[I use feedback] when there's something that I can see that's wrong about it."</i> – Ivy	I see my mistakes		
<i>"It was good because you told me about the errors that I have made"</i> - Alleana	It points out errors	Correction (n = 29)	
<i>"Everyone sort of gets positive and negative feedback and it's good that we get both because then we can see plusses and minuses."</i> - Chloe	It tells me what I got right and wrong		
<i>"It gave me a boost of confidence for the parts that I did well."</i> - Samantha	I feel more confident		
<i>"I feel happy because I know I've done something right"</i> - Samantha	I feel happy		
<i>"Some [feedback] made me really proud of myself, like, comments about what I did, I was quite proud."</i> – Katie	I feel proud		
<i>"I think the feedback that I got was encouraging"</i> – Izzy	It is encouraging		Personal responses to feedback
<i>"I try but it is just discouraging, like, to get all the bad feedback."</i> - Steve	It is discouraging		Students' personal responses to feedback
<i>"It's just so embarrassing... because, like normally, I'm, like, one of the good students who always does very good... That's why sometimes it is really embarrassing."</i> – Alleana	I feel embarrassed	Emotions (n = 24)	personal responses to feedback (n = 61)
<i>"It upsets your feelings because you tried your best and it upsets your feelings."</i> – Alleana	I feel upset		
<i>"If [students] keep getting like, everything good, they won't even bother to try anymore and if they don't get any 'Well done' feedback they just feel like they, um, they're like really bad at the subject and they also won't want to try anymore. So I think [teachers] should give a mix of both types of feedback."</i> – Sakura	My feelings depend on the type of feedback		

<i>"In my nature, my nature is normally competing with others..." – Samantha</i>	I am competitive	
<i>"Because, like, normally I'm one of the good students who always does very good and everyone gets really surprised if I get a really bad mark." - Alleana</i>	I expected to do well	Expectations (n = 9)
<i>"My mum and dad want me to do good and then if I don't, I'll get in trouble." – Steph</i>	I want to avoid getting in trouble with my parents	
<i>"Normally, my mum makes me, when I read, um, when I get something wrong, she makes me do it again to make it, um, correct and for me to know next time." – Jeff</i>	My parents make me correct my work	Parents (n = 4)
Interviewer: And what type of feedback do you like? <i>"'Good', 'Improvable', and 'I like how you did this and it was really, really good. Really impressive'." – Katie</i>	I like positive or encouraging feedback	
<i>"I like the feedback that tells me what I could do and not, like, 'Maybe you should do this. Maybe.' I don't like the word 'maybe'." - Izzy</i>	I prefer directive feedback	Preferences (n = 10)
<i>"Try and make the negative stuff into encouraging stuff, like, 'You <u>could</u> try better to do this' and not just like, 'Bad job, you haven't done well,' stuff like that." – Steve</i>	I prefer feedback phrased in an encouraging way	
<i>"I understand you are a music teacher ... so I know you could help me improve." – Alleana</i>	I know teachers are trying to help me	
<i>"I know that the teachers are, like, employed to work as a teacher and that they know what they're doing so it's not questionable." – Izzy</i>	The teacher knows what they are doing	View of teacher (n = 14)
<i>"I did it well and the teacher likes it... that means I've done it according to what the teacher wants me to do." – Sakura</i>	The teacher liked my work	

<i>"I ask for a bit of help" - Belle</i>	I ask for help		
<i>"I was going to get back tonight and change whatever you said and just follow the feedback." - Steve</i>	I make changes		
<i>"I do it, like, [even] if it's too much, I just do it at home because if I have work, I can stay up until whatever time until I finish." – Steph</i>	I put in time and work		
<i>"If I got feedback saying I could improve on something, I usually tell my mum and friends and people that could help. I usually get people who tell me, like, about what feedback they got as well... because I think they think that I could help them with it... I usually tell them and help them and explain what that feedback means, and how they could use it, and how it will help what they're, what the work they're doing." - Jeremy</i>	I talk to others about feedback	Action (n = 29)	Processing of feedback Students' processing and use of feedback (n = 72)
<i>"I'll try to, like, use it as much as I can and make whatever I'm doing, um, make it try to get as close as I can to what they've said in the feedback." – Jeremy</i>	I try to use it		
<i>"I think about if it would be good to improve on whatever is said and decide whether I should use it or not." – Ivy</i>	I decide whether or not to use feedback		
<i>"If I think that I don't need it then I just won't put it in really." - Chloe</i>	I do not think I need it		
<i>"Sometimes you feel like, 'No, I tried my best and I'm just going to do what I did in the first place,' even though it would help you but you just want to do it your way." – Alleana</i>	I want to do it my way	Evaluation (n = 22)	
<i>"So, like, if it's quite a simple thing that I can add easily, I just take it but if it's a big thing I sort of add bits of it." - Chloe</i>	It depends if it is easy to use		

<p><i>“Well, it depends really on which, like, what type of project it is and if I felt like I have done enough... so if it was quite a big subject I’m doing it for and if I want to get good marks I’d probably use feedback a bit more and get into a bit more detail.”</i> – Chloe</p>	<p>It depends on the task or subject</p>	
<p><i>“Sometimes I can’t be bothered if it’s more work.”</i> – Izzy</p>	<p>It is too much work</p>	
<p><i>“So I think the ones that I don’t really use are... if the person that is giving you feedback doesn’t understand... [for example] when the teacher or whoever is giving you feedback doesn’t quite see or read it correctly sometimes, like, if you put your words quite differently.”</i> - Chloe</p>	<p>The teacher did not understand my work</p>	
<p><i>“I sometimes struggle with some things because they’re very hard for me to learn.”</i> – Belle</p>	<p>I struggle with learning</p>	
<p><i>“I didn’t understand why there was a piece missing in the middle of this one because I thought, because I listened to it many times and it felt like that and I didn’t really understand what a PMI chart was.”</i> - Belle</p>	<p>I do not understand</p>	<p>Understanding (n = 21)</p>
<p><i>“The feedback was simple, easy to understand.”</i> - Sakura</p>	<p>I understand</p>	

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

As indicated in the preceding tables, similar themes emerged from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This suggested that students' reflections on written individual feedback were relatively stable and that data saturation was being reached (Saunders et al., 2018). Data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview collectively revealed three unifying themes:

1. students' perspectives on feedback,
2. students' personal responses to feedback, and
3. students' processing of feedback.

These three themes were identical to those that emerged from School A. However, it should be noted that the findings from School A were not used as a pre-set framework when analysing the data from School B. Data from both School A and School B were analysed independently in keeping with the two-case study methodology as described in Chapter Three. However, if the categories or themes that emerged from School B demonstrated the same characteristics as those that had already been identified from School A, then the same descriptive title and definition were used to achieve consistency. For example, the descriptive title 'perspectives on feedback' held identical meanings for both School A and School B (i.e., the way in which students viewed feedback and their thoughts about the purpose of feedback). This approach to data analysis was followed throughout the study. Findings from School B will now be presented in relation to the three aforementioned themes.

#### ***4.3.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback***

As with School A, the theme of 'perspectives on feedback' contained data that related to students' views of feedback and the purposes of feedback. Students' perspectives on feedback focussed on (a) 'improvement', (b) 'correction' and (c) 'information'.

##### *Improvement*

Data belonging to the category of 'improvement' focussed on how feedback helped students improve and make their work better. Students appreciated being shown "how to" improve and found it helpful when feedback told them what to do next or gave them ideas and advice. The idea of improving one's work in order to "do

*better*” was a key explanation for why students used written individual feedback. This was closely connected to a desire to achieve a good mark in their final music project submission. As Izzy explained, *“I used the feedback for the first question and added more to the listening map. I described the tempo in the listening map. I used the feedback because I knew that if I included the feedback, I would’ve gotten a better mark.”* Thus, students believed that if they did not use feedback, they would not get the *“good marks”* or *“final result”* that they were hoping for. For some students, this perspective was influenced by their past experiences with feedback. For example, one student explained that they had used feedback from teachers in the past and this enabled them to get better marks. In general, an interest in marks was a strong finding for students in School B.

### *Correction*

The category of ‘correction’ related to the way in which feedback identified areas of work that contained errors or that could be further improved. Students recognised that written individual feedback helped to *“correct”* them and show them *“what we did wrong and can do better”*. It pointed out weaker areas or things that they had *“missed”* and gave them a chance to fix these areas. Students explained that they used written individual feedback because they *“could see”* the changes that needed to be made. For example, one student referred to a specific item of feedback they received and explained why they had used that item of feedback: *“I used the feedback about needing to describe the mood, tempo, texture, dynamics etc. for every box because I could see I needed to add more for different sections.”*

Students also observed that written individual feedback indicated areas of work that were correct or had been done well. They typically reflected on this in conjunction with the corrective function of feedback. For example, one student stated that *“feedback tells what you should improve on, how to improve and what things are good and you should do more often.”* Thus, feedback was seen as having a dual function: (a) to tell students what they did wrong, and (b) to tell students what they did right. Students felt that feedback should primarily correct errors. However, they explained that it was also good to have some positive points identified in their work.

### *Information*

Data in the category of ‘information’ highlighted how written individual feedback told students about something or provided them with information. Given the context of this study, students saw this information as being in relation to their “work”. For example, feedback was seen as “*someone elses [sic] opinion on your work*” or “*when someone is telling you something about your work*”, and “*when you do work and someone marks it*”. Students identified that written individual feedback gave them “*suggestions*”, told them if they were meeting expectations and helped to clarify what teachers were “*looking for*”. For example, Katie explained that she had drawn pictures to create a storyline for the music rather than describe each section of the music. She reflected:

*“I drew pictures on how it was an adventure of what I saw when I was listening to the music, but what you, but what my music teacher was going for really was me telling, like, writing down what was it like. Like, what was the sound? What was the tempo? Was it high? Was it low?”*

The written individual feedback that Katie received helped her to clarify the requirements of the task.

#### **4.3.1.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback**

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ emphasised the personal way in which students responded to feedback. Data belonging to this theme showed that students responded to written individual feedback based on their personal (a) ‘emotions’, (b) ‘expectations’ and (c) ‘preferences’, (d) ‘parents’, and (e) ‘view of teacher’.

### *Emotions*

The category of ‘emotions’ pertained to feelings that students experienced. Two types of emotive responses were evident in students’ reflections: positive emotional responses and negative emotional responses. Positive emotional responses included feelings such as pride and happiness whereas negative emotional responses



encompassed feelings like disappointment and sadness. Reasons for these emotional responses were somewhat mixed.

In general, affirmative feedback that identified areas of work that students had done well generated positive feelings in students (e.g., *“a sense of relief”*, *“a boost of confidence”*, *“encouraged”*, *“happy”*, *“proud”*). However, constructive feedback that identified areas of work that could be improved resulted in negative feelings (e.g. *“upset”*, *“disappointed”*, *“feel a little bit stupid”*, *“stressed”*, *“embarrassing”*). Interestingly, some students experienced positive feelings in relation to constructive feedback. For example, they *“felt glad that I got encouragement and suggestions to make my work improved”* and they *“felt inspired about the ideas”*. Thus, for some students, receiving *“ideas”* and *“suggestions”* to improve their work resulted in positive feelings. However, this was not the case for everyone. Neymar’s emotional responses were entirely negative. This was despite the fact that he did receive positive feedback. When reflecting, Neymar used phrases like *“sad”*, *“I don’t nhuw [sic]”*, *“hard”*, *“not interstead [sic]”*, *“need help”*, *“I can’t do it”* and *“I want to fail in musik [sic]”*. A sense of sadness and helplessness was evident in these responses. For Neymar, this seemed to be connected to issues of understanding (e.g., *“hard”*, *“I don’t nhuw [sic]”*). Given that Neymar was also unsure about what feedback actually was, these negative emotional responses could have been a response to having to complete the questionnaires, or to the learning task (i.e., music history/appreciation project), or to the written individual feedback itself.

### *Expectations*

The category of ‘expectations’ related to what students were expecting with regard to written individual feedback or to themselves. Some students thought that they had done better than they expected and reflected on why they had done so well. For example, Zelda thought that she received *“better feedback then [sic] the last project because I spent more time on it”*. Other students explained that the written individual feedback they received wasn’t what they had expected *“because I thought that I did a really good job”*. The variations in responses indicated that students had differing expectations in relation to the feedback they had received.

In terms of personal expectations, some students identified themselves as being competitive students who normally did very well in school. They enjoyed comparing themselves with others and were shocked or embarrassed when they received constructive feedback. For example, Alleana explained, *“I’m, like, one of the good students who always does very good and everyone gets really surprised if I get a really bad mark. That’s why sometimes it is really embarrassing.”* This helped to shed light on some of the data in the previous category of ‘emotions’.

### *Preferences*

Data in the category of ‘preferences’ concerned students’ likes and dislikes with regard to feedback. Some students expressed a preference for encouraging or positive feedback. They preferred receiving comments such as *“I like how you did this and it was really, really good”* and *“Well done. You’ve done well. Keep doing this or keep trying hard”*. Other students preferred constructive feedback to be phrased in an encouraging way. As Steve explained, *“Try and make the negative stuff into encouraging stuff, like, ‘You could try better to do this’ and not just like, ‘Bad job, you haven’t done well,’ stuff like that.”* A singular finding was that one student identified that they preferred very direct straightforward feedback: *“I like the feedback that tells me what I could do and not, like, ‘Maybe you should do this. Maybe.’ I don’t like the word ‘maybe’ ... [because it] could be open to many, many options.”*

### *Parents*

The category of ‘parents’ pertained to students’ consideration of their parents. This consideration was evidenced in two ways. Firstly, some students reflected on how their parents influenced their approach towards error-correction. For example, Jeff explained, *“Normally, my Mum makes me, when I read, when I get something wrong, she makes me do it again to make it, um, correct and for me to know next time.”* Secondly, some students gave thought to what their parents would think of the feedback they had received. This was typically connected to a desire to either avoid parent disapproval or gain parent approval. They reported that they responded to written individual feedback because they did not want to get *“in trouble”* with their parents. As one student stated, *“If I do what the teacher says, I won’t get any trouble and then my Mum and Dad wouldn’t scold me.”* Other students simply considered

how pleased their parent would be with the feedback they had received: *“Last thing I thought... I have them SKILLSSSS!!! ☺ My mum will be happy! ☺”*

#### *View of teacher*

The final category of ‘view of teacher’ contained data that related to students’ personal perceptions of the teacher. Students believed that teachers wanted *“to help me to get better”* and *“to improve in what I do”*. Students felt they should use the written individual feedback they received because the teacher was *“an experienced music teacher and I respect her feedback”* or *“because the teacher knows what she’s doing and it’s her opinion of my grades and she does my grades”*. Reflections such as these demonstrated that students reflected on the broader context of written individual feedback (e.g., teacher, assessment task). A unique finding pertaining to this category came from Sakura’s data. She stated *“I usually do use feedback because the feedback is from the teacher who assigned the work so I should use the feedback to their likings”*. As her comment suggests, Sakura used feedback because she wanted to produce work that the teacher would like. A concern for pleasing or impressing the teacher appeared regularly in Sakura’s data. Her comments highlighted social and relational considerations within the feedback process.

#### **4.3.1.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback**

The theme ‘processing of feedback’ focussed on the thinking and acting processes that students engaged in when responding to written individual feedback. Data in this theme focussed on the concepts of (a) ‘understanding’, (b) ‘evaluation’ and (c) ‘action’.

#### *Understanding*

Data belonging to the category of ‘understanding’ highlighted cognitive understanding or comprehension. Students tried to understand and make sense of the written individual feedback they received. Some thought that the feedback was understandable but others were *“not quite sure”* about certain feedback items or found the feedback *“difficult to understand”*. Students who did not understand the written individual feedback they received generally did not use it. As Belle

succinctly put it, *“I don’t usually use it because I don’t normally get it.”* Lack of understanding was the main reason that students in School B did not use written individual feedback.

Interestingly, two students in School B did not know what feedback was. Belle and Neymar had difficulty defining feedback and explaining why they thought teachers provided students with feedback. For example, in their responses to the first question of *Questionnaire 1* (‘What is feedback?’), Belle stated *“I don’t know what feedback is”* and Neymar answered *“????”*. Although Neymar did not define feedback in *Questionnaire 1*, during his semi-structured interview he was able to make references to feedback that he had received in school in the past (e.g., *“That’s not enough information, go add in more interesting facts”*, *“Put your commas, and, um, put your question marks on questions in the right place”*, *“Put your full stops at the right time”*, *“Do more work and look where the mistakes are”*). However, Neymar’s responses still showed a limited understanding of feedback and what to do with it. These responses suggested that Belle and Neymar did not fully grasp the general concept of feedback. This was quite striking.

Limited understanding of written individual feedback could also have been linked to limited understanding of the task itself. For example, Belle had an incorrect understanding of the music history/appreciation project. She mistakenly thought that she needed to create a tourist/holiday project on the topic of Kakadu. Belle related the struggles she was experiencing with written individual feedback and the music history/appreciation project to the difficulties that she experienced with learning in general: *“I sometimes struggle with some things because they’re very hard for me to learn.”*

### *Evaluation*

The category of ‘evaluation’ emphasised cognitive evaluation or appraisal. Students processed written individual feedback by evaluating it and making judgements about it. Students evaluated how *“right”* or relevant feedback was. For example, Steve explained, *“I thought the feedback was realitive [sic] to what I need to do.”* The opposite was also true in that students thought that the written individual feedback they received was not relevant to their work. For instance, Chloe believed that some

of the comments she received *“didn’t need to be there”* or were unnecessary. Students identified that they might not use written individual feedback if they *“disagreed”* with it, if they believed the feedback was *“wrong”*, or if *“you just want to do it your way... because you think yours is better”*. The active decision-making that students engaged in could be seen in the internal conversations they had when they received written individual feedback. As one student reflected, *“I just think about it and what they’re trying to say and say, ‘Well, does it make sense or am I right? Or should I use this part or should I go my own way?’”* Students’ evaluative reasoning often conveyed a sense of unwillingness to change their original work. It was interesting how students identified that when the language of feedback appeared to give them a choice, they were more likely to make their own decisions about it.

Students evaluated written individual feedback in light of how easy it was to use, and how much work or time would be involved in responding to feedback. They explained that if the feedback was *“quite a simple thing”* and *“quite easy to do”*, they would use it. However, if they felt that feedback was too *“complicating”* or *“a big thing”*, they would use only some of the feedback and *“sort of add bits of it”*. Students reflected on how difficult it was to change their work once it had already been done and expressed a preference for *“achievable”* feedback *“not like you have to change the whole project all over again”*. In a similar manner, students also evaluated written individual feedback in light of the task or subject. For example, if the work they were producing was for *“a big subject”*, or a *“a new subject”* that they were uncertain about, or if the work was worth a lot of marks, they would tend to use feedback more. However, if the task or subject was not as significant, students identified that they would *“probably just use a little bit”*.

To a lesser extent, students explained that they evaluated the tone of feedback and stated that they would not use feedback if the tone was too negative. As Alleana explained, *“Things that would prevent me to use the feedback would be that they are not uplifting and are too negative.”* Similarly, Samantha identified, *“What might stop me from using feedback is when it is all very negative and just makes me feel bad and that the teacher doesn’t care about me and my work.”* Students’ consideration of the tone of feedback seemed to be connected to an emotional aspect.

### *Action*

The category of ‘action’ contained data that related to actions students would take or had taken in response to written individual feedback. Reflection on ‘action’ could be seen in students’ responses to *Questionnaire 1* and the semi-structured interview.

However, as mentioned earlier in relation to School A, the timing of these instruments produced slightly different results. Students generally reflected on action to a lesser degree in *Questionnaire 1* as compared to their semi-structured interview (see Section 3.4 for more information about the data collection process). In general, data from *Questionnaire 1* showed that most students planned to use some/all the written individual feedback they received (see Appendix I). However, two students (i.e., Belle and Neymar) both indicated that they were confused and needed to get help.

Data from the semi-structured interview revealed the presence of two main groups of actions. First, students tried to use written individual feedback by making some degree of change to their work (e.g., adding “*bits*”, redoing the “*whole thing*”). Some students identified that they were very thorough in the checking and changing process, going through their work several times. Second, students talked to others about the written individual feedback they received if they needed help. They identified that they asked their peers, parents and the teacher for advice if they did not understand what an item of feedback meant. As mentioned in Chapter Three, data from the teacher-researcher journal was used to cross-check findings relating to questions that students asked about written individual feedback. Observations recorded in the teacher-researcher journal showed that two out of a total of sixteen students asked the teacher-researcher questions about the feedback they received. It was interesting that most students who said they had difficulty understanding feedback and who said they would ask the teacher-researcher for help did not actually end up doing so (e.g., Belle, Neymar, Katie). However, these students may have asked their peers for help and this may not have been recorded in the teacher-researcher journal.

#### 4.3.1.4 Summary

Three unifying themes emerged from the data collected through *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview. These were ‘perspectives on feedback’, ‘personal responses to feedback’, and ‘processing of feedback’. Like School A, data belonging to the first theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ showed that students believed written individual feedback helped them to improve and get better grades. It identified mistakes in their work and allowed them to correct errors they had made. However, students felt that error-correction needed to be balanced with the identification of positive aspects of their work. Students also explained that written individual feedback provided them with information that enabled them to clarify what teachers were “*looking for*”. Overall, students viewed the improving, error-correcting and informative functions of feedback as being advantageous to them.

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ highlighted the personal way in which students responded to written individual feedback. In general, affirmative feedback resulted in positive emotions (e.g., confident, encouraged, happy, proud) whilst constructive feedback resulted in both positive and negative feelings depending on the student. It was interesting that students also responded to feedback based on consideration of their parents. For example, students explained that they responded to feedback because they did not want to get into trouble with their parents. Other personal responses included students’ preferences in relation to feedback (e.g., encouraging feedback, directive feedback), students’ view of the teacher (e.g., teacher will be assessing work), and students’ expectations of themselves (e.g., competitive, good student).

Data belonging to the theme of ‘processing of feedback’ showed that students tried to understand, evaluate and act on written individual feedback. Some students were able to understand the feedback they had received whilst others had difficulty doing so. A surprising finding emerged in that two students in School B demonstrated a very limited understanding of feedback and the music history/appreciation task (i.e., Belle, Neymar). Students evaluated the written individual feedback they received and considered a variety of factors when deciding whether or not to use written

individual feedback (e.g., relevance, ease of use, subject or task context, amount of work, tone). Students reported that they generally acted on written individual feedback in two ways: (a) they made some degree of change to their work and (b) if they needed help, they talked to others. It was interesting to observe that only two students actually asked the teacher-researcher for help with the feedback they received (i.e., Jeremy, Jeff).

### **4.3.2 Findings from artefacts**

Artefacts consisted of students' draft music project components (including written individual feedback from the teacher-researcher) and students' final music project submissions. Data from artefacts were analysed following a two-step process of comparison and collation (see section 3.5.1.3 for more detailed information about the data analysis process). Artefacts from School B showed that students received an average of eight items of written individual feedback on their draft music project components. On average, three of these items were affirmative in nature (e.g., "Good job for listening to the instruments!") whilst five of these items were constructive in nature (e.g., "You are on the right track, Steve! Try to give a reason or explanation for your opinions. This will help you show a more thoughtful response."). As with School A, constructive feedback may have been prefaced with a positive or affirming comment. However, the main purpose of the feedback item was to improve or correct an aspect of the student's work. Feedback comments such as these were therefore identified as being essentially constructive. Students were not expected to make any changes to their work in response to affirmative feedback items. Hence, the focus during analysis was on how students responded to constructive feedback items. Data showed that students had different types of responses to constructive feedback.

#### **4.3.2.1 Types of responses to feedback**

Students responded to items of constructive feedback in one of four ways. Interestingly, they did not always respond to every item of constructive feedback in the same way. Students either *fully used* a feedback item, *partially used* a feedback item, *did not use* a feedback item or *deleted* their original work in response to a



feedback item (see Figure 4.5). These types of responses were identical to those observed in School A. Each of these responses will now be explained in more detail. (See Appendix L for a full record of how students used each feedback item they received.)

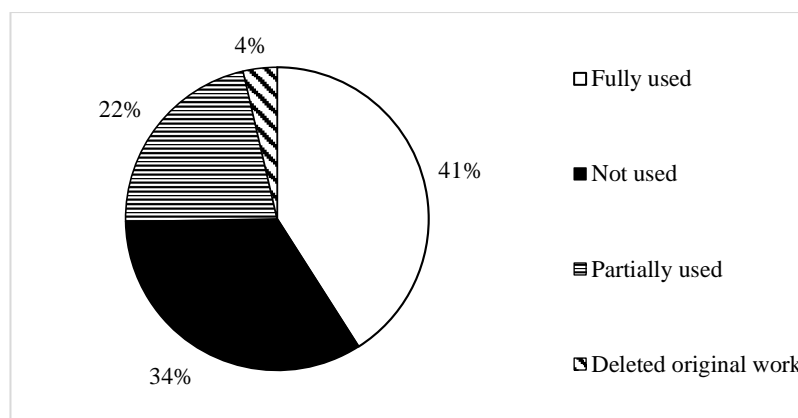


Figure 4.5. Types of responses to constructive feedback items (School B, Term A) ( $n = 83$ ).

#### *Fully used*

Students fully used an item of feedback when they completely applied the feedback that was provided to improve their work. For example, Jeremy received the following feedback on his draft music project component:

“You have summarised the main points well, Jeremy! If you want to, you could add more detailed information. For example, why did Sculthorpe say ‘no’ at first? Did the anaesthesiologist leave any special instruments for Sculthorpe?”

Jeremy fully used this item of feedback by responding to each of the questions posed in the feedback comment.

Most of the feedback items that were fully used involved relatively straightforward changes. For example, students answered simple prompting questions such as “What was the tempo (speed) like?” and responded to comments such as “I think a section is missing here. Try listening to the music again.” However, some students fully used feedback items that required more substantial changes or application to several

sections of their work. For example, Steph received the following comment on his Plus-Minus-Interesting chart:

“Good comments here, Steph! Try to give a reason for your opinions. This will show a more thoughtful response.”

Steph checked the responses in his Plus-Minus-Interesting chart and provided an additional explanation for all statements that did not have a supporting reason.

### *Partially used*

Students partially used an item of feedback when they applied feedback to some extent. For example, Alleana received the following feedback on her draft music project component:

“The first 2 points in this section are really good because you have given a reason for your opinion. Try to do the same thing for all the comments in the ‘Plus’ and ‘Minus’ sections.”

Alleana partially used this item of feedback by adding reasons to her comments in the ‘Plus’ section but not in the ‘Minus’ section. Items of feedback that students partially used tended to require students to apply feedback to more than one part of their work and necessitated careful checking. For example, Jeff received the comment on his listening map:

“Try to describe the tempo (speed), dynamics (loud or soft) and instruments you hear in each section.”

Jeff added descriptions of the tempo and instruments to his listening map. However, he did not add descriptions of the dynamics.

The categories that emerged during thematic analysis of students’ questionnaires and semi-structured interviews helped to shed light on why students partially used feedback items. According to students’ reflections, they may have partially used an item of feedback if they had too much to do and could not finish their work on time, if the feedback gave them an option (e.g., if it contained the word “maybe”), or if they did not really understand it. Students also identified that they partially used feedback items when the feedback required them to make substantial changes to their work. As one student explained, *“if it’s quite a simple thing that I can add easily, I just take it but if it’s a big thing I sort of add bits of it.”*

### *Not used*

Students did not use an item of feedback when they did not make any changes in response to the feedback provided. For example, Ducky received the following feedback comment on his draft music project component:

“Try to describe the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in each section. This will help you show good listening skills.”

Ducky did not use this feedback in any way. Items of feedback that were not used by students did not show any clear patterns. Some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “Tell what you liked about the music.”) whilst others required more thoughtful or thorough responses (e.g., “Try to give a reason for your comments. For example, why did you like the surprises in the music? Did it keep you interested or do you think it matched the surprising nature of Kakadu?”). It was interesting to observe that certain students did not use a noticeably high number of feedback items (e.g., Belle, Ducky).

As with feedback that was partially used, several reasons could be suggested as to why students did not use feedback items. According to students’ responses in questionnaires and the semi-structured interview, they may not have used an item of feedback if they did not understand it, if it was too much work to do, if it was too negative, or if they thought that they did not need it (e.g., the feedback was wrong, their work was fine the way it was). Nevertheless, the issue of understanding seemed to be most significant for students in School B, and this was particularly applicable to those who did not use a significantly high number of feedback items. Students who had difficulty understanding the feedback they received generally did not use it. However, it was interesting to observe that limited understanding of feedback was also linked to limited understanding of the task itself as well as to the concept of feedback in general.

### *Deleted original work*

Students deleted their original work when they removed the part of their work to which feedback referred. For example, Henry received the following feedback comment on his draft music project component:

“Good guess! Not quite correct. Try having another listen to the music. It actually belongs to another family of instruments. ☺”

Henry responded by deleting the word to which this item of feedback referred. Deleting original work was less commonly used by students in comparison to the preceding three responses. Interestingly, all students who deleted their original work received the same type of feedback as Henry. These students did not offer any reasons as to why they deleted their original work. However, based on the type of feedback that students received, it was likely that students simply did not know the correct answer to the question and therefore chose to delete their work instead. In the following section, attention will be turned to general patterns in students' use of written individual feedback.

**4.3.2.2 Patterns in feedback use**

As with School A, data relating to the feedback use of each student in School B was collated into a graph (see Figure 4.6). This graph displayed the frequency of types of responses to constructive feedback for each student, and allowed general patterns in students' feedback use to be identified.

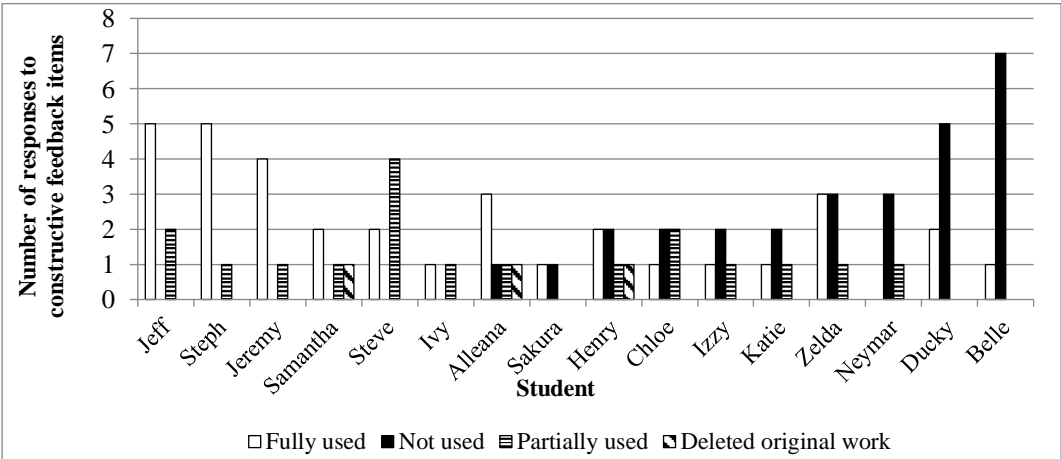


Figure 4.6. How students used constructive feedback items (School B, Term A).

Figure 4.6 suggests the presence of three broad groups of students. The first group of students used every item of constructive feedback they received in some way (i.e., Jeff, Steph, Jeremy, Samantha, Steve, Ivy). Overall, students in this group tended to fully use most of the written individual feedback items they received, and partially use one or two items. It was interesting to observe that although students in this

group fully used feedback items that were relatively straightforward, they also fully used feedback that necessitated substantial changes or application to multiple parts of their work.

The second group of students used some of the constructive feedback items they received (i.e., Alleana, Sakura, Henry, Chloe, Izzy, Katie, Zelda). The number of feedback items they did use was either greater than or equal to the number of feedback items they did not use. Students in this group fully used items of feedback that were relatively straightforward, or that necessitated only simple changes.

The third group of students hardly used the constructive feedback they received (i.e., Neymar, Ducky, Belle). The items of feedback they did not use outweighed the number of items that they did use. It was interesting to observe that Ducky and Belle did not use a noticeably high number of feedback items. Feedback items that students did not use demonstrated no clear patterns. As mentioned earlier, some items were relatively straightforward whilst others required more significant thought or change. In both cases, students did not use the feedback they received.

As for School A, once the three groups of students had been identified, general characteristics of students in each group were investigated. Students in each group were cross-checked with the categories of data that had emerged during thematic analysis of *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview. A meta-matrix was employed to assist in this analysis (see Table 4.10). Categories that were significant for each student were identified based on the frequency of their responses in the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This data was then entered into the meta-matrix. Like School A, only categories that had the highest number of units of data for each student were selected for inclusion in the meta-matrix (i.e., top 1-3 categories).

Table 4.10

*Meta-Matrix Showing Groups of Students and Significant Categories of Data for Students (School B, Term A)*

Categories of Data from Thematic Analysis															
	Improvement	Information	Correction	Encouragement	Emotions	Expectations	Preferences	Social context	Parents	View of teacher	Tone	Evaluation	Work and time	Action	Understanding
<b>Group 1: Used all feedback</b>	Samant. Steph Ivy Steve Jeremy Jeff		Samant. Steph Ivy Steve Jeff		Steve							Ivy		Steph Jeremy	Jeff
<b>Group 2: Mostly used feedback</b>	Alleana Henry Chloe Izzy Zelda	Katie Chloe	Sakura Henry Zelda		Sakura Katie	Alleana				Sakura		Henry Chloe			Katie
<b>Group 3: Hardly used feedback</b>			Belle Ducky		Neymar										Belle Neymar

*Note.* Samant. = Samantha.

Table 4.10 shows that students in Group 1 reflected strongly on the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’, and ‘action’. Students in this group recognised that written individual feedback helped them to improve and were particularly concerned about achieving good marks. They were able to recognise mistakes that they had made and were keen to correct these errors. Students in Group 1 acted upon the feedback they had received by asking for help, making changes to their work, and trying to use the feedback as much as possible. According to data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions (see section 3.3.2.2), students in Group 1 typically self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 2 generally focussed on the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘information’, ‘correction’, personal responses to feedback (i.e., ‘emotions’, ‘expectations’, ‘view of teacher’), and ‘evaluation’. They recognised that written individual feedback helped them to improve and gave them information on what teachers were “*looking for*”. As with the previous group, students in Group 2 were very interested in using written individual feedback to achieve better marks, and they were generally able to recognise the mistakes that they had made. Interestingly, students in this group demonstrated more personal responses to written individual feedback compared to the other groups. For example, students responded to written individual feedback based on their emotions and personal expectations. Students in Group 2 also evaluated the written individual feedback they received, for example, by considering if the teacher understood their work and if the feedback was easy to use. Data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in Group 2 commonly reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 emphasised the categories of ‘correction’ and ‘understanding’. They were aware that written individual feedback identified mistakes in their work. However, they generally did not understand the written individual feedback they received. This lack of understanding was connected to students’ overall understanding of the task (i.e., music history/appreciation project) as well as to the feedback message itself. It was interesting to observe that students in this group did

not reflect strongly on the ‘improvement’ function of feedback. This differed to the previous two groups and suggested that students in Group 3 were not as cognisant of the purpose of feedback. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in Group 3 generally reported a low to moderate level of interest in the subject, a low to moderate level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher (except for Neymar who reported a poor relationship). As shown in Chapter Three, Neymar provided atypical responses to the Likert scale self-description in that all responses were entirely negative.

#### **4.3.2.3 Summary**

Artefacts collected during this study showed that students in School B used constructive written individual feedback in one of four ways. They either *fully used* the feedback, *partially used* the feedback, *did not use* the feedback or *deleted their original work* in response to the feedback. Collating the data from each student showed three groups of students:

1. students who used all written individual feedback,
2. students who used some written individual feedback, and
3. students who hardly used written individual feedback.

Each group of students demonstrated a variety of characteristics. Students in Group 1 typically made good use of written individual feedback. They fully used feedback items that required straightforward changes but also fully used feedback that involved more significant change or application to different sections of their work. Students in this group focussed strongly on the ‘improvement’ function of feedback and used written individual feedback to achieve better marks. They did not have very personal responses to written individual feedback and instead emphasised the ‘action’ they would take in response to feedback (e.g., asking for help, making changes to their work, and trying to use the feedback as much as possible). Students in Group 1 also generally self-reported a strong interest in the subject of music, a high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.



Students in Group 2 made some use of the written individual feedback they received and tended to fully use feedback items that required only straightforward simple changes. As with the previous group, students in Group 2 emphasised the ‘improvement’ aspect of feedback and were interested in achieving good marks. However, they demonstrated more personal responses to written individual feedback (e.g., responding to feedback based on their emotions and expectations) and tended to engage more in ‘evaluation’ of feedback. Students in this group commonly self-reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 hardly used the written individual feedback they received. No clear trends were evident in relation to the types of feedback items they did not use (e.g., some feedback items required straightforward changes whilst other items required more significant changes or thought). Interestingly, students in this group did not focus on the ‘improvement’ function of feedback. Instead, they emphasised their lack of ‘understanding’ in relation to the feedback they received as well as to the learning task. Students in Group 3 tended to self-report a low to moderate level of interest in the subject, a low to moderate level of ability in relation to music, and a generally good relationship with the teacher-researcher. This concludes the presentation of results from School B. The next section contains a synthesis of findings from School A and School B.

#### **4.4 Synthesis: Written individual feedback**

The previous sections of this chapter have presented findings from the intrinsic analysis of data. This section will compare and synthesise findings from School A and School B in an instrumental analysis. As explained in Chapter Three, findings from School A and School B were compared through the use of meta-matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Meta-matrices enabled the teacher-researcher to compare key issues that had arisen from the questionnaires, semi-structured interview, and artefacts during intrinsic analysis. This section will be structured in two parts. Findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview will be compared

and synthesised first. This will then be followed by a comparison and synthesis of findings from artefacts.

#### **4.4.1 Findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interview**

The meta-matrix that synthesised findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview was organised according to the themes that had emerged during intrinsic analysis (see Table 4.11). This approach was taken given that the same unifying themes had arisen from both School A and School B (i.e., ‘perspectives on feedback’, ‘personal responses to feedback’, ‘processing of feedback’), thus making them ideal units of comparison. Issues of interest associated with each theme were entered into the relevant cell in the meta-matrix. This allowed similarities and differences between School A and School B to be more easily investigated. Issues of interest included in the meta-matrix were derived from the categories of data that had emerged during intrinsic analysis (e.g., improvement, emotions, understanding).

Table 4.11

*Meta-Matrix Synthesising Key Issues from Questionnaires and Semi-Structured Interview (Term A)*

Theme	School A	School B	Synthesis
<p><b>Perspectives on feedback</b> <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i></p>	<p>Feedback supports improvement and helps to achieve better marks</p> <p>Feedback corrects mistakes or weak areas in work but should also contain affirmative comments</p> <p>Feedback conveys information about work and progress</p> <p>Feedback as written information is different to feedback as spoken information</p>	<p>Feedback supports improvement and helps to achieve better marks</p> <p>Feedback corrects mistakes or weak areas in work but should also contain affirmative comments</p> <p>Feedback provides information about what teachers are looking for</p> <p>Feedback information is helpful when it contains specific instructions and reiterates the rubric</p>	<p>Students believe that feedback:</p> <p>(a) supports improvement and helps them to achieve better marks,</p> <p>(b) corrects mistakes or weak areas in their work but should also contain affirmative comments, and</p> <p>(c) can provide different types of information (e.g., work and progress, what teachers are looking for, links to rubric)</p>
<p><b>Personal responses to feedback</b> <i>Students' personal responses to feedback</i></p>	<p>Students experience different emotions depending on type of feedback, how well they take criticism, and other pressures (e.g., time constraints, lack of understanding)</p> <p>Students may have high expectations of themselves and this can affect their responses</p> <p>Three sets of feedback preferences: (a) encouraging, (b) follow-up discussions initiated by the teacher, and (c) feedback that does not change work too much</p> <p>Students generally believe teachers are trying to help them</p> <p>Students are aware that the teacher will mark their final work and therefore defer to them</p> <p>Some students feel that teachers could be biased when providing feedback</p>	<p>Generally, affirmative feedback produces positive emotions and constructive feedback produces negative emotions</p> <p>Students link their responses to feedback to their expectations of themselves (e.g., competitive, good student)</p> <p>Students have certain feedback preferences (e.g., positive, encouraging, directive)</p> <p>Students consider their parents when responding to feedback (e.g., approach to correcting errors, avoid getting into trouble, approval)</p> <p>Students believe that teachers want to help them and are aware that the teacher will mark their final work</p>	<p>Students generally experience positive emotions in response to affirmative feedback and negative emotions in response to constructive feedback</p> <p>Students' emotional responses can also depend on other factors (e.g., how well they take criticism, other pressures)</p> <p>Students have different expectations and this can affect their responses (e.g., competitive)</p> <p>Students have different feedback preferences (e.g., encouraging, directive)</p> <p>Students may consider their parents when responding to feedback</p> <p>Students generally believe that teachers want to help them and are aware that the teacher will mark their final work</p>

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<p><b>Processing of feedback</b>  <i>Students' processing and use of feedback</i></p>	<p>Students try to understand feedback but are hindered by unclear explanations and confusing terminology</p> <p>Teachers need to know students and what they are capable of in order to provide understandable feedback</p> <p>Students evaluate feedback and do not use feedback for a variety of reasons (e.g., interferes with plans, too much work)</p> <p>Students try to act on feedback by making changes to their work</p> <p>Some students put a significant amount of time and work into acting on feedback</p> <p>Students identify that they act on feedback by asking for help when they do not understand but few actually approach the teacher for help</p> <p>When unable or unwilling to act on feedback, students tend to use only some of the feedback they receive</p>	<p>Some students find feedback difficult to understand and this can be linked to limited understanding of the task itself</p> <p>Some students have a very limited understanding of feedback and do not know what to do with it</p> <p>Students evaluate feedback and decide if and how much feedback should be used based on different reasons (e.g., easy to use, important subject/task, amount of work)</p> <p>Some students evaluate feedback and make their own decisions about it because the language used encourages them to do so</p> <p>Students act on feedback in two main ways: (a) make changes to work and (b) talk to others if help is needed (in reality, very few students ask the teacher for assistance)</p>	<p>Students do not always understand feedback and this can be linked to various problems (e.g., unclear explanations, confusing terminology, limited understanding of task)</p> <p>Students evaluate feedback and decide how they will use it based on different considerations (e.g., interference with personal plans, easy to use, importance of subject/task)</p> <p>Students act on feedback by making changes to their work. Students identify that they ask for help if they do not understand feedback but in reality, few students approach the teacher for assistance</p>
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Table 4.11 shows that issues pertaining to each of the three unifying themes were generally similar across both school sites. Indeed, the distribution of coded units of data across themes was also very similar (see Table 4.12). Each of these themes will now be compared in more depth.

Table 4.12

*Comparison of Number of Coded Units of Data from Questionnaires and Semi-Structured Interview (Term A)*

Theme	School A ( <i>n</i> = 480)	School B ( <i>n</i> = 401)
Perspectives on feedback	225 (46.88%)	192 (47.88%)
Personal responses to feedback	106 (22.08%)	93 (23.19%)
Processing of feedback	149 (31.04%)	116 (28.93%)

*Note.* *n* = number of coded units of data.

#### **4.4.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback**

The theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ contained fairly consistent issues of interest. Students at both school sites believed that written individual feedback supported improvement and helped them to achieve better marks. They identified that written individual feedback allowed them to correct mistakes or weak areas in their work. However, they believed that feedback also needed to point out areas of work that they had done well. Students recognised that written individual feedback could provide them with different types of information. For example, it informed them about their progress, gave them an idea of what teachers were looking for in their work, and could be linked to a rubric. One small point of dissimilarity was that students in School A reflected on the differences between feedback as written information and feedback as spoken information.

#### **4.4.1.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback**

Findings pertaining to the theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ were also similar. In general, students experienced positive emotions in response to affirmative

feedback (e.g., happy, encouraged, proud) and negative emotions in response to constructive feedback (e.g., embarrassed, stressed, upset). However, students explained that their emotional responses to written individual feedback could also depend on other factors, for example, how well they took criticism and the presence of other pressures in their lives (e.g., time constraints, chores, extra-curricular activities). It was also interesting that students linked their responses to written individual feedback to their personal expectations. For instance, some students identified that they had high expectations of themselves, were competitive, and normally did well at school. This had an effect on their responses to written individual feedback (e.g., feeling shocked when they received unexpected constructive feedback, trying their best to use feedback to achieve a high grade).

Some differences between both school sites were noticeable in regard to students' feedback preferences, view of the teacher, and consideration of parents. First, findings from both school sites showed that students had certain feedback preferences. However, these preferences were not consistent. For example, some students at School A and School B liked written individual feedback to be phrased in an encouraging or positive way. However, students in School A preferred to have follow-up discussions about written individual feedback with the teacher and wanted these conversations to be initiated by the teacher. This finding was not present for School B. Second, students at both school sites generally believed that teachers wanted to help them. They were inclined to use written individual feedback because they were aware that the teacher providing them with feedback would also be the one assessing their final work. However, a minority of students at School A felt that teachers could be biased and show favouritism when providing feedback. Third, students at School B gave consideration to their parents when responding to feedback but this did not feature prominently in data from School A.

#### ***4.4.1.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback***

In relation to the theme of 'processing of feedback', students at both school sites evaluated and acted upon the written individual feedback they received in similar ways. They decided if and how they would use the feedback they received based on a

range of considerations (e.g., amount of work, importance of subject/task, interference with personal plans). For example, students reported that they did not want to use written individual feedback because they thought that their work was fine the way it was or because they thought that using written individual feedback would involve too much effort on their part. Evaluative reasons such as these conveyed a sense of unwillingness to change their original work.

Students at both School A and School B made changes to their work to varying degrees (e.g., adding bits, redoing the whole thing). It was interesting that some students expended a lot of time into making changes to their work whilst others did not. Students stated that they asked for help from their peers, parents and teacher when they did not understand written individual feedback. Cross-checking this finding with data from the teacher-researcher journal revealed that very few students at either school site asked the teacher for assistance.

One interesting difference was evident in relation to the category of understanding. Students did not always understand the written individual feedback they received. This was linked to a variety of problems. In School A, difficulties with understanding were generally related to the feedback itself. For example, students did not understand written individual feedback if it had unclear explanations or confusing terminology. They identified that written individual feedback was not always provided at the “*perfect level*” for them. However, in School B, students who had difficulty understanding written individual feedback also had a very limited understanding of the task itself as well as a limited understanding of feedback in general. The limited awareness and understanding that students at School B demonstrated in relation to feedback and learning could be explained by the fact that School B had a higher representation of students who identified that they struggled to learn in music (see section 3.3.2.2).

#### **4.4.1.4 Summary**

In summary, comparing the findings from both School A and School B demonstrated that students’ ‘perspectives on feedback’ were similar. They believed that written

individual feedback supported improvement and helped them to achieve better marks. Written individual feedback also enabled them to correct errors and affirmed areas of work they had done well. It provided them with different types of information. These perspectives were frequently highlighted as potential benefits or advantages of feedback.

Students' 'personal responses to feedback' emphasised the individual and unique ways that students responded to written individual feedback. Students responded to written individual feedback emotionally. Positive feelings were associated with affirmative feedback whilst negative feelings were linked to constructive feedback. Students connected their responses to written individual feedback to their own expectations (e.g., competitive, good student) and personal characteristics (e.g., how well they take criticism, sensitive). In addition, students reflected on written individual feedback based on their personal feedback preferences and views of the teacher. Some students also gave consideration to their parents when responding to written individual feedback.

Students 'processed feedback' by trying to understand it, evaluate it and act on it. It was interesting that difficulty in understanding written individual feedback was linked either to the feedback itself (School A) or to students' understanding of the task and the general concept of feedback (School B). Students evaluated written individual feedback and decided how they would use it based on a range of considerations. They usually acted on written individual feedback by making some degree of change to their work and asking for help if needed. However, in this study, students rarely asked the teacher-researcher for help with feedback.

#### **4.4.2 Findings from artefacts**

This section will compare and synthesise findings from School A and School B in relation to artefacts. Findings from School A and School B were compared through the use of a meta-matrix (see Table 4.13). The structural framework of the meta-matrix was based on key findings that had emerged during intrinsic analysis. These findings were: (a) types of responses to feedback, and (b) patterns in feedback use.



Table 4.13

*Meta-Matrix Synthesising Key Issues from Artefacts (Term A)*

Finding	School A	School B	Synthesis
<b>Types of responses to feedback</b> <i>How students used specific items of feedback</i>	Students responded to an item of constructive feedback in one of four ways: (a) Fully used – Feedback generally required straightforward changes. Some students fully used items that required substantial changes, work or checking. (b) Partially used - Feedback generally required application to multiple parts of work or contained several suggestions. (c) Did not use – Feedback was varied and did not show any trends. (d) Deleted original work – Less common response to feedback.	Students responded to an item of constructive feedback in one of four ways: (a) Fully used - Feedback generally required straightforward changes. Some students fully used items that required substantial changes, work or checking. (b) Partially used - Feedback generally required application to multiple parts of work. (c) Did not use – Feedback was varied and did not show any trends. (d) Deleted original work - Less common response to feedback.	Students typically used an item of constructive feedback in one of four ways: (a) fully use (b) partially use (c) do not use (d) delete original work Full use and partial use of feedback items could be related to the type of feedback provided (e.g., requiring straightforward changes, requiring application to multiple parts of work). Non-use of feedback could not be related to type of feedback provided. Deleting original work was a less common response to feedback.
<b>Patterns in feedback use</b> <i>General patterns in how groups of students used feedback</i>	Based on students' types of responses to feedback, three groups were evident: (a) Group 1 - Students who used all written individual feedback in some way. Students were more likely to fully use feedback that required substantial change, work or checking. (b) Group 2 - Students who mostly used written individual feedback (number of feedback items used usually greater than items not used). Students tended	Based on students' types of responses to feedback, three groups were evident: (a) Group 1 - Students who used all written individual feedback in some way. Students were more likely to fully use feedback that required substantial change, work or checking. (b) Group 2 -Students who used some written individual feedback (number of feedback items used either greater than or equal to items not used). Students	Based on students' types of responses to feedback, three groups were evident: (a) Group 1 - Students who used all feedback in some way. Students were more likely to fully use feedback that required substantial change, work or checking. (b) Group 2 -Students who used some feedback. There was variation within this group (some students used most feedback items whilst others used

<p>to fully use items that required straightforward changes.</p> <p>(c) Group 3 - Students who hardly used written individual feedback. No clear trends in feedback not used.</p>	<p>tended to fully use items that required straightforward changes.</p> <p>(c) Group 3 - Students who hardly used written individual feedback. Some students in this group did not use a high number of feedback items. No clear trends in feedback not used.</p>	<p>only half the feedback items). Students tended to fully use items that required straightforward changes.</p> <p>(c) Group 3 - Students who hardly used feedback. Students in this group did not use most of the feedback items they received. No clear trends in feedback not used.</p>
<p>Cross-checking each group of students with categories that emerged during thematic analysis revealed the following characteristics:</p> <p>(a) Group 1 – Focussed strongly on improvement function of feedback. Interested in achieving good marks. Emphasised action in response to feedback. Generally no personal response to feedback.</p> <p>(b) Group 2 – Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Interested in achieving good marks. Engaged in evaluation of feedback (e.g., amount of work). More personal response to feedback (e.g., emotions).</p> <p>(c) Group 3 - Focussed strongly on improvement function of feedback. Engaged in evaluation of feedback (e.g., interferes with plans, do not need it).</p>	<p>Cross-checking each group of students with categories that emerged during thematic analysis revealed the following characteristics:</p> <p>(a) Group 1 – Focussed strongly on improvement function of feedback. Interested in achieving good marks. Emphasised action in response to feedback. Generally no personal response to feedback.</p> <p>(b) Group 2 – Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Interested in achieving good marks. Engaged in evaluation of feedback (e.g., easy to use). More personal response to feedback (e.g., emotions).</p> <p>(c) Group 3 – Did not focus on improvement function of feedback. Emphasised lack of understanding in relation to feedback and task.</p>	<p>Characteristics of each group could be identified based on common key categories that emerged during thematic analysis:</p> <p>(a) Group 1 – Focussed strongly on improvement function of feedback. Interested in achieving good marks. Emphasised action in response to feedback. Generally no personal response to feedback.</p> <p>(b) Group 2 – Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Interested in achieving good marks. Engaged in evaluation of feedback. Demonstrated more personal response to feedback (e.g., emotions).</p> <p>(c) Group 3 – Inconsistent characteristics. In School A, students exhibited characteristics similar to Group 2. In School B, students showed less understanding of feedback and less awareness of the improvement function of feedback.</p>

Issues of interest associated with each finding were entered into the relevant cell in the meta-matrix. Table 4.13 shows that issues pertaining to key findings of ‘types of responses to feedback’ and ‘patterns in feedback use’ were very similar across both school sites. These findings will now be compared in more detail.

#### **4.4.2.1 Finding 1: Types of responses to feedback**

Results showed that students had four typical responses to items of constructive written individual feedback. They either *fully used* the feedback, *partially used* the feedback, *did not use* the feedback or *deleted their original work* in response to the feedback. Students did not always respond to every item of constructive feedback in the same way. These were consistent findings across both school sites. The distribution of types of responses was also fairly similar for both students in School A and School B (see Table 4.14).

Students’ full use and partial use of written individual feedback items could be related to the type of feedback that was provided (e.g., students tended to fully use feedback that involved straightforward changes but tended to partially use feedback that required them to apply feedback to multiple parts of their work). However, items of feedback that students did not use were varied and did not show any trends. To a much lesser extent, students deleted their original work in response to feedback instead of adding to it or correcting it.

Table 4.14

*Comparison of Types of Responses to Constructive Feedback (Term A)*

Type of response	School A ( <i>n</i> = 93)	School B ( <i>n</i> = 83)
Fully used	49%	41%
Not used	31%	34%
Partially used	14%	22%
Deleted original work	5%	4%

*Note.* *n* = total number of constructive feedback items provided to students during Term A.

#### ***4.4.2.2 Finding 2: Patterns in feedback use***

General patterns in written individual feedback use across both school sites were also quite similar. Results showed that students could be classified into three broad groups based on their types of responses to written individual feedback. The first group of students used all the written individual feedback items they received in some way. The second group of students used some written individual feedback items. The third group of students hardly used any written individual feedback items. It was interesting to observe that the first and second group of students generally exhibited similar characteristics in both School A and School B. However, the same could not be said in relation to the third group of students. Characteristics of each of these three groups will now be explored in more detail.

Students in Group 1 generally made good use of the written individual feedback they received. They used every item of constructive feedback in some way (i.e., fully used, partially used or deleted original work). Students in this group fully used feedback items that required straightforward changes but were also more likely to fully use feedback that involved significant change, work or checking. They focussed strongly on the improvement function of feedback and used feedback in order to achieve better marks. They generally did not respond to feedback in a personal way but instead emphasised action in response to feedback. For example, they asked for help, made changes to their work, and tried to use feedback as much as possible.

Examining the data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions also revealed some interesting similarities in terms of contextual factors. Students in this group typically self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a medium to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher. The characteristics of students in Group 1 were very similar across both school sites.

Students in Group 2 used some of the written individual feedback they received. However, some slight variation was evident within this group. In School A, students in Group 2 used most of the constructive feedback items they received. That is, the number of feedback items students used was generally greater than the number of items they did not use. However, in School B, the number of feedback items students used may have been equal to the items they did not use. Apart from this difference,

the characteristics of this group were comparable. Students in Group 2 tended to fully use feedback items that required only straightforward changes to their work. They focussed on the improvement function of feedback and were concerned about achieving good marks. However, unlike Group 1, they generally demonstrated a more personal response to written individual feedback. For example, they responded to feedback based on their emotions, expectations and view of the teacher. Students in this group also tended to engage more in evaluating written individual feedback (e.g., considering the amount of work involved). Data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group generally reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher. In general, these contextual factors were similar across both school sites.

Students in Group 3 hardly used the written individual feedback they received. The number of feedback items that students did not use was greater than the number of items they did use. No clear trends were evident in relation to the type of written individual feedback that students did not use (e.g., some items required straightforward changes whilst others required more significant changes). This finding was consistent across both School A and School B. However, the characteristics of students in Group 3 differed considerably from one school site to the other. In School A, students exhibited characteristics that were similar to Group 2. They focussed quite strongly on the improvement function of feedback and engaged more in making evaluative decisions about written individual feedback. In contrast, students in School B did not focus on the improvement function of feedback. Instead, they emphasised lack of understanding in relation to written individual feedback as well as to the learning task. Data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions were also inconsistent. In general, students from School B self-reported lower levels of interest in the subject and lower levels of ability in relation to music in comparison to students from School A. Although students from both school sites generally self-reported a good relationship with the teacher-researcher, the differences in students' levels of interest and ability in relation to music could help to explain some of the discrepancies in findings between School A and School B.

#### 4.4.2.3 Summary

In summary, the first finding indicated that students had four types of responses to constructive items of written individual feedback. They either *fully used* the feedback, *partially used* the feedback, *did not use* the feedback or *deleted* their original work in response to feedback. It was interesting that students did not always respond to every item of written individual feedback in the same way. The second finding highlighted general patterns in relation to how groups of students responded to written individual feedback. Three groups of students were evident.

Students in Group 1 used all items of written individual feedback they received in some way. They were more likely to fully use feedback that involved significant change, work or checking. They focussed strongly on the improvement function of feedback and emphasised action in response to feedback. According to students' Likert scale self-descriptions, they also generally self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 2 used some items of written individual feedback but did not use others. They tended to fully use feedback items that required only straightforward changes to their work. Although they recognised the improvement function of feedback, they tended to demonstrate a more personal response to written individual feedback and engage more in evaluating written individual feedback. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group generally self-reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 hardly used any written individual feedback items. The characteristics of this group were inconsistent across both School A and School B. Students in School A demonstrated characteristics that were similar to Group 2. However, students in School B showed less understanding of written individual feedback and less awareness of the improvement function of feedback. Differences were also noticeable in relation to the data from students' Likert scale self-

descriptions. Students from School B tended to self-report lower levels of interest in music and lower levels of ability in relation to music in comparison to students from School A.

## **4.5 Summary**

This chapter has presented findings in relation to how students reflected on and used written individual feedback. Data was collected from two school sites via multiple instruments (i.e., questionnaires, semi-structured interview, artefacts, teacher-researcher journal). Results from School A and School B were first reported individually in an intrinsic analysis. Findings from both school sites were then synthesised in an instrumental analysis that focussed on issues of interest. The results from this analysis indicated that data had reached saturation point as students' reflections on written individual feedback were clearly reiterated across the various instruments. Taken together, results from the instrumental analyses revealed four overarching themes.

Firstly, students had fairly consistent and stable perspectives on written individual feedback. They believed that written individual feedback helped them to improve their work and achieve better marks. Students also identified that written individual feedback gave them encouragement and provided them with information about their work or progress. These were seen as being the potential benefits of written individual feedback.

Secondly, students' responses to written individual feedback were personal in nature. For example, they reflected on written individual feedback based on their emotions, expectations, preferences, and views of the teacher. It was interesting that students linked their responses to written individual feedback to their own personal characteristics (e.g., competitive, sensitive) and that some students demonstrated a more emotional response to written individual feedback than others. Overall, findings highlighted the individual differences amongst students and how these differences could be connected to students' responses to feedback.

Thirdly, students processed written individual feedback in a variety of ways. They tried to understand written individual feedback and evaluated written individual feedback in light of different considerations (e.g., amount of work and time required to use feedback, congruence of feedback with original plans, tone of feedback). Students identified that these factors could either hinder or support their use of written individual feedback. For example, if students did not understand written individual feedback, they would be less likely to use it. Having said this, it was surprising that some students' difficulties with understanding could be connected to a limited understanding of the general concept of feedback and the learning task as well as to the feedback message itself. As alluded to earlier, students' processing of written individual feedback was linked to their actions in response to feedback (e.g., use, do not use).

Finally, students demonstrated patterns in their use of written individual feedback. Collating data on each student's feedback use revealed three groups of students. Students in Group 1 used all items of written individual feedback they received in some way. They focussed strongly on the improvement function of feedback and emphasised action in response to feedback. Data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group generally self-reported high levels of interest and ability in relation to music. Students in Group 2 used some items of written individual feedback but did not use others. They generally demonstrated a more personal response to feedback and engaged more in evaluation of feedback. Students in this group commonly self-reported moderate to high levels of interest and ability in relation to music. Students in Group 3 hardly used any constructive feedback items. The characteristics of this group varied in School A and School B. Students in School A demonstrated characteristics that were similar to Group 2. However, students in School B typically demonstrated less understanding of feedback and less awareness of the improvement function of feedback. In general, students in School B also self-reported lower levels of interest and ability in relation to music compared to students in School A. This concludes the presentation of findings in relation to written individual feedback. The next chapter will report on the second set of findings from this study pertaining to written whole-class feedback.



# Chapter Five

## Findings: Written Whole-Class Feedback

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented findings in relation to written individual feedback. This present chapter will focus on findings pertaining to written whole-class feedback. Written whole-class feedback refers to collective written feedback provided by a teacher to a whole class of students based on a task that students completed independently. In this study, written whole-class feedback was provided to students in the form of an A4 handout (see Appendix F). Students at both School A and School B received written whole-class feedback during Term B in the context of a music history/appreciation project on the musical work ‘Rhapsody in Blue’ by George Gershwin. (See section 3.3.3 for a full description of the learning and teaching context of this study.) Students completed a draft music project component based on this musical work and submitted their draft music project component to the teacher-researcher for formative assessment. Students at both school sites then received written whole-class feedback on their work. This chapter will present findings in relation to how students reflected on written whole-class feedback, and how they used this feedback in the production of a final music project submission.

Findings in this chapter will be reported in three sections. Findings from School A will first be presented followed by findings from School B. Finally, a synthesis of findings from both school sites will be outlined in accordance with two-case study methodology (see Figure 5.1 for a visual representation). This structure corresponds with the processes of intrinsic and instrumental data analysis outlined in Chapter Three (see section 3.5).

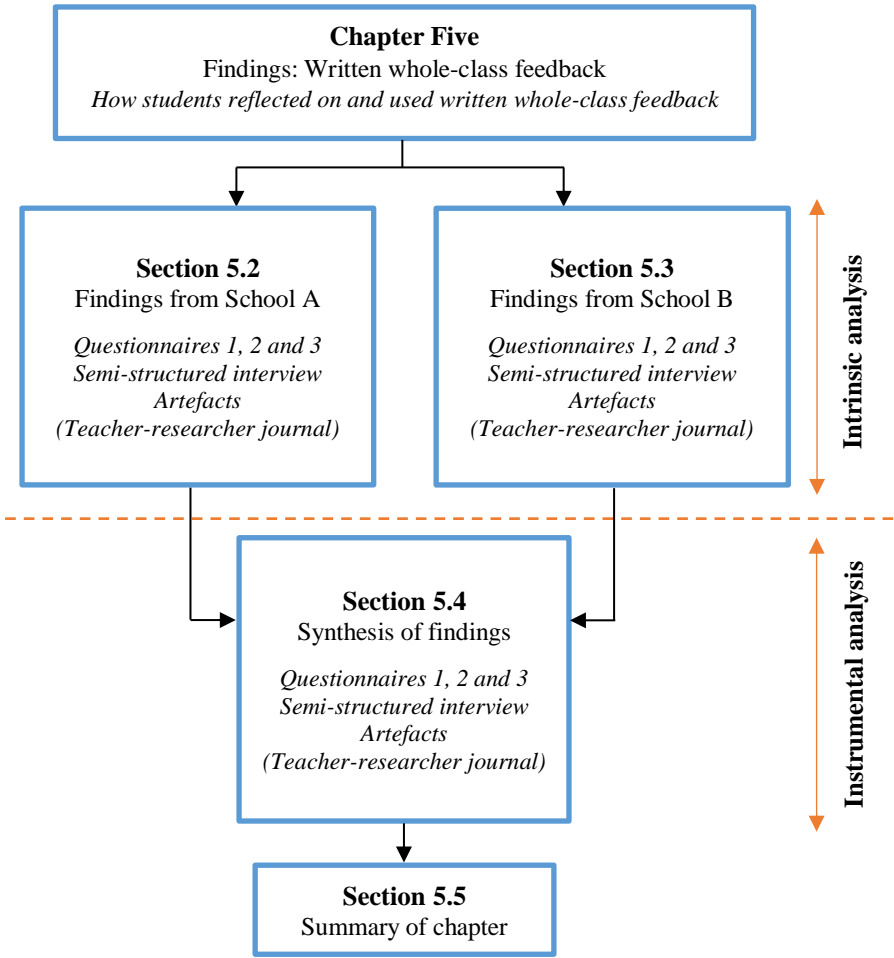


Figure 5.1. Structure of Chapter Five.

As explained in Chapter Three, the processes of data collection and analysis employed in relation to written whole-class feedback were essentially identical to those utilised during Term A. The only difference pertained to the collection and analysis of artefacts. This was necessary in order to take into account the different type of written feedback being provided to students (see section 3.5.1.3 for more information about the analysis of artefacts). In this chapter, quotations from students will be presented with double quotation marks and italicised text. Quotations from the teacher-researcher journal or quotations of written whole-class feedback provided by the teacher-researcher will be presented with double quotation marks but without italicisation in order to clearly distinguish teacher-researcher data from student data.

## **5.2 School A: Written whole-class feedback**

This section will outline findings from School A pertaining to written whole-class feedback. Every participant in School A completed all questionnaires, participated in a semi-structured interview and submitted all artefacts ( $n = 18$ ). Findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview will be presented first as these instruments generated similar data. This will be followed by a presentation of findings from student artefacts. As with Chapter Four, data from the teacher-researcher journal will not be reported separately as the purpose of this instrument was to provide supplementary information about how students responded to written whole-class feedback (see section 3.5.1.4 for more information). Instead, supplementary data from the teacher-researcher journal will be included within the context of other instruments where appropriate.

### **5.2.1 Findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interview**

Data collected from each questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were analysed separately following a three-step process of coding, categorising and identifying themes. (See sections 3.4 and 3.5 for a thorough description of each instrument as well as the process of data collection and analysis.) The results of this analysis have been summarised and presented in tables within the following pages.

Table 5.1 shows findings from *Questionnaire 1*, Table 5.2 presents findings from *Questionnaire 2*, Table 5.3 summarises findings from *Questionnaire 3*, and Table 5.4 displays findings from the semi-structured interview. Each table shows the codes, categories and themes that resulted from thematic analysis and also indicates the number of units of data that comprised each theme and category. Unifying themes that arose from the data will be explained in detail after the presentation of tables.

As evidenced in the analysis shown in these tables, comparable themes emerged from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. For example, the themes of ‘perspectives on feedback’ (*Questionnaire 1* and semi-structured interview), ‘student perceptions’ (*Questionnaire 2*), and ‘advantages of feedback’ (*Questionnaire 3*) contained similar ideas. This suggested that students’ reflections on written individual feedback were consistent. It also suggested that data saturation was being reached as few new categories of data appeared in relation to each instrument (Saunders et al., 2018). Data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview collectively revealed three unifying themes:

1. students’ perspectives on feedback,
2. students’ personal responses to feedback, and
3. students’ processing of feedback.

Each of these themes will now be explained in greater detail.

Table 5.1

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 1 Data (School A, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories... / That were clustered into themes...
<p><i>“It’s advice given by a teacher or someone else to benefit your work and improve your work.” - Lizzie</i></p>	<p>It helps me improve</p>	
<p><i>“Feedback is when your’e [sic] teacher checks your information for your project and gives you suggestions on what you should improve on.” - Serena</i></p>	<p>It gives me ideas or suggestions</p>	<p>Improvement (n = 15)</p>
<p><i>“[T]he stuff in the feedback was pretty much my mental checklist and I made sure I ticked them off in my head before I handed my draft in.” - Curry</i></p> <p><i>“Feedback is a way of giving someone facts or your own opinion about what they (the person) have done.” - Tara</i></p>	<p>It is stuff I already knew</p> <p>It is someone’s opinion</p>	<p>Information (n = 5)</p> <p>Perspectives on feedback <i>Students’ views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 28)</p>
<p><i>“[I]t was basically talking about mistakes” - Olive</i></p> <p><i>“It’s when someone is ither [sic] giving you some inpoot [sic] to what you can werk [sic] on or inpoot [sic] of some stuff what that person thinks is inpresseve [sic].” – Dove</i></p>	<p>It points out mistakes</p> <p>It tells me what I got right and wrong</p>	<p>Correction (n = 8)</p>

<p><i>"I wasn't overly happy when we didn't receive any individual feedback... dejected, unhappy, sad, disappointed, bummed, meh." - Curry</i></p>	<p>I have negative feelings</p>	<p>Emotions (n = 9)</p>	<p>Personal responses to feedback <i>Students' personal responses to feedback</i> (n = 19)</p>
<p><i>"I felt really [sic] good because most of the feedback [I] got was good and I had done basically everything it said to do. ☺" - Charlie</i></p>	<p>I have positive feelings</p>		
<p><i>"I knew my work would'nt [sic] be entirely perfect." - Madeline</i></p>	<p>I knew it would not be perfect</p>	<p>Expectations (n = 3)</p>	
<p><i>"No because I thought I did more better." – Barack</i></p>	<p>I thought I would do better</p>		
<p><i>"I felt that the feedback... was aimed to people who don't consider themselves very good at music and don't try that hard. I would've liked individual feedback as it gives me, personally a chance to improve my work. I would've liked to have the mistakes in my work pointed so that I could fix them &amp; maybe fix other higher-level mistakes like sentence structure." – Curry</i></p>	<p>I prefer individual feedback</p>	<p>Preferences (n = 3)</p>	
<p><i>"All of the feedback that the Teacher [sic] gave is all stuff we need to know. And it helps our learning jearny [sic]." – Tara</i></p>	<p>Teachers are trying to help me</p>	<p>Social context (n = 4)</p>	
<p><i>"I agree with all the feedback, because this feedback is from the teacher that is marking the project, so she knows what she wants to see." – Nels</i></p>	<p>It was from the teacher</p>		
<p><i>I think it is very helpful to both teacher and student because the teacher dosen't [sic] have to write it for every one of the students." – Lizzie</i></p>	<p>It saves the teacher time</p>		

<i>"I will use it as a checklist for my good copy."</i> - Curry	I will use it as a checklist	Action (n = 2)	
<i>"A bit confused about how to use it... wondering, confused."</i> - Daniel	I do not understand		Processing of feedback <i>Students' processing and use of feedback</i> (n = 17)
<i>"The feedback I received did not really apply to me specifically."</i> - Curry	I know which feedback applies to me	Understanding (n = 15)	
<i>"I didn't disagree with any because they all make sense."</i> - Lizzie	It makes sense		
<i>"[It is] a completely new way of feedback."</i> - Jonathan	It is a new type of feedback		

*Note.* n = number of coded units of data.

Table 5.2

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 2 Data (School A, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories... That were clustered into themes...
<p><i>"To tell me what I got wrong and what I needed to do."</i> – Barack</p>	<p>It points out mistakes</p>	<p>Correction (n = 4)</p>
<p><i>"[It] can give you some incauregment [sic]."</i> – Dove</p>	<p>It helps to encourage me</p>	<p>Encouragement (n = 2)</p>
<p><i>"To help you improve on your work and to help you get your best score possible."</i> - Tanisha</p>	<p>It helps me get better marks</p>	<p>Student perceptions <i>Perceptions of the purpose and usefulness of feedback</i> (n = 28)</p>
<p><i>"Teachers give feedback to help students inprove [sic] in tasks and set topics."</i> - Jonathan</p>	<p>It helps me improve</p>	
<p><i>"[Y]ou can learn from it."</i> – Dove</p>	<p>It helps me learn</p>	<p>Improvement (n = 22)</p>
<p><i>"All feedback is helpful to me. It doesn't matter if it is written feedback or spoken feedback."</i> – Bardon</p>	<p>It is helpful</p>	



<i>"Whether you use the feedback is your choice."</i> - Curry	I decide whether or not to use it		
<i>"When I think I got everything perfectly right."</i> - Barack	I think I am right		
<i>"[It] interferes [sic] with what I want to do with my project."</i> - Bardon	I have my own ideas of what I want to do	Evaluation (n = 15)	
<i>"What might stop me from using feedback is when it is incorrect or is wrong."</i> - Lizzie	It could be wrong		
<i>"If I think that the feedback does not apply to me."</i> - Curry	It does not apply to me		
<i>"Good feedback that makes you feel good."</i> – Alison	I like positive feedback		
<i>"Feedback specific to my work."</i> – Curry	I prefer feedback that is specific to my work	Preferences (n = 3)	
<i>"From the teachers, all feedback because they know what they are looking for."</i> - Nel	It is from the teacher	Social context (n = 1)	
<i>"If the feedback is harsh and dosen't [sic] build me up and I don't use it."</i> – Michelle	It can be mean or harsh	Tone (n = 2)	
<i>"Say if we get feedback a week before our project is due I would only do feedback I can do in that time."</i> – Tara	It depends on time	Work and time (n = 2)	
<i>"It might not make sence [sic]."</i> – Jonathan	I do not understand it	Understanding (n = 2)	

Student considerations  
*Considerations and factors that affect response to feedback*  
(n = 25)

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 5.3

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 3 Data (School A, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...
<i>"To improve and get a better grade."</i> - Daniel	I wanted to get better marks	Improvement (n = 37)
<i>"I used all of it because ... I whante'd [sic] to do my best."</i> – Tara	I wanted to do my best	Advantages of feedback <i>Potential benefits and advantages of feedback</i> (n = 52)
<i>"In general, I use feedback because it helps you improve."</i> – Lizzie	It helped me improve	
<i>"I used all the feedback because it really does help me and my project."</i> – Bardon	It was helpful	
<i>"I checked through my work and saw I needed to change it."</i> – Jonathan	I saw my mistakes	Correction (n = 15)
<i>"I like how it tells me what I did wrong and what I could have done better."</i> - Barack	It told me what I did wrong	

<i>"I spent a fare [sic] bit of time working on making it better."</i> - Daniel	I put in time and work	Work and time (n = 3)	
<i>"I thought I had already done as well as I needed to."</i> – Olive	I thought I had done well enough		
<i>"[I did not use] All feedback irrelevant to me because I didn't make the mistakes talked about in the feedback."</i> - Curry	It did not apply to me	Evaluation (n = 9)	
<i>"[I do not like] Feedback that puts you down."</i> – Michelle	I do not like negative feedback	Preferences (n = 2)	Considerations relating to feedback <i>Considerations and concerns when responding to feedback</i> (n = 27)
<i>"Especially if it's from the person marking my work. They're taking time out of their schedule to give helpful comments on how I can improve my work. It's basically what they'll be thinking when they mark your good copy."</i> - Curry	It was from the teacher		
<i>"I thought the teecher [sic] must be wright [sic] so I used it."</i> – Dove	Teachers know best	Social context (n = 5)	
<i>"When Teachers become mean with their feedback."</i> - Tara	Teachers can be harsh		
<i>"I didn't use any because I didn't know what to do."</i> – Barack	I did not understand it		
<i>"I used all of it because I understood it"</i> – Tara	I understood it		
<i>"I used the feedback about using music therminology [sic]. Because I <u>then</u> saw it was actually in the marking criteria. I didn't see it their [sic] before."</i> - Nels	I understand feedback is linked to the marking criteria	Understanding (n = 8)	

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 5.4

*Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Data (School A, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories... That were clustered into themes...
<i>"If I do it again, then I might get better results next time."</i> - Olive	It helps me get better marks	
<i>"After you've got feedback, you can improve and you can make it better in the future if you get kind of the same topic."</i> – Jake	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 33)
<i>"Feedback is the, um, giving back the work of the person that did it and all marked and things."</i> - Barack	It is marking	
<i>"I think feedback is a way for you to get somebody else's opinion on it once you've worked on something and you think it's correct."</i> – Tanisha	It is someone else's opinion	Information (n = 6)
<i>"I think feedback is a way of communicating with the student or a, um, a teacher with a student or anything that requires work. Feedback's just a way of communicating"</i> – Bardon	It is communication	Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 78)

<p><i>"I prefer individual feedback because if there's some bits that I don't need to fix, then I can just leave it... Individual feedback has a lot more content about your work and sometimes I might have different errors to someone else."</i> – Jonathan</p>	<p>I like feedback that tells me specifically about my mistakes</p>	
<p><i>"It actually helped me a bit because I realized that I made a couple of mistakes"</i> - Serena</p>	<p>I recognise my mistakes</p>	
<p><i>"It's good to know that you're not the only one who's making mistakes and stuff."</i> – Charlie</p>	<p>I am not the only one making mistakes</p>	<p>Correction (n = 39)</p>
<p><i>"It helped me know a little bit more what I did wrong."</i> – Madeline</p>	<p>It points out what I did wrong</p>	
<p><i>"I feel quite good that I get feedback... so that I know what I'm doing wrong or right."</i> - Alison</p>	<p>It tells me what I got right and wrong</p>	
<p><i>"It kind of gave me reassurance that I was doing, I was on the right track and I understood what we were, we'd been working on."</i> - Tanisha</p>	<p>I feel reassured</p>	
<p><i>"[I felt] nervous because since it was for the whole class, I didn't know if that was for me or not."</i> – Nels</p>	<p>I feel nervous</p>	
<p><i>"I was a little annoyed because I wanted it to be direct feedback just in case there was something that I really needed to fix and I didn't pick up on it, so."</i> – Tanisha</p>	<p>I feel annoyed</p>	
<p><i>"If you get, like, bad, not bad feedback but yeah [laughs], then, like, sometimes you feel like you've done really bad at it. Like you can't do anything about it and like you can't improve or anything because you've done it wrong already and you can't improve it... Mostly I feel like you don't know, like, you don't know how to change it... because when you write it down, you feel like that's it and, like, that's what I'm going stick with and it's really good and then when you get your feedback, it's like, 'Oh, I don't think I can change it because I don't know how to change it, and that's, like, the only thing that I really know about that sort of section.'" - Olive</i></p>	<p>I feel overwhelmed</p>	<p>Emotions (n = 6)</p> <p>Personal responses to feedback Students' personal responses to feedback (n = 25)</p>

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<p><i>“I’m fine with it because I know that teachers just want to help us and do the best for us and so we can do better.” – Tara</i></p>	<p>I know teachers are trying to help me</p>	<p>Social context (n = 12)</p>
<p><i>“If they're the ones marking it, if they say that I should improve or something, or if I need to do anything with my work, because they're the one marking it, I'm going to kind of say that, that what they're saying is right.” – Curry</i></p>	<p>It is from the teacher</p>	
<p><i>“It’s much more helpful for the student and the teacher because then the teacher doesn’t have to write it one by one... Because, like, if the teacher has to write one by one and we have 28 students in our class, that was going to be hard, including every other class which is probably, like, the same amount.” – Lizzie</i></p>	<p>It is easier for the teacher</p>	
<p><i>“Like, literally, some teachers can get a bit too harsh in their words... They don’t use any good— they don’t look on the good side of the project, they only see the bad side... I wouldn’t use that at all because it’s like putting me down and it’s, um, after you’ve read it, it just puts you down so much... You might hate the teacher, you might never want to see her in your life again.” - Michelle</i></p>	<p>Teachers can be harsh</p>	

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<p><i>“I like feedback that, um, that tells me that I did really good on this... because it tells me that I understand the questions more... It makes me feel happy about myself” – Alison</i></p>	<p>I like positive feedback</p>	<p>Preferences (n = 7)</p>
<p><i>“I like encouragement to make the child keep on going and feel like they can do better or, like, they can do, um, they're doing really good if, like, they don't feel that... let's say for me, let's say I was a bit struggling and I didn't know what to do and I was, like, all confused and stressed, um, I would probably want some, like, encouragement as in saying like, ‘You're doing a good job. Keep on working. Good effort.’” - Dove</i></p>	<p>I prefer feedback phrased in an encouraging way</p>	

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<p><i>"I asked some of my friends and they told me what to do." - Madeline</i></p>	<p>I ask for help</p>	<p>Action (n = 42)</p>	<p>Processing of feedback Students' processing and use of feedback (n = 101)</p>
<p><i>"So when I got it I just, like, looked down and I scanned it all and then I went through my book and checked everything, and as I did, I would, like, tick it off. So the first, or well one of them was 'Check your spelling.' So I went through every question and tried to fix any spelling mistakes and then I would tick it off and go down to the next question and do the same thing." - Charlie</i></p>	<p>I check my work</p>		
<p><i>"Because if I got this wrong, then since that was that person's view, I would look at my view and see if I can improve it and kind of mix them both up but still use the feedback... so it's kind of a mix of my view and the other person's." - Jake</i></p>	<p>I will use some feedback</p>		
<p><i>"With the group one you have to look over, it makes us look over our work and all that instead of us just skipping to the one that you said we should improve. Giving this one with the common mistakes, it makes us go through our work slowly, check all these mistakes and everything." - Curry</i></p>	<p>It makes me check my work more carefully</p>		
<p><i>"Well, I think about it first to see if I could use it and to see if it matches, like, with the project... if the project has, like, a theme or something and then this part of it doesn't, like, kind of match with the theme, like the thing I'm doing." - Alison</i></p>	<p>I decide whether or not to use feedback</p>	<p>Evaluation (n = 34)</p>	
<p><i>"It depends if it's, if my instincts think it's right or if they think it's wrong." - Russell</i></p>	<p>It could be right or wrong</p>		
<p><i>"I wouldn't use feedback that say if you give it to me a week before, like if you give it to me today and it was due next week, and it was something that I needed to do over a period of time, then I wouldn't be able to do that. But it's not, uh, like I wouldn't want to, it's just that I don't think I could." - Tara</i></p>	<p>It depends on time</p>		

<p><i>“Some bits I didn't need to use the feedback because I've already— some people might have fallen on that area but I haven't and so I didn't need to use some of the feedback. But like, when you said, um, don't— when in the ‘Why did Peter, uh, not Peter Sculthorpe, um, George Gershwin, um, wrote the piece’, I put in ‘two days later’ and I found that error.” – Jonathan</i></p>	<p>I know which feedback applies to me</p>	
<p><i>“I don't really know if I have to fix this or fix that so I didn't really get it. But individual feedback, um, it's much more easier to understand, so yeah.” – Michelle</i></p>	<p>I do not know if the feedback applies to me</p>	
<p><i>“If there's usually, like, pages and pages of feedback, then I'd feel devastated because I know that, um, something's going wrong and it's a big mistake so I need to fix it which is going to take quite a while. But if it's short feedback that is um, that's easy to work with and it gives good description, then yes I would use it.” – Jonathan</i></p>	<p>I think about how much work is involved</p>	
<p><i>“[I like] feedback that is clear that I can understand because sometimes... I get feedback that, um, is not clear. Like, they're telling me to do something but I don't know how to do it or what to do.” – Tara</i></p>	<p>Clear explanations help me understand</p>	
<p><i>“I did it one at a time kind of. But if I didn't really get it, um, I just skipped to the next one.” – Dove</i></p>	<p>I do not understand</p>	
<p><i>“It made me a bit confused about how to use it because it was in a different way. It's like a general thing.” – Daniel</i></p>	<p>I am confused about how to use it</p>	<p>Understanding (n = 25)</p>
<p><i>“Definitely teachers need to know who they're writing their feedback to. Make sure that they understand because they wouldn't give the same feedback that they give to a Year One to a Year Nine. They need to know who they're talking to and how they can comprehend that.” – Tanisha</i></p>	<p>It needs to be understandable</p>	

Note. n = number of coded units of data.



### 5.2.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback

The theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ contained data that related to students’ views of feedback and the purpose of feedback. Students’ written reflections showed that their perspectives on feedback centred around the conceptual categories of (a) ‘improvement’, (b) ‘correction’, and (c) ‘information’.

#### *Improvement*

Data in the category of ‘improvement’ highlighted the way in which written whole-class feedback enabled students to improve and do better. Students thought that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work, learn and understand concepts better. It enabled them to recognise things that they could change in their work so that they could “do better” and “do a project to a high standard”. This was typically linked to an interest in achieving “higher marks” or “better grades”. As one student explained, written whole-class feedback showed them “how to make your project or your draft whatever you are doing better and... gives you tips and let’s say ‘life hacks’ on how to make it better and get a better grade.”

It was interesting that although most students found written whole-class feedback to be “helpful” and “useful”, some students identified that written whole-class feedback did not help them to improve as much as written individual feedback as it was “general” and not “specific” to them. Some students also remarked that the general nature of written whole-class feedback made it less easy for them to improve and get the best mark in comparison to written individual feedback.

#### *Correction*

Data belonging to the category of ‘correction’ related to the way in which written whole-class feedback identified areas of work that were incorrect or that were not necessarily wrong but could be improved. Students reflected on how written whole-class feedback pointed out mistakes they did not realise they had made or “small details” that they had missed. Students reported that they used written whole-class feedback because they could “see what the mistakes were”. They appreciated being given the chance to correct these errors or weak areas in their work. As Daniel

reflected, *“I like how it gives you a second chance to fix some of the mistakes you made.”* Overall, these were familiar reflections. However, students also voiced a number of concerns in relation to the corrective function of written whole-class feedback. They explained that they preferred feedback that told them specifically about their own mistakes rather than a general sheet with common errors. This was linked to two main issues.

Firstly, students were concerned that mistakes they had made were not included in the written whole-class feedback handout they had received. As one student reflected, *“So if, like, I made a mistake that all the other class didn’t make, then it doesn’t get into that class feedback section, so I don’t know about it.”* Students also felt that the written whole-class feedback handout covered only *“simple”* or *“easy”* mistakes, and did not address *“harder”* mistakes that they might have made. Secondly, students were concerned that written whole-class feedback did not point out exactly if and where they had made a mistake. For example, Tanisha remarked, *“I think if people had those types of mistakes, they would probably want to know exactly where in the PMI chart or the listening map or something, where they needed to fix their mistakes.”* Students therefore generally felt that written individual feedback was more effective. As one student put it, *“If it’s individual, it’s more, like, it’s more straight what you did, like, wrong.”*

### *Information*

The category of ‘information’ related to how written whole-class feedback told students about something or gave them information. Students identified that written whole-class feedback provided them with *“someone else’s perspective”* and *“somebody else’s opinion”* on their work. Interestingly, some students explained that the information that written whole-class feedback provided was somewhat redundant as they were already aware of the points being made. For instance, one student reflected, *“the stuff in the feedback was pretty much my mental checklist and I made sure I ticked them off in my head before I handed my draft in.”* In general, students reflected on the information-providing function of written whole-class feedback to a much lesser extent in comparison to the previous two categories.

### 5.2.1.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ highlighted the personal way in which students responded to written whole-class feedback. Data pertaining to this theme showed that students responded to written whole-class feedback based on their personal (a) ‘emotions’, (b) ‘preferences’, (c) ‘social context’ and (d) ‘expectations’.

#### *Emotions*

The category of ‘emotions’ related to feelings that students experienced in response to written whole-class feedback. In general, students reported minimal negative emotions in response to written whole-class feedback. The main finding of interest was that some students were “*dejected*”, “*unhappy*” and “*bumped*” at receiving written whole-class feedback instead of written individual feedback as they felt that written whole-class feedback did not really apply to them. They felt “*nervous*” and “*not as confident*” without written individual feedback, and were “*annoyed*” that they did not receive written individual feedback. According to data from the Likert scale self-descriptions (see section 3.3.2.1), these students generally self-reported high levels of ability in relation to music.

Students were also worried that the teacher had not actually seen their work. As Curry explained:

*“Maybe it’s because like the first project, I relied a lot on the feedback that you gave us to, like, kind of reassure myself... I would’ve said to myself that you’ve read through it and then these are the things that you found so if I correct those things, if you read it again, you wouldn’t find them again. So, I’d say that that’s it and I’ve done it and it should be perfect.”*

Observations recorded in the teacher-researcher journal also supported this finding as another student had also asked the teacher-researcher if she had read their PMI chart: “*Did you read this? If I made one more point, would I get ‘Expert’?*” Responses like these conveyed a sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

Students who expressed positive feelings in relation to written whole-class feedback were happy, proud and excited that they had actually done what most of the feedback had indicated. These findings were striking as it suggested that students' emotions were generally unrelated to whether they had received affirmative feedback or constructive feedback. This contrasted with findings pertaining to written individual feedback where affirmative feedback was typically associated with positive feelings, and constructive feedback with negative feelings.

### *Preferences*

Students also reflected on their 'preferences' or likes and dislikes with regard to feedback. As alluded to earlier, it was interesting that some students expressed a strong dislike for written whole-class feedback. They felt that written whole-class feedback did not address specific errors in their work and therefore reduced their chances of improvement. As such, they preferred written individual feedback. For example, one student explained:

*"I felt that the feedback... was aimed to people who don't consider themselves very good at music and don't try that hard. I would've liked individual feedback as it gives me, personally a chance to improve my work. I would've liked to have the mistakes in my work pointed so that I could fix them & maybe fix other higher-level mistakes like sentence structure."*

Data also showed that some students particularly liked positive feedback *"that tells me that I did really good on this"* and *"personal compliments"*. Other students did not prefer positive feedback, but instead wanted feedback to be delivered in a very encouraging way. They gave examples of what this type of feedback would look like: *"It might be like, 'You've done really well on this part. There's a little mistake in there and a little mistake but apart from that, you've done really well and if you improve on that then you might, like, get high marks and you'll do really well.'"* Feedback phrased in a very encouraging way reassured students and made them feel as though they could actually do it.

### *Social context*

Data in the category of ‘social context’ focussed on the wider social setting of feedback. Students considered who was providing them with feedback as well as the broader context of feedback. They generally respected and trusted the written whole-class feedback that the teacher-researcher had provided because they saw her as an authority on the subject. They also strategically accepted written whole-class feedback because they knew that it came “*from the teacher that is marking the project, so she knows what she wants to see*”. For example, one student stated that they would use feedback especially if it came from the person who would eventually be marking their work: “*They’re taking time out of their schedule to give helpful comments on how I can improve my work. It’s basically what they’ll be thinking when they mark your good copy.*” Thus, in a way, students’ use of written whole-class feedback was influenced by power relationships and students’ desire to give teachers “*what they’re looking for*”.

Interestingly, some students reflected on the benefits of written whole-class feedback for the teacher-researcher. They remarked that written whole-class feedback was easier for the teacher-researcher to provide “*because the teacher doesn’t [sic] have to write it for everyone of the students.*” As one student elaborated, “*It’s much more helpful for the student and the teacher because then the teacher doesn’t have to write it one by one... Because, like, if the teacher has to write one by one and we have 28 students in our class, that was going to be hard, including every other class which is probably, like, the same amount.*” Students therefore gave thought to how efficient it would be for the teacher to provide written whole-class feedback to students as opposed to written individual feedback.

### *Expectations*

The final category of ‘expectations’ contained data that highlighted students’ expectations in relation to written whole-class feedback, the task or themselves as individuals. This category contained few responses. In general, students either expected to have made mistakes in some areas or thought that they would have done better.

### 5.2.1.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback

The theme ‘processing of feedback’ emphasised the thinking and acting processes that students engaged in when responding to written whole-class feedback. This theme comprised of three categories: (a) ‘understanding’ and (b) ‘evaluation’, and (c) ‘action’.

#### *Understanding*

The category of ‘understanding’ contained data that highlighted cognitive understanding or comprehension. This category contained a range of responses. Findings revealed that some students were confused about how to use written whole-class feedback when they first received it. They were initially confused about what to do with it and why all students in the class had received the same feedback. This was in spite of the teacher-researcher having introduced the written whole-class feedback handout prior to distributing the handout. Eventually, most students were able to work out what to do with the written whole-class feedback handout on their own after reading the handout or asking a friend. This initial confusion could have been the result of written whole-class feedback being a “*completely new way of feedback*” or an unfamiliar “*different*” type of feedback for students. On the other hand, some students understood what to do with written whole-class feedback and were able to identify which feedback items applied to them.

Students indicated that their use of written whole-class feedback was dependent on their understanding of it. For example, Barack reported that he did not use any written whole-class feedback “*because I didn’t know what to do with it*”. Other students like Tara explained, “*I used all of it because I understood it*”. Some students commented on how written whole-class feedback was more difficult to understand compared to written individual feedback. Students also explained that clear explanations helped them to understand written whole-class feedback better. As one student reflected, without clear and understandable explanations, it felt as though “*[teachers are] telling me to do something but I don’t know how to do it or what to do.*” Students identified that the provision of examples, specific information, and verbal feedback for more complicated explanations were helpful. If students did not

understand an item of written whole-class feedback, they would most likely “*skip it*”.

### *Evaluation*

The category of ‘evaluation’ highlighted students’ cognitive evaluation and assessment of the written whole-class feedback they received. Students primarily sought to evaluate if written whole-class feedback applied to their work. They accomplished this with varying degrees of success. Some students were able to accurately identify which items of feedback applied to them. However, other students’ evaluations of written whole-class feedback and its application to their work were not always accurate. For instance, Russell confidently reported that “*most of the feedback didn’t really apply to me*” but this evaluation was incorrect.

On the other hand, some students had significant difficulty identifying which written whole-class feedback applied to them. For instance, Michelle and Tanisha’s reflections contained statements such as “*I don’t really know if I have to fix this or fix that so I didn’t really get it*” and “*I couldn’t tell exactly what I needed to change*”. Students who were unsure about whether written whole-class feedback applied to them were also concerned that they might change their work incorrectly (i.e., changing something that was originally correct to something that was incorrect). It was interesting that some of the students who had trouble identifying which items of written whole-class feedback applied to their work were students who had used written individual feedback very well during the previous term (e.g., Tanisha).

Students also explained that they would not use written whole-class feedback if they thought that they were right, if they felt that they had done well enough, or if the feedback interfered with their ideas. They also evaluated the amount of time that was involved in using written whole-class feedback. These ideas were similar to those that had emerged during the previous term in relation to written individual feedback.

### *Action*

The category of ‘action’ pertained to actions that students took or would take in response to written whole-class feedback. As with Term A, reflection on ‘action’ was

evident in students' responses to *Questionnaire 1* and the semi-structured interview. However, due to the timing of these instruments, students generally reflected on action to a lesser degree in *Questionnaire 1* as compared to their semi-structured interview (see Section 3.4 for more information about the data collection process). Data from *Questionnaire 1* related more to students' future plans as this instrument was completed immediately after they had received written whole-class feedback.

As mentioned in section 3.4.2.1, planning for future action was also explicitly included as part of *Questionnaire 1* as students were required to describe what they would do with the written whole-class feedback they received. Students were given the option of selecting from four given responses or writing their own response. Data collected from this question showed that most students identified they would either use all or some of the written whole-class feedback they had received (see Appendix I). In comparison to findings from Term A, data from Term B showed an increase in the number of students who reported that they would use only some of the feedback. This was expected given the different type of feedback being provided (i.e., not all items of written whole-class feedback would have applied to all students). In spite of this, an anomaly was noticeable in Olive's data who indicated that she did not know what to do with the written whole-class feedback she received: "*I don't know what I will do.*"

Data from the semi-structured interview showed that students typically acted on written whole-class feedback by checking which feedback applied to their work and using the written whole-class feedback handout they received as a "*checklist*". This response could have been due to the formatting and presentation of the written whole-class feedback handout with checkboxes next to each item of feedback (see Appendix F). Students saw this as "*self-marking*" and generally ticked off each item of feedback as they cross-checked the feedback with their draft music project component. Some students reported that they "*double-checked*" and triple-checked their work even though they were quite certain they had not made the mistakes outlined in the written whole-class feedback handout. Others specially checked areas where they would "*usually lose marks*".



Interestingly, students felt that written whole-class feedback required them to check their work more carefully in comparison to written individual feedback. They explained that written whole-class feedback made them work harder and think more about their work as it was not as easy to identify mistakes that they had made. As one student explained:

*“With the group [feedback] you have to look over, it makes us look over our work and all that instead of us just skipping to the one that you said we should improve. Giving this one with the common mistakes, it makes us go through our work slowly, check all these mistakes and everything... I’m alright with it because I’m guessing that would be what you’d have to do in high school. You wouldn’t just get it that easy, that they just tell you what it is and then we have to improve it... I said that if she chooses to give us just a group feedback sheet, that just means that I’ve got to work harder to find the mistakes.”*

Some students believed that this made it hard for them to achieve the best marks.

To a lesser extent, students also identified that they would ask for help if they did not understand the written whole-class feedback they received. In practice, students who did ask for help generally did not know how to use the written whole-class feedback and therefore asked their peers what to do. For example, one student explained, *“I asked some of my friends and they told me what to do... and then I realised what to do.”*

#### **5.2.1.4 Summary**

Findings from *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview were very consistent and centred around three unifying themes: ‘perspectives on feedback’, ‘personal responses to feedback’, and ‘processing of feedback’. Data relating to the theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ showed that students in School A reflected on how written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work, enabled them to correct errors and, to a lesser extent, provided them with information. However, students’ reflections also showed that they had

some reservations about written whole-class feedback. Students generally felt that written whole-class feedback was not as effective as written individual feedback in helping them improve and correct weak areas in their work. Some students felt that the information written whole-class feedback provided may have been useful to others but was not useful to them, and that written whole-class feedback seemed to focus solely on mistakes (i.e., lacked affirmative or positive feedback). As acknowledged in Chapter Three, this was largely true given the nature of written whole-class feedback. However, it should be noted that some positive feedback was included in the written whole-class feedback that students received (see Appendix F).

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ was not a strong theme. This was interesting as it suggested that written whole-class feedback generated less personal and emotive responses from students compared to written individual feedback. That said, some students did experience a negative emotional response to written whole-class feedback (e.g., annoyed, nervous). For example, some students did not feel confident about their work and were worried that they would not do well due to the absence of written individual feedback. A sense of uncertainty and insecurity was evident in these students’ responses. It was quite surprising that these students were often those who had self-reported a high level of ability in music in their Likert scale self-descriptions, and who had used written individual feedback well during the previous term. Students also considered the social context of feedback and identified that they used written whole-class feedback because they believed that the teacher knew the subject better than them, and were aware that the teacher would ultimately summatively assess their final work. Some students also reflected on their personal feedback preferences, explaining that they preferred positive feedback or feedback that was phrased in a very encouraging way.

In relation to the theme of ‘processing of feedback’, data showed that students processed the written whole-class feedback they received by evaluating it, trying to understand it and acting on it. The main evaluative process that students engaged in was determining if and which items of written whole-class feedback applied to their work. Students were able to accomplish this with varying degrees of success. Some were able to confidently and accurately identify which feedback items applied to

them whilst others were not. Other evaluative considerations mirrored those that students had identified during Term A (e.g., amount of work and time involved, accuracy of feedback). It was interesting that some students had difficulty understanding what to do with written whole-class feedback. Students' initial confusion was often resolved after they spoke to their peers or worked out what to do on their own. In addition to this, students also identified that limited understanding of feedback messages often hindered them from using feedback. Students who understood the written whole-class feedback they received generally acted upon feedback by engaging in "*self-marking*" and using written whole-class feedback as a checklist. They observed that using written whole-class feedback required more effort and work on their part as compared to written individual feedback.

### **5.2.2 Findings from artefacts**

Artefacts were items produced by students and the teacher-researcher as part of the normal learning and teaching program that were relevant to this study. During Term B, these artefacts were students' draft music project components, written whole-class feedback handouts, and students' final music project submissions. Artefacts were analysed in order to determine if and how students used the written whole-class feedback they received. This aligned with Research Question 4 of this study: 'How do upper primary students use written whole-class feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?'

Analysis of artefacts during Term B differed slightly to Term A. This was due to the fact that written whole-class feedback was provided to students instead of written individual feedback. The implication of this was that some items of written whole-class feedback may not have been applicable to a particular student. The analysis of artefacts gathered during Term B reflects this unique property of written whole-class feedback. In order to analyse artefacts, comparisons were made between each student's draft music project component, the written whole-class feedback they received, and their final music project submissions. This enabled the teacher-researcher to identify how applicable items of written whole-class feedback were used by students. (See Chapter Three for a more detailed description of this process.)

Students in School A received an average of three items of applicable written whole-class feedback on their draft music project component. Data showed that students had three different types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback.

### 5.2.2.1 *Types of responses to feedback*

Students responded to an applicable item of written whole-class feedback in one of three ways. It was interesting to observe that students did not always respond to every applicable item of written whole-class feedback in the same way. Students either *fully used* an applicable feedback item, *partially used* an applicable feedback item, or did *not use* an applicable feedback item (see Figure 5.2). Each of these responses will now be explained in more detail. (See Appendix M for a full record of how students used each applicable item of written whole-class feedback.)

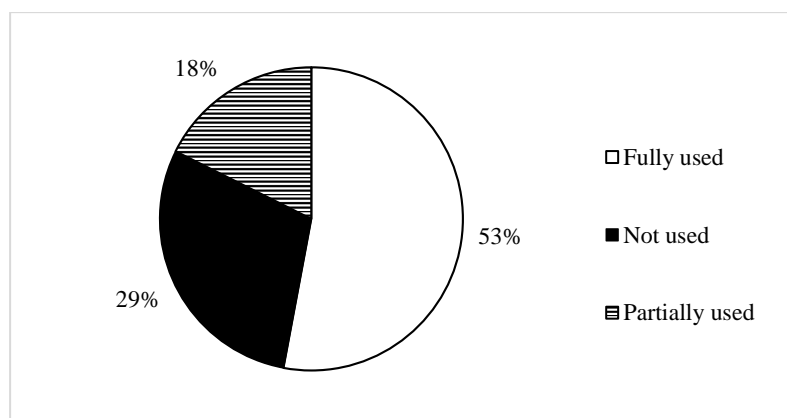


Figure 5.2. Types of responses to applicable feedback items (School A, Term B) ( $n = 51$ ).

#### *Fully used*

Students fully used an applicable item of written whole-class feedback when they completely utilised it to improve their work. For example, Jake fully used the following feedback item by adding the necessary points to his PMI chart:

“Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.”

No clear patterns were noticeable in the written whole-class feedback items that students fully used. Some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling and see if you have missed any words.”) whilst others were required more thorough checking (e.g., “Make sure every section in your listening map describes two different musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).”) In both cases, students fully used the applicable item of written whole-class feedback.

#### *Partially used*

Students partially used an applicable item of written whole-class feedback when they utilised feedback to some extent. For example, the following feedback item applied to Madeline’s draft music project component:

“Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.”

Madeline partially used this item of feedback by including pictures on three out of a total of eight slides. Interestingly, feedback pertaining to pictures on slides was generally the most partially used item of feedback. It is possible that the wording of this feedback item may have contributed to the way that students partially used it (i.e., “Try to”).

#### *Not used*

Students did not use an applicable item of written whole-class feedback when they did not make any changes in response to the feedback provided. For example, the following written whole-class feedback comment applied to Olive’s draft music project component:

“If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.”

Olive did not use this feedback or make any changes to her listening map. Items of written whole-class feedback that were not used by students did not demonstrate any clear patterns. Some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “Try to include a

picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.”) whilst others required more substantial work (e.g., “Make sure every section in your listening map describes three different musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood).”). In either case, students who received these comments did not use the applicable item of feedback. With this understanding of students’ three types of responses to written whole-class feedback in mind, attention will now be turned to general patterns in students’ use of written whole-class feedback.

**5.2.2.2 Patterns in feedback use**

Data pertaining to the use of written whole-class feedback was collated into a graph (see Figure 5.3). This graph showed the frequency of types of responses to applicable feedback items for each student, and allowed general patterns in students’ feedback use to be identified.

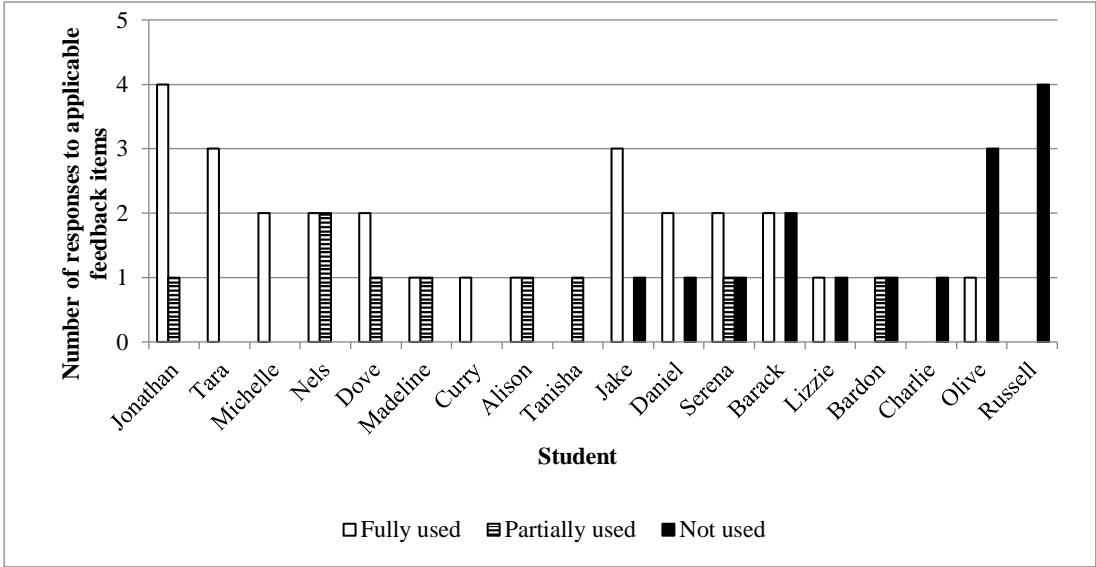


Figure 5.3. How students used applicable feedback items (School A, Term B).

Figure 5.3 indicates the presence of three broad groups of students. The first group of students used every item of applicable feedback in some way (i.e., Jonathan, Tara, Michelle, Nels, Dove, Madeline, Curry, Alison, Tanisha). For example, students may

have fully used some feedback items or partially used some feedback items. It was interesting that three students (i.e., Tara, Michelle, Curry) fully used all items of written whole-class feedback that applied to their work.

The second group of students used some of the written whole-class feedback items that applied to their work (i.e., Jake, Daniel, Serena, Barack, Lizzie, Bardon). The number of feedback items they used was either greater than or equal to the number of feedback items they did not use. Items of feedback that students in this group did not use related primarily to formatting issues rather than content issues, for example, students frequently did not use the feedback item: “You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don’t think all the sections will fit on one slide.” However, students in this group generally made full use of feedback items that pertained to the content of their work (e.g., “Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart”, “Make sure every section in your listening map describes two different musical elements”).

The third group of students hardly used any applicable written whole-class feedback items (i.e., Charlie, Olive, Russell). The items of feedback they did not use outweighed the number of items that they did use. Data from Russell and Olive clearly showed that these students made little use of applicable feedback items and did not use written whole-class feedback well. However, Charlie’s data was slightly different in that only one item of written whole-class feedback was applicable to her work and this item was not used. Feedback items that students did not use demonstrated no clear patterns. As mentioned previously, some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “Try to include a picture on every slide”) whilst others required more thorough checking (e.g., “Make sure every section in your listening map describes three different musical elements”).

General characteristics of the three groups were subsequently explored by cross-checking the students in each group against the categories of data that had emerged during thematic analysis of *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview (e.g., ‘improvement’, ‘evaluation’, ‘action’). A meta-matrix was used to assist in this analysis (see Table 5.5). Significant categories for each student were identified based on the frequency of their responses in the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This data was then displayed in the meta-matrix. The categories that had the highest number of units of data for each student were identified (i.e., top 1-3 categories), and the student’s name was entered into the appropriate cell in the meta-matrix. This approach was taken as the student had focussed on these categories repeatedly, and therefore it was likely that these issues were of more significance to the student.

Table 5.5 shows that students in Group 1 generally focussed on the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘action’, ‘understanding’ and ‘evaluation’. Students in this group recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve. They acted upon written whole-class feedback by asking for help and checking their work. However, it should be noted that students in this group reported that they did not always understand the written whole-class feedback they received. Students in Group 1 placed strong emphasis on evaluating written whole-class feedback (e.g., analysing which feedback applied to their work). In general, they were able to confidently and accurately identify applicable feedback items. However, this was not true for all students in this group. Data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions (see section 3.3.2.1) revealed that students in Group 1 generally self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.



Table 5.5

*Meta-Matrix Showing Groups of Students and Significant Categories of Data (School A, Term B)*

Categories of Data from Thematic Analysis													
	Improvement	Information	Correction	Encouragement	Emotions	Expectations	Preferences	Social context	Tone	Work and time	Action	Understanding	Evaluation
<b>Group 1: Used all applicable feedback</b>	Dove Alison Jonathan Nels Michelle Tanisha Tara Curry		Madeline Alison					Nels Tara			Dove Madeline Curry	Dove Jonathan Michelle Tara	Madeline Alison Jonathan Nels Michelle Tanisha Tara
<b>Group 2: Used some applicable feedback</b>	Serena Lizzie Bardon Daniel Jake		Serena Lizzie Daniel Barack								Jake	Lizzie Bardon Daniel Barack	Serena
<b>Group 3: Hardly used applicable feedback</b>	Olive Charlie Russell		Olive				Olive						Charlie Russell

Students in Group 2 tended to stress the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’, and ‘understanding’. As with the previous group, students in Group 2 recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve and pointed out mistakes that they had made. However, students felt that written whole-class feedback was less effective in helping them to identify and correct specific errors in their work in comparison to written individual feedback. Students in Group 2 experienced difficulty in understanding what to do with written whole-class feedback when they first received it and were confused about how to use it. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group typically self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 generally emphasised the categories of ‘improvement’ and ‘evaluation’. They recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work. Interestingly, students in this group also engaged strongly in evaluating written whole-class feedback and were surprisingly confident when assessing the applicability of written whole-class feedback to their work. However, as evidenced by their non-use of applicable feedback, their evaluations were not always correct. According to data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions, students in Group 3 generally self-reported a high level of interest in the subject, a low to moderate level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

### **5.2.2.3 Summary**

Artefacts collected during this study showed that students in School A used written whole-class feedback in one of three ways. They either *fully used* applicable feedback, *partially used* applicable feedback, or *did not use* applicable feedback.

Collating the data from each student revealed three groups of students:

1. students who used all applicable feedback,
2. students who used some applicable feedback, and
3. students who hardly used applicable feedback.

Each group of students demonstrated certain characteristics. Students in Group 1 generally made good use of applicable items of written whole-class feedback. They used written whole-class feedback to improve their work, and acted upon written whole-class feedback by engaging in checking processes and asking for help. Most students in this group were able to accurately and confidently identify which feedback items applied to their work. However, some students were uncertain about this. Students in Group 1 typically self-reported a strong interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher in their Likert scale self-descriptions.

Students in Group 2 used some applicable items of written whole-class feedback. They generally made full use of feedback items that related to the content of their work (e.g., adding required information), but did not use feedback items that related to the formatting of their work (e.g., distributing content across more slides). Students were interested in using written whole-class feedback to improve their work and correct mistakes. However, they felt that written whole-class feedback was not as effective as written individual feedback in this regard. Students in Group 2 were also initially confused about how to use written whole-class feedback. They usually self-reported a strong interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher in their Likert scale self-descriptions.

Students in Group 3 hardly used applicable items of written whole-class feedback. However, no clear patterns were evident in relation to the types of feedback items that students did not use. Some feedback items required simple and straightforward changes whereas other feedback items necessitated more substantial changes. In either case, students did not use the applicable feedback items. Students in this group recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve and were surprisingly confident in evaluating the written whole-class feedback they received (e.g., deciding if and which feedback applied to their work). However, these evaluations were not always accurate. Students in Group 3 tended to self-report a high level of interest in the subject, a low to moderate level of ability in relation to

music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher in their Likert scale self-descriptions. This concludes the presentation of findings from School A. The following section will address findings from School B.

### **5.3 School B: Written whole-class feedback**

In this section, findings from School B will be presented in relation to written whole-class feedback. Every participant in School B completed all questionnaires, participated in a semi-structured interview and submitted all artefacts ( $n = 16$ ). Presentation of findings from School B will be structured as for School A (see section 5.2). Data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview will be outlined first followed by data from student artefacts. Data from the teacher-researcher journal will not be reported separately as the purpose of this instrument was to provide supplementary information about how students responded to written individual feedback (see section 3.5.1.4 for more information). Instead, supplementary data from the teacher-researcher journal will be introduced in the context of other findings where appropriate.

#### **5.3.1 Findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interview**

Data collected from each questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were analysed separately following a three-step process of coding, categorising and identifying themes. (See sections 3.4 and 3.5 for a thorough description of each instrument as well as the process of data collection and analysis.) The results of this analysis have been summarised and presented in tables within the following pages. Table 5.6 shows findings from *Questionnaire 1*, Table 5.7 presents findings from *Questionnaire 2*, Table 5.8 summarises findings from *Questionnaire 3*, and Table 5.9 displays findings from the semi-structured interview. Each table shows the codes, categories and themes that resulted from thematic analysis and also indicates the number of units of data that comprised each theme and category. Unifying themes that arose from the data will be explained in detail after the presentation of tables.

Table 5.6

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 1 Data (School B, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"I agree with everything because I know I will get good marks if I do what the feedback says."</i> - Steph	I will get better marks		
<i>"Feedback is when you do something and someone gives you ideas or how to make it better."</i> – Henry	It gives me ideas or suggestions		
<i>"Feedback is a way for people to help or improve what someone has done / is doing."</i> – Alleana	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 10)	Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 29)
<i>"[T]his will help me learn."</i> – Zelda	It helps me learn		
<i>"It was all helpful and will help me understand what I could change to help me."</i> - Jeremy	It is helpful		
<i>"The feedback felt totally general."</i> - Alleana	It is general		
<i>"Feedback is infomation [sic] given to you by somebody explaining their thoughts on your work."</i> – Jeremy	It is information	Information (n = 9)	
<i>"Writing that the teacher gives you on how your work is going"</i> -Ivy	It tells me how my work is going		

<i>"I put a word in a wrong place"</i> – Ducky	I recognise my mistakes			
<i>"I agree with everything because people make those mistakes."</i> – Henry	It points out mistakes	Correction (n = 10)		
<i>"Feedback is when teachers tell you if you did well or did something wrong in a project."</i> - Steph	It tells me what I got right and wrong			
<i>"Feedback is nothing to me!!!"</i> - Neymar	I do not care about feedback	Emotions (n = 6)	Personal responses to feedback <i>Students' personal responses to feedback</i> (n = 8)	
<i>"The feedback made me feel good and made me happy."</i> - Henry	I have positive feelings			
<i>"I didn't like the new way of giving feedback."</i> - Henry	I do not like whole-class feedback	Preferences (n = 2)		
<i>"I can do this on my work. I can improve my draft. I got lower this time and I need to work harder."</i> - Zelda	I need to work harder	Action (n = 4)		
<i>"So I was feeling pretty conflicted but I just thought that I would ask about it to the teacher before changing it!"</i> – Sakura	I will ask for help			
<i>"I cannot answer that because the teacher didn't give us feedback, we did!"</i> - Katie	I do not see whole-class feedback as feedback	Understanding (n = 12)	Processing of feedback <i>Students' processing and use of feedback</i> (n = 16)	
<i>"I think I should use them but I am confused"</i> - Sakura	I do not understand			
<i>"I felt that most of it was not about my work or me but there were definitely 1 or 2 did [sic]."</i> - Samantha	I know which feedback applies to me			
<i>"I agree with all the feedback given to me, it all makes sense."</i> - Izzy	I understand			

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 5.7

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 2 Data (School B, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"To help us correct our work and learn from our mistakes."</i> - Ducky	It points out mistakes		
<i>"The type of feedback that is helpful are ones that tell you what you are doing right, what you are doing wrong and what you are missing or could improve on."</i> - Sakura	It tells me what I got right and wrong	Correction (n = 9)	
<i>"If you think it will add marks"</i> - Chloe	It will add marks		Student perceptions <i>Perceptions of the purpose and usefulness of feedback</i> (n = 30)
<i>"Feedback that gives you ideas to do something."</i> – Katie	It gives me ideas or suggestions		
<i>"So we can improve and do better next time."</i> – Henry	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 17)	
<i>"To make us learn"</i> – Jeff	It helps me learn		
<i>"A lot of feedback is really helpful"</i> – Neymar	It is helpful		
<i>"I think teachers give feedback because they want to let a student know how they've done on a piece of work."</i> – Samantha	It tells me how I am going with my work	Information (n = 4)	

<i>"If it [sic] not useful or hard to use." - Jeff</i>	It is not useful		
<i>"If I disagree with the feedback I might not use it." – Izzy</i>	I disagree with it		
<i>"If I know the feedback is wrong or if I think I did everything correct." – Steph</i>	It could be wrong	Evaluation (n = 10)	Student considerations <i>Considerations and factors that affect response to feedback</i> (n = 14)
<i>"Something that might stop people from using feedback is when it is overall comments for the entire class not just for you." – Samantha</i>	It does not apply to me		
<i>"When it is too hard to put into my work." - Ivy</i>	It is too hard to use		
<i>"I think if it is too negative I would not use it or if it changes too much as if they hate it." – Alleana</i>	It is too negative		
<i>"Feedback that uses bossy words and gives you examples are the best kind of feedback." – Izzy</i>	I prefer bossy feedback	Preferences (n = 4)	
<i>"The type of feedback that is helpful is when they tell you your mistakes in an encouraging way." - Samantha</i>	I prefer feedback phrased in an encouraging way		

Note. n = number of coded units of data.



Table 5.8

*Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire 3 Data (School B, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis	Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"All of the feedback I could use so I could get a better grade." - Henry</i>	I wanted to get better marks	
<i>"I used the feedback saying we should include explanations why we thought so in the PMI chart to help improve my work." - Izzy</i>	It helped me improve	Improvement (n = 24)
<i>"I found it helpful." - Jeremy</i>	It was helpful	
<i>"[I used] More points on the Listening map. I didn't have enough." - Steph</i>	I recognise my mistakes	Advantages of feedback <i>Potential benefits and advantages of feedback</i> (n = 35)
<i>"To use more music terminology because I got the same thing last time." - Samantha</i>	I made this mistake in the past	
<i>"Yes to fix up the mistakes in my work." - Belle</i>	I wanted to fix my mistakes	
<i>"Shows you your mistakes." - Ivy</i>	It showed me my mistakes	Correction (n = 11)
<i>"I like it when I don't get that many errors." - Samantha</i>	I do not like making mistakes	

<i>"I put in a lot of work and thought about it."</i> - Samantha	I put in time and work		
<i>"[I did not use] More full sentences and reasons for PMI chart. There wasn't enough [sic] space on the chart."</i> - Zelda	It was too much to change	Work and time (n = 2)	
<i>"Sometimes I don't agree with it."</i> – Henry	I do not agree with it	Evaluation (n = 8)	Considerations relating to feedback <i>Considerations and concerns when responding to feedback</i> (n = 21)
<i>"I didn't use the feedback that didn't apply to me. I didn't use it because I didn't need to."</i> – Sakura	It did not apply to me		
<i>"I like when it is postive [sic]. I don't like when it is negative."</i> – Steve	I do not like negative feedback	Preferences (n = 5)	
<i>"I liked it"</i> - Neymar	I like whole-class feedback		
<i>"I trust my teachers."</i> – Alleana	I trust the teacher	Social context (n = 5)	
<i>"I like the teacher to give me feedback so I know how she wants it done."</i> - Katie	It is from the teacher		
<i>"If I don't understand it."</i> – Jeff	I do not understand	Understanding (n = 1)	

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

Table 5.9

*Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Data (School B, Term B)*

Level 1 analysis		Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
Units of data such as...	Were assigned codes...	That were grouped into categories...	That were clustered into themes...
<i>"It helps them get, like, better marks." - Steph</i>	It helps me get better marks		
<i>"I know it's going to help me and get me to improve." - Jeremy</i>	It helps me improve	Improvement (n = 40)	
<i>"The feedback that I got was good and helpful, and I think that I would use most of the feedback because it would help me." - Izzy</i>	It is helpful		
<i>"I would have also liked to see, like, personal feedback for all the students and also what they have done well." - Sakura</i>	It does not tell me what I did well		Perspectives on feedback <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i> (n = 101)
<i>"I didn't really know much because like it wasn't directly to me. [laughs] So, like, um, I think we just had the general idea of what a project should be like sort of." - Chloe</i>	It is general		
<i>"It helped me by giving me advice that I needed to work on." - Zelda</i>	It is advice	Information (n = 13)	
<i>"I think it just means that, that people uh, do some work and then they, like, see what another person thinks about it... it shows their opinion on the side. And see if the students like that, and it gives them a choice to use it or not." - Katie</i>	It is someone else's opinion on my work		
<i>"I can see how we're going and, like, if I've completed, like, what I need to." - Chloe</i>	It tells me how I am going		

<i>"I prefer individual feedback so you know which ones affect you, which ones don't... It helps to know that it's directly to you and not to the entire class, so you know which ones are your mistakes." – Samantha</i>	I like feedback that tells me specifically about my mistakes		
<i>"Once I received it, I kind of realized that it was right and that I could've added more detail to areas and things like that." - Jeremy</i>	I realise my mistakes		
<i>"I think besides the spelling mistake, I did pretty much what everyone else did, like, same mistakes or, like, in a bit of an area where everyone struggled... It made me feel better that, um, that I wasn't the only one who got that bit wrong." – Ducky</i>	I am not the only one who got things wrong	Correction (n = 48)	
<i>"Because some of those things, the common mistakes, maybe some people have already done all of those and the mistakes that you made wasn't put on there." – Henry</i>	It may not address my mistakes		
<i>"It helped me because if I didn't get it I wouldn't have known that I did spelling mistakes in it." – Belle</i>	It points out mistakes		
<i>"Feedback is something that you give to me to show what I've done wrong and right." - Ivy</i>	It tells me what I got right and wrong		
<i>"I sort of was a bit annoyed that there wasn't anything I could add." - Ivy</i>	I feel annoyed		
<i>"[I feel] afraid... I can't really do anything to improve." – Henry</i>	I feel afraid	Emotions (n = 6)	Personal responses to feedback
<i>"It made me feel, um, encouraged because I could use some of that feedback and help myself and my project." – Izzy</i>	I feel encouraged		Students' personal responses to feedback
<i>"[I prefer] Positive [feedback] because it tells me, like, to keep going and do what I'm doing." – Steve</i>	I like positive feedback	Preferences (n = 2)	(n = 14)

<p><i>“But it may take longer [for]... the teacher, because you have to do every single one and look through it. The class one is easier but less efficient.” – Zelda</i></p>	<p>It is easier for the teacher</p>		
<p><i>“They can, if it’s like a normal class teacher and they’ve been around them for a long time,... they get to know you throughout the year, maybe they can see if you’re a person who can take quite a lot of feedback and use it, or if that’s a person that does not like feedback at all or, like, is really sensitive or something.” – Samantha</i></p>	<p>Teachers need to know their students</p>		
<p><i>“Sometimes people, including me, like to gossip a lot, like, ‘I heard, like, someone had to change this one because they didn’t do this,’ and then they go, ‘What?! Seriously, that?!’ Because it was, like, just a really easy thing but it might’ve been hard for them so it might hurt others even though they don’t know it’s being hurt. It might hurt others.” – Alleana</i></p>	<p>What other students say can affect me</p>	<p>Social context (n = 6)</p>	
<p><i>“If it’s, like if you did a listening map, it was at the point where it was 10 to 20. But say you only did one in each or said not to put an instrument in every box for the one, it’s like changing your whole listening map as if the teacher hates it. It feels like that and so, I would say no. If they hate it, they hate it, but I worked hard for it, so, yeah.” – Alleana</i></p>	<p>My teacher hates my work</p>		
<p><i>“I didn’t feel like using the, um, make your words right because I thought that ‘accento’ was a word but then I decided to ask you instead before making a decision.” - Sakura</i></p>	<p>I ask for help</p>		
<p><i>“I checked, I checked again with the feedback... I just looked at the sheet and then looked at what I did and then I, like, compared it.” – Steph</i></p>	<p>I check my work</p>		
<p><i>“I showed [the feedback] to my Mum, and she said that she thinks that I would do better than last, I did better than last term... I was kind of disappointed at first until I showed my Mum and she said, ‘Oh, I think you’ve done better than last time.’ [laughs].” – Zelda</i></p>	<p>I discuss feedback with my parents</p>	<p>Action (n = 21)</p>	<p>Processing of feedback Students’ processing and use of feedback (n = 101)</p>
<p><i>“I remember feeling like, ‘Nah, stuff it. But I should use it. But I shouldn’t because I don’t feel like it. But I should use it.’ So I half used it.” - Alleana</i></p>	<p>I will use some feedback</p>		
<p><i>“I think it would be easier for us to mark our work when it’s on our sheet handwritten. Then we can easily change it.” – Alleana</i></p>	<p>Individual feedback is easier to use</p>		

<i>"Well, if I don't think it's, like, important or, like, if I don't think it adds anything better and it doesn't make it better then I just leave it out." – Chloe</i>	I decide whether or not to use feedback	Evaluation (n = 53)
<i>"It was really confusing because we didn't really have that kind of feedback last year or last semester. So, it was kind of new and a bit confusing... it was a bit difficult because I didn't exactly know which ones I had to improve on, so I didn't know which feedback kind of affects me." - Izzy</i>	I do not know if the feedback applies to me	
<i>"On my draft, it was the whole class feedback so most of it didn't affect me but I knew there was one or two that did and I changed them on my information so then it was correct." – Samantha</i>	I know which feedback applies to me	
<i>"If you really don't like it and you think that the teacher's wrong and so you don't want to use it." - Henry</i>	It could be wrong	
<i>"I don't normally do it if it's too much work." - Alleana</i>	It is too much work	
<i>"Some of it you had to read it to make sure that you did do it but it was just more time-wasting because you need to get on to your project." – Belle</i>	It takes up more time	
<i>"Maybe be a little bit more specific in what you wanted us to do exactly... it would help me to get a better perspective of what exactly I need to do and not have, um, any misunderstandings." – Izzy</i>	Clear explanations help me understand	Understanding (n = 27)
<i>"I just, like, used the ones I like and are easy to put in but the others are, like, difficult to actually understand." - Jeff</i>	I do not understand	
<i>"I'm not really sure because, like, technically Music is the only, um, thing that like actually asks you about feedback. So, I don't really know what is feedback in the other things, other subjects." - Katie</i>	I do not really understand what feedback is	
<i>"It helped me because I understood it all and was able to use it." – Jeremy</i>	I understand	

Note. n = number of coded units of data.

The preceding tables demonstrate that similar themes emerged from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This suggested that students' reflections on written individual feedback were relatively stable and that data saturation was being reached (Saunders et al., 2018). Collectively, data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview revealed three unifying themes:

1. students' perspectives on feedback,
2. students' personal responses to feedback, and
3. students' processing of feedback.

As explained in Chapter Four, findings from School A were not used as a pre-set framework when analysing the data from School B. Instead, data from both School A and School B were analysed independently in keeping with two-case study methodology. Findings from School B will now be presented in relation to the three aforementioned themes.

#### ***5.3.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback***

As with School A, the theme of 'perspectives on feedback' contained data that related to students' views of feedback and the purposes of feedback. Students' perspectives on written whole-class feedback focussed on (a) 'improvement', (b) 'correction' and (c) 'information'.

##### *Improvement*

The category of 'improvement' contained data that related to how written whole-class feedback helped students to improve their work. Students explained that they used written whole-class feedback because it was "*useful*" and gave them suggestions about how "*to work better next time*". Some students identified that they would get better marks in their final music project submission if they used the written whole-class feedback they received. As one student reflected, "*This is good and helpful feedback and it will probably get me higher marks in my assignment.*" In general, students found it helpful when written whole-class feedback provided them with ideas, and were likely to use it if they thought that it would improve their final submission.

### *Information*

Data in the category of ‘information’ related to the way in which written whole-class feedback told students about something or provided them with information. Students’ reflections showed that they viewed written whole-class feedback as another person telling them about their work, for example, how their work was going and what they thought of their work. It was interesting that students felt that the information provided by written whole-class feedback was too general in nature and not specific enough. A sense of dissatisfaction was evident in students’ comments such as: “*The feedback felt totally general.*” Some students also identified that written whole-class feedback should tell them what they had “*done well*” and shared a concern that written whole-class feedback did not contain sufficient affirmative or positive comments.

### *Correction*

The category of ‘correction’ emphasised the way in which written whole-class feedback addressed areas of work that contained errors or that could be further improved. Students identified that written whole-class feedback helped them to “*correct our work and learn from our mistakes*”. They found it helpful when they received what one student described as “*‘You need to fix this’ feedback*”. However, some noted that they had not made the mistakes identified in the written whole-class feedback. This was evidenced in reflective comments like, “*I agree with everything because people make those mistakes*” and “*lot’s [sic] of people do lot’s [sic] of small mistakes like this*”. Reflections such as these implied that although students believed written whole-class feedback pointed out mistakes, these mistakes were not relevant to them as they were simply errors that others had made.

Students had several reservations about the corrective function of written whole-class feedback. They explained that they would rather receive feedback that told them specifically about the mistakes they had made. The reasons for this were varied. Students identified that written individual feedback specifically addressed their mistakes and therefore made it easier for them to identify what they had done wrong.



They did not have to worry about other people's errors and they felt reassured that the teacher had actually seen their work. As one student explained:

*“Well, obviously I like individual feedback because I can, like, it's like, she's looked at your work and you can tell that. It helps more because you can, you actually know what you're doing wrong, and like, if there's anything missing that needs to be there, you just get told.”*

Students were also concerned that written whole-class feedback might fail to address mistakes that only a small group of students had made. They felt that the errors that were pointed out in written whole-class feedback were “*common mistakes*” at “*lower levels*”. Therefore, “*more advanced*” students could not benefit as much from written whole-class feedback. Additionally, some students were not as confident in their ability to self-correct mistakes and believed that this might result in more errors in their work.

### ***5.3.1.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback***

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ emphasised the personal way in which students responded to written whole-class feedback. Data showed that students responded to written whole-class feedback based on their personal (a) ‘emotions’, (b) ‘preferences’, and (c) ‘social context’.

#### *Emotions*

The category of ‘emotions’ pertained to feelings that students experienced in response to written whole-class feedback. Some students had positive feelings about the written whole-class feedback they received. They felt “*happy*” that they had already done the points outlined in the feedback and were appreciative of the feedback. For example, Belle explained that she felt “[g]ood because I did those things and I don't have to worry about it.” However, it was interesting that students who did experience negative feelings (e.g., annoyed, afraid) were typically more competent students who had used written individual feedback well during the previous term (e.g., Ivy, Steph). These students explained that they felt afraid they

could not improve, annoyed that they could not add anything to their work, and nervous that they would do *“really bad”*.

It was interesting to observe that students’ emotional responses to written whole-class feedback were not related to the valence of feedback as had generally been the case in Term A (i.e., positive feelings in response to affirmative feedback, negative feelings in response to constructive feedback). In addition, students had noticeably less emotional responses to written whole-class feedback as compared to written individual feedback. This would suggest that written whole-class feedback did not elicit as emotive a response in comparison to written individual feedback.

### *Preferences*

Students reflected on their ‘preferences’ in relation to written whole-class feedback. Data in this category revealed individual differences amongst students. Some students did not like feedback that was *“too negative”* or wanted feedback to be phrased *“in an encouraging way”*. They expressed a strong preference for positive feedback such as, *“You’re doing really well on this. Keep doing, keep up the good work.”* However, other students found it more helpful to receive feedback that used *“bossy words”* and was phrased in a directive way. Students’ preferences in relation to written whole-class feedback were not explicitly linked to their use or non-use of feedback. However, individual preferences could have explained students’ general responses to feedback (e.g., emotive). One student, Neymar, identified that he liked written whole-class feedback. This was an unusual response given that this student had expressed a generally negative response toward feedback throughout the entire study.

### *Social context*

The category of ‘social context’ contained data pertaining to the broader social setting of feedback. Students identified that they used written whole-class feedback because they trusted their teacher. They also reported that they were keen to know what the teacher thought of their work and liked receiving feedback from the teacher *“so I know how she wants it done”*.

Students also considered the workload of the teacher-researcher providing them with written whole-class feedback and observed that this type of feedback would be easier for the teacher-researcher to produce as compared to written individual feedback. Although students recognised this, they still generally preferred written individual feedback. One anomaly in this category came from Alleana's data. This student had an overall negative response to written whole-class feedback. Alleana reflected on how she was affected by discussions that other students in the class had in relation to written whole-class feedback. She explained that her peers had expressed disbelief that some people in the class had made a certain error. She was negatively impacted by this as she was one of the students who had made that particular error. In her own words:

*“Sometimes people, including me, like to gossip a lot, like, ‘I heard, like, someone had to change this one because they didn’t do this,’ and then they go, ‘What?! Seriously, that?!’ Because it was, like, just a really easy thing but it might’ve been hard for them so it might hurt others even though they don’t know it’s being hurt.”*

Although singular, this finding highlighted potential broader social aspects surrounding the feedback process.

### ***5.3.1.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback***

The theme ‘processing of feedback’ focussed on the thinking and acting processes students engaged in when responding to written whole-class feedback. This theme comprised of three categories: (a) ‘understanding’, (b) ‘evaluation’, and (c) ‘action’.

#### *Understanding*

Data belonging to the category of ‘understanding’ highlighted cognitive understanding or comprehension. Students’ reflections in relation to this category were quite varied. Some students understood the written whole-class feedback they received and were able to identify which feedback applied to them. However, other students experienced confusion because they did not know if the feedback applied to them. Some students continued to exhibit a limited understanding of feedback and its purposes. For example, one student did not consider written whole-class feedback to

be ‘feedback’ at all. In response to the questions, “How did the feedback make you feel? What did you think when you read the feedback?”, Katie responded: *“I cannot answer that because the teacher didn’t give us feedback, we did!”*

In general, students used written whole-class feedback which they understood. Students appreciated a *“full explanation”*, *“examples of what I need to do”*, *“very specific feedback”* and supporting written feedback with verbal feedback by *“going one-on-one with them”*. They identified that this helped them to understand exactly what they needed to do and reduced the likelihood of misunderstanding. An interesting finding that emerged from the data was that one student was confused about an item of written whole-class feedback because it (a) conflicted with her own research and (b) contradicted feedback that she had received on her previous project in Term A. This suggested that students’ confusion about feedback could also have stemmed from the fact that it conflicted with past experiences or prior knowledge.

### *Evaluation*

The category of ‘evaluation’ focussed on cognitive evaluation or appraisal. The key evaluative activity that students engaged in was trying to identify which items of written whole-class feedback applied to their work. As alluded to earlier, some students were able to identify which feedback items were relevant to their work whereas others had trouble doing so. The contrast in responses between these two sets of students can be seen in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10

*Comparison of Students' Ability to Identify Applicable Feedback*

I do not know which feedback applies to me	I know which feedback applies to me
<i>"I couldn't really technically go, 'Oh yeah, definitely didn't do that'" – Chloe</i>	<i>"On my draft, it was the whole class feedback so most of it didn't affect me but I knew there was one or two that did and I changed them on my information so then it was correct." – Samantha</i>
<i>"I didn't know which feedback kind of affects me" – Izzy</i>	<i>"I just looked at it and saw that I did most everything correct and I didn't need to use all of the feedback." - Ducky</i>
<i>"I didn't really know what I did wrong" – Steph</i>	<i>"I think there was some bits [that I did not use]. I can't remember which ones but ones that didn't really relate to what I did, what I'd done, so, um, I didn't use them... because, like, what it said I had kind of already done in my draft." – Jeremy</i>

If students concluded that an item of written whole-class feedback was not applicable to them, they typically did not use it. For example, Ivy explained, *"I didn't use any of the feedback because it was irrelevant [sic] to me"* and Sakura stated that she *"didn't use the feedback that didn't apply to me"*. Interestingly, Ivy and Sakura's evaluations of the applicability of written whole-class feedback to their work were incorrect. This showed that students' evaluations of written whole-class feedback were not necessarily accurate.

Students also evaluated written whole-class feedback by considering the amount of work and time involved. They explained that they might not use written whole-class feedback that told them to make too many changes as they felt that this *"would be, like, stressing them out"*. They found it *"a hassle"* to go back and change their work, redo a paragraph, and restart again. Students also reflected that written whole-class feedback created a lot more work for them as compared to written individual feedback. Even though they may have been able to identify which feedback items applied to their work, they felt that written whole-class feedback required them to

check their work more carefully than usual and some complained that this was “*time-consuming*” and “*time-wasting*”.

### *Action*

The category of ‘action’ contained data that related to actions students took or would take in response to written whole-class feedback. As with School A, reflection on ‘action’ was evident in students’ responses to *Questionnaire 1* and the semi-structured interview. However, due to the timing of these instruments, data from *Questionnaire 1* related more to students’ future plans as students did not yet have the chance to act on feedback. Data collected from *Questionnaire 1* showed that most students planned to use all the written whole-class feedback they received (see Appendix I). However, some students identified that they would either use “*some*” or were “*not quite sure*” about what they would do. Two students (i.e., Chloe and Neymar) both indicated that they did not think they would use any of the written whole-class feedback. Chloe’s response was interesting given that during the previous term, she had reported that she would use most of the written individual feedback she received. This response was therefore unexpected and suggested that Chloe had difficulty using written whole-class feedback. This corresponded with the general dissatisfaction and confusion that was conveyed throughout her reflections on written whole-class feedback.

In subsequent reflections, students identified that they acted on written whole-class feedback by checking their work, asking for help if they did not understand, using only some of the feedback, and discussing the feedback with their parents. Checking of work was the main action that students engaged in. However, it was interesting to observe that students’ checking processes varied in accuracy, systematicity and thoroughness. For example, some students relied on their memory. That is, they only engaged in checking items of feedback that they thought might apply to their work based on their memory of their work. As one student explained, “*I was, like, ‘I think I know that I would’ve, like, done that already.’*”

#### *5.3.1.4 Summary*

Three unifying themes emerged from data collected through the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. These were ‘perspectives on feedback’, ‘personal responses to feedback’, and ‘processing of feedback’. Like School A, data belonging to the first theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ showed that students believed written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work, allowed them to correct errors in their work, and provided them with information. However, students had some concerns about the efficacy of written whole-class feedback in comparison to written individual feedback. They felt that written whole-class feedback addressed mistakes in a general way and this was not as helpful as feedback that specifically addressed errors that individual students had made. For example, they believed that written whole-class feedback may have omitted mistakes that were unique to their work and felt that this hampered their ability to improve.

The theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ highlighted the personal way in which students responded to written whole-class feedback. Overall, data showed that students had minimal personal responses to written whole-class feedback. The finding of interest was that a small number of students had a negative emotional response (e.g., annoyed, afraid). These students experienced negative emotions in relation to the fact that they had received written whole-class feedback as opposed to written individual feedback. For example, they felt annoyed that they could not add anything to their work and nervous that they would not do well in their final music project submissions. Students also reflected on the broader social setting of feedback (e.g., time teacher took to provide written whole-class feedback, perceptions of other students), and some students expressed a particular preference for positive and encouraging feedback.

Data belonging to the theme of ‘processing of feedback’ showed that students engaged in evaluating, acting on, and understanding written whole-class feedback. Students actively sought to evaluate which feedback items were applicable to their work. It was interesting that some students were able to accomplish this successfully whilst others were not. Students identified that use of written whole-class feedback was time-consuming, and created more work for them. In general, students used

written whole-class feedback which they understood, and which they deemed as being applicable to their work. They acted upon written whole-class feedback primarily by checking their work and making the necessary changes. However, students' checking processes varied in accuracy, systematicity and thoroughness.

### **5.3.2 Findings from artefacts**

Artefacts were items produced by students and the teacher-researcher as part of the normal learning and teaching program that were relevant to this study. During Term B, these artefacts were students' draft music project components, written whole-class feedback handouts, and students' final music project submissions. Artefacts were analysed in order to determine if and how students used the written whole-class feedback they received. The process of analysis was identical to the process used to analyse artefacts from School A (see section 5.2.2). Students in School B received an average of three applicable items of written whole-class feedback. Data showed that students had three different types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback.

#### ***5.3.2.1 Types of responses to feedback***

Students responded to applicable items of written whole-class feedback in one of three ways. Interestingly, they did not always respond to every item of applicable feedback in the same way. Students either *fully used* an applicable feedback item, *partially used* an applicable feedback item, or did *not use* an applicable feedback item (see Figure 5.4). These types of responses were identical to those observed in School A. (See Appendix M for a full record of how students used each applicable item of written whole-class feedback.)



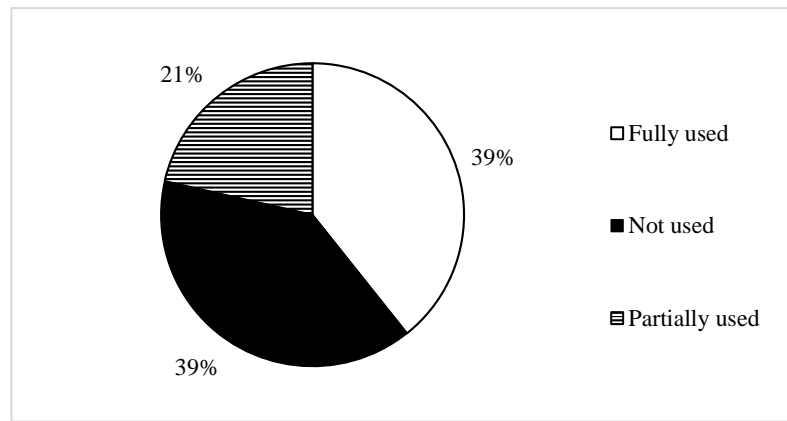


Figure 5.4. Types of responses to applicable feedback items (School B, Term B) ( $n = 56$ ).

#### *Fully used*

Students fully used an applicable item of written whole-class feedback when they completely utilised the feedback that was provided to improve their work. For example, Ivy fully used the following feedback item on her PMI chart:

“Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word ‘because’. This will help you show better thinking.”

Ivy fully used this item of feedback by adding the necessary reasons to her opinions. No noticeable patterns were observed in the feedback items that students fully used. Some items were straightforward (e.g., “Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.”) whilst others required more substantial work (e.g., “Make sure every section in your listening map describes two different musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).”) In both cases, students fully used the applicable item of written whole-class feedback.

### *Partially used*

Students partially used an applicable item of written whole-class feedback when they used feedback to some extent. For example, the following feedback item applied to Jeremy's draft music project component:

“If you used the word ‘medium’ or ‘moderate’ in your listening map, please be more specific. Do you mean medium tempo or dynamics?”

Jeremy partially used this item of feedback by adding the word “tempo” to some but not all points in his listening map. As with feedback that was fully used, no clear patterns were obvious in relation to the items of feedback that students partially used.

### *Not used*

Students did not use an applicable item of written whole-class feedback when they did not make any changes in response to the feedback provided. For example, the following feedback item applied to Jeff's draft music project component:

“Make sure every section in your listening map describes three different musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.”

Jeff did not make any changes in response to this item of feedback. Items of feedback that were not used by students did not reveal any patterns. Some items were relatively straightforward (e.g., “Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.”) whilst others required more thoughtful or thorough responses (e.g., “Try to write about different things (for example, instruments, tune and dynamics). Good PMI charts described a few different musical elements.”). In the following section, attention will be turned to general patterns in students' use of written whole-class feedback.

### **5.3.2.2 *Patterns in feedback use***

As with School A, data relating to the use of written whole-class feedback was collated into a graph (see Figure 5.5). This graph displayed the frequency of types of responses to applicable feedback per student, and allowed general patterns in students' feedback use to be identified.

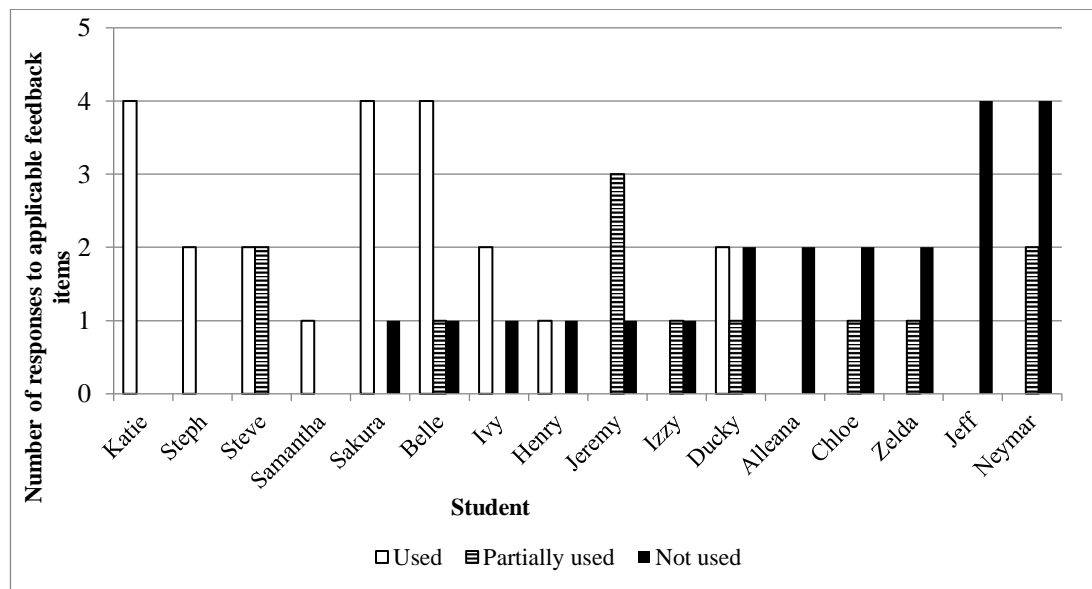


Figure 5.5. How students used applicable feedback items (School B, Term B).

Figure 5.5 suggests the presence of three broad groups of students. The first group of students used every applicable item of written whole-class feedback in some way (i.e., Katie, Steph, Steve, Samantha). For instance, students may have fully used or partially used applicable feedback items. It was interesting that nearly all students in this group fully used every item of written whole-class feedback that applied to their work.

The second group of students used some applicable items of written whole-class feedback (i.e., Sakura, Belle, Ivy, Henry, Jeremy, Izzy, Ducky). The number of feedback items they did use was either greater than or equal to the number of feedback items they did not use. Items of feedback that students did not use varied. Some required substantial work (e.g., “Check that you have all the important points and the correct sequence of events. Try listening to the radio show or reading the ‘Why did George Gershwin...’ document on Google Classroom again.”) whilst others were more straightforward (e.g., “Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.”).

The third group of students hardly used any applicable items of written whole-class feedback (i.e., Alleana, Chloe, Zelda, Jeff, Neymar). The number of feedback items they did not use outweighed the number of items that they did use. This showed that students generally did not make good use of written whole-class feedback. Items of written whole-class feedback that students did not use demonstrated no clear patterns. As mentioned previously, some items were relatively straightforward whilst others required more significant thought or change. In both cases, students did not use the applicable items of written whole-class feedback they received.

As for School A, once the three groups of students had been identified, general characteristics of students in each group were investigated. Students in each group were cross-checked with the categories of data that had emerged during thematic analysis of *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2*, *Questionnaire 3* and the semi-structured interview (e.g., ‘improvement’, ‘emotions’, ‘understanding’). A meta-matrix was employed to assist in this analysis (see Table 5.11). Categories that were significant for each student were identified based on the frequency of their responses in the questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This data was then entered into the meta-matrix. Like School A, only categories that had the highest number of units of data for each student were selected for inclusion in the meta-matrix (i.e., top 1-3 categories). This approach was taken as the student had focussed on these categories repeatedly, and therefore it was likely that these issues were of more significance to the student.

Table 5.11

*Meta-Matrix Showing Groups of Students and Significant Categories of Data for Students (School B, Term B)*

Groups	Categories of Data from Thematic Analysis									
Improvement	Information	Correction	Emotions	Preferences	Social context	Work and time	Action	Understanding	Evaluation	
<b>Group 1: Used all applicable feedback</b>	Katie Steph Steve		Samantha Steph		Steve			Katie	Samantha Katie Steph Steve	
<b>Group 2: Used some applicable feedback</b>	Henry Izzy Jeremy	Belle	Sakura Belle Ducky Ivy Jeremy					Sakura Izzy	Sakura Belle Henry Ivy Izzy	
<b>Group 3: Hardly used applicable feedback</b>	Alleana Chloe Zelda Jeff	Chloe	Neymar Zelda Jeff	Neymar		Alleana		Zelda	Neymar Chloe Jeff	Chloe Jeff

Table 5.11 shows that students in Group 1 generally reflected strongly on the categories of ‘improvement’ and ‘evaluation’. Students in this group recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work. They engaged in evaluating written whole-class feedback and tried to identify which items of feedback were applicable to their work. It was interesting that some students in this group were able to confidently recognise applicable feedback items whilst other students had difficulty doing so. Students who were able to identify which feedback applied to their work reflected on how time-consuming this process was. According to data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions (see section 3.3.2.2), students in Group 1 typically self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 2 typically focussed on the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’, and ‘evaluation’. They believed that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve and correct errors in their work. However, students explained that written individual feedback identified specific mistakes they had made and was therefore more effective than written whole-class feedback because they didn’t “*have to go through a whole sheet and to look up for maybe what we have done wrong*”. Students in this group were also concerned that written whole-class feedback may not have addressed mistakes they had made given that they were more “*advanced*” students. Students in Group 2 engaged strongly in evaluating written whole-class feedback and confidently identified which feedback items applied to their work. This was interesting in view of the fact that they did not always use applicable feedback items. Data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in Group 2 commonly reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 emphasised the categories of ‘improvement’, ‘correction’ and ‘understanding’. As with the previous group, students recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve and identify errors in their work. Students in this group had difficulty understanding written whole-class feedback. The level of

confusion varied from one student to another. For example, some in this group did not understand the feedback items they received, whilst others had a generally weak understanding of feedback overall. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in Group 3 generally reported a low to moderate level of interest in the subject, a low to moderate level of ability in relation to music, and an average relationship with the teacher-researcher (except for Neymar who reported a poor relationship). As indicated in Chapter Three, Neymar provided atypical responses to the Likert scale self-description in that all responses were entirely negative.

### 5.3.2.3 Summary

Artefacts collected during this study showed that students in School B used applicable items of written whole-class feedback in one of three ways. They either *fully used* the feedback, *partially used* the feedback, or *did not use* the feedback.

Collating the data from each student showed three groups of students:

1. students who used all applicable feedback,
2. students who used some applicable feedback, and
3. students who hardly used applicable feedback.

Each group of students demonstrated a variety of characteristics. Students in Group 1 typically made good use of applicable items of written whole-class feedback. They tended to fully use every item of feedback that applied to their work. Students focussed on the improvement function of feedback and on evaluating written whole-class feedback. This was primarily evidenced in the way they sought to determine if and which items of written whole-class feedback applied to their work. Interestingly, some students in this group were able to confidently recognise which items applied to their work whilst others experienced difficulty doing so. Students in Group 1 generally self-reported a strong interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher in their Likert scale self-descriptions.

Students in Group 2 made some use of applicable written whole-class feedback. Items of feedback that students did not use were mixed. Some feedback items required substantial work whilst others were simple and straightforward. In both cases, students did not use these items of feedback. As with the previous group, students in Group 2 focussed on the improvement function of feedback and believed that feedback helped them to correct errors in their work. However, they felt that written whole-class feedback was limited in its ability to accomplish this in comparison to written individual feedback. Students in this group also engaged in evaluating written whole-class feedback and were generally very confident in identifying which feedback items applied to their work. They typically self-reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with teacher-researcher in their Likert scale self-descriptions.

Students in Group 3 hardly used any applicable items of written whole-class feedback. No clear trends were evident in relation to the types of feedback items they did not use (e.g., some feedback items required straightforward changes whilst other items required more significant changes or thought). Students recognised that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve and pointed out errors in their work. However, students experienced difficulty in understanding written whole-class feedback (e.g., did not understand meaning of feedback items, limited understanding of feedback in general). Students in Group 3 tended to self-report a low to moderate level of interest in the subject, a low to moderate level of ability in relation to music, and an average relationship with the teacher-researcher in their Likert scale self-descriptions. This concludes the presentation of results from School B. The next section contains a synthesis of findings from School A and School B.



## **5.4 Synthesis: Written whole-class feedback**

The preceding sections of this chapter have presented findings from the intrinsic analysis of data. This section will compare and synthesise findings from School A and School B in an instrumental analysis. As explained in Chapter Three, findings from School A and School B were analysed through the use of meta-matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Meta-matrices enabled the teacher-researcher to compare key issues that had arisen from the questionnaires, semi-structured interview, and artefacts during intrinsic analysis. This section will be structured in two main parts: findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview from both schools will first be compared followed by findings from artefacts.

### **5.4.1 Findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interview**

The meta-matrix that synthesised findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interview was organised according to the themes that had emerged during intrinsic analysis (see Table 5.12). This approach was taken given that the same unifying themes had arisen from both School A and School B (i.e., ‘perspectives on feedback’, ‘personal responses to feedback’, ‘processing of feedback’), thus making them ideal units of comparison. Issues of interest associated with each theme were entered into the relevant cell in the meta-matrix. This allowed similarities and differences between School A and School B to be more easily investigated. Issues of interest included in the meta-matrix were derived from the categories of data that had emerged during intrinsic analysis (e.g., improvement, emotions, understanding).

Table 5.12

*Meta-Matrix Synthesising Key Issues from Questionnaires and Semi-Structured Interview (Term B)*

Theme	School A	School B	Synthesis
<b>Perspectives on feedback</b> <i>Students' views of feedback and its purposes</i>	<p>Feedback helps to improve work. However, written whole-class feedback does not support improvement as well as written individual feedback.</p> <p>Feedback corrects mistakes or weak areas in work. However, written whole-class feedback does not correct student-specific mistakes.</p> <p>Feedback provides information about work. Written whole-class feedback conveys general information and this is not always useful.</p>	<p>Feedback helps to improve work.</p> <p>Feedback corrects mistakes or weak areas in work. However, written whole-class feedback does not correct student-specific mistakes.</p> <p>Feedback provides information about work. However, written whole-class feedback conveys general information and does not identify positive aspects of individual students' work.</p>	<p>Students generally believe that feedback helps them to correct mistakes or weak areas in their work, provides information about their work, and allows them to improve their work.</p> <p>However, students have some concerns about the effectiveness of written whole-class feedback in relation to these three perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) written whole-class feedback does not correct student-specific mistakes,</li> <li>(b) written whole-class feedback provides only general information and does not identify positive aspects of individual students' work, and</li> <li>(c) written whole-class feedback does not support improvement as well as written individual feedback.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal responses to feedback</b> <i>Students' personal responses to feedback</i>	<p>Students generally do not respond emotively to written whole-class feedback. However, some students experience annoyance and nervousness as a result of receiving written whole-class feedback instead of written individual feedback.</p>	<p>Students generally do not respond emotively to written whole-class feedback. However, some students experience annoyance and fear as a result of receiving written whole-class feedback written instead of individual feedback.</p>	<p>Students generally do not respond emotively to written whole-class feedback. However, some students experience negative feelings (e.g., annoyance, nervousness, fear) as a result of receiving written whole-class feedback instead of written individual feedback.</p>

	<p>Students consider the social context of feedback (e.g., teachers know the subject better, teacher providing feedback will mark final work, easier for the teacher to provide written whole-class feedback).</p> <p>Some students prefer positive or encouraging feedback.</p>	<p>Students consider the social context of feedback (e.g., easier for teacher to provide written whole-class feedback).</p> <p>Some students have a strong preference for positive feedback.</p>	<p>Students consider the social context of feedback (e.g., easier for teacher to provide written whole-class feedback, teacher knows better and will ultimately mark final work).</p> <p>Some students prefer positive or encouraging feedback.</p>
<p><b>Processing of feedback</b> <i>Students' processing and use of feedback</i></p>	<p>Students primarily evaluate written whole-class feedback by determining if and which feedback items apply to their work. They accomplish this with varying degrees of success.</p> <p>Students do not always understand feedback messages.</p> <p>Some students do not understand how to use whole-class feedback.</p> <p>Students act on written whole-class feedback by using it as a checklist and self-marking.</p> <p>Students identify that acting on written whole-class feedback requires more effort and work compared to written individual feedback.</p>	<p>Students primarily evaluate written whole-class feedback by determining if and which feedback items apply to their work. They accomplish this with varying degrees of success. Students also believe this process is time-consuming.</p> <p>Students do not always understand feedback messages.</p> <p>Some students do not have a strong understanding of what constitutes feedback.</p> <p>Students act on written whole-class feedback by checking work and making changes. However, students' checking processes vary in accuracy, systematicity and thoroughness.</p>	<p>Students primarily evaluate written whole-class feedback by determining if and which feedback items apply to their work. They accomplish this with varying degrees of success.</p> <p>Some students do not always understand feedback (e.g., how to use whole-class feedback, what constitutes feedback, meaning of feedback messages)</p> <p>Students act on written whole-class feedback by checking their work. However, students' checking processes may vary in accuracy, systematicity and thoroughness.</p> <p>Students identify two main concerns in relation to processing written whole-class feedback:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) it is difficult to evaluate which whole-class feedback items apply to one's work, and</li> <li>(b) it requires more time and effort to evaluate and act on written whole-class feedback as compared to written individual feedback.</li> </ol>

#### ***5.4.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback***

The theme of ‘perspectives on feedback’ contained similar issues of interest for School A and School B. Students at both school sites believed that written whole-class feedback generally had three main purposes: (a) it helped them to correct mistakes or weak areas in their work, (b) it provided them with information about their work, and (c) it allowed them to improve their work. However, students also had some concerns about written whole-class feedback in relation to these perspectives.

Students’ concerns were linked to the general nature of written whole-class feedback. They felt that written whole-class feedback did not correct mistakes that were specific to their work, and were concerned that their mistakes were not included in the written whole-class feedback handout of “*common mistakes*”. This was particularly troubling to students who felt that the mistakes being addressed in the written whole-class feedback handout were “*simple mistakes*” at “*lower levels*”. Students also observed that written whole-class feedback provided them with “*general*” information and this was not always helpful. They observed that whole-class information did not identify positive aspects of their work, and this did not allow them to know what they had done well. In general, students thought written whole-class feedback did not support improvement as well as written individual feedback, and made it difficult for them to achieve the best marks possible. It was interesting that this sentiment was expressed more strongly by competent students who had used written individual feedback well during the previous term. These students communicated a sense of being short-changed due to the provision of written whole-class feedback.

### 5.4.1.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback

Findings pertaining to the theme of ‘personal responses to feedback’ were also similar across both school sites. Overall, data showed that students had minimal personal responses to written whole-class feedback as can be seen in the distribution of coded units of data across all three themes (see Table 5.13).

Table 5.13

*Comparison of Number of Coded Units of Data from Questionnaires and Semi-Structured Interview (Term B)*

Theme	School A ( <i>n</i> = 400)	School B ( <i>n</i> = 369)
Perspectives on feedback	186 (46.50%)	195 (52.85%)
Personal responses to feedback	57 (14.25%)	36 (9.76%)
Processing of feedback	157 (39.25%)	138 (37.40%)

*Note.* *n* = number of coded units of data.

Table 5.13 shows that personal responses to written whole-class feedback constituted an average of 12.00% of the total units of data. This was surprising as results from the previous term had shown that personal responses to written individual feedback constituted an average of 22.63% of the total units of data (see section 4.4.1). This suggests that written whole-class feedback did not elicit a particularly personal response as compared to written individual feedback.

Overall, students at both school sites did not respond emotively to written whole-class feedback. However, some students did experience negative feelings (e.g., annoyance, nervousness, fear). These feelings were not related to the valence of feedback (i.e., affirmative/positive or constructive/negative) but rather the fact that students had received written whole-class feedback as opposed to written individual feedback. For example, students explained that they felt nervous without written individual feedback, afraid that they could not improve, and annoyed that they could not add anything to their work. Again, these students were typically more competent students who had actually used written individual feedback well during the previous term.

Other personal responses related to the social context of feedback and students' personal preferences. For example, some students recognised that it was much easier for a teacher to provide written whole-class feedback to students compared to written individual feedback, and some students expressed a personal preference for positive or encouraging feedback. One small difference between the school sites was that students in School A appeared to be more strategic in their use of written whole-class feedback. That is, students in School A reported that they used written whole-class feedback because they believed the teacher-researcher knew the subject better than them, and they were aware that the teacher-researcher providing them with feedback would ultimately be the one assessing their final work.

#### ***5.4.1.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback***

The theme of 'processing of feedback' was a relatively strong theme for students at both school sites (see Table 5.13). The main way that students processed written whole-class feedback was to evaluate if and which items of written whole-class feedback applied to their work. It was interesting that students engaged in this evaluative process with varying degrees of success. Some were able to accurately identify which feedback items applied to their work whilst others were not. Students who were unable to correctly identify applicable items of written whole-class feedback typically fell into two categories: (a) those who could not tell which feedback items applied to their work, and (b) those who incorrectly believed that none of the feedback items applied to their work.

Students at both school sites also processed written whole-class feedback by trying to understand it. Expectedly, students identified that they would not use written whole-class feedback if they could not understand it. Students reported that lack of understanding could be linked to unclear explanations, or conflicts with their own experiences and knowledge (e.g., research on the internet, past feedback comments). Some differences were noticeable in the findings from School A and School B in relation to the topic of understanding. Students from School A reported that they initially did not understand how to use written whole-class feedback. This initial confusion was typically resolved after students continued reading the written whole-

class feedback handout on their own or after they spoke to a friend. Students from School B did not experience this confusion. Instead, it was interesting that some students in School B continued to demonstrate a limited understanding of feedback and its purposes. Indeed, one student in this school did not consider written whole-class feedback to be feedback at all.

Findings showed that students acted on written whole-class feedback by checking their work or using the written whole-class feedback handout as a checklist. As mentioned previously, this could have been due to the formatting and presentation of the written whole-class feedback handout with checkboxes next to each item of feedback. However, students' checking processes varied in systematicity and thoroughness. Students in School A were generally more systematic in the way that they engaged in the checking process. For example, they ticked off each item of feedback as they cross-checked the feedback with their draft music project component, and reported that they double- and triple-checked their work even though they were certain that they had not made any mistakes. Students in School B were generally less systematic and thorough. For example, students engaged in checking items of feedback that they thought might apply to their work based on their memory of their work, and reported rather vaguely on the checking processes that they used.

Like the first theme of 'perspectives on feedback', students identified some concerns in relation to the processing of written whole-class feedback. Firstly, students explained that it was difficult to evaluate which written whole-class feedback items applied to their work. They could not really identify which feedback was "*pointing in my direction*" and "*couldn't tell exactly what I needed to change*". Secondly, students identified that it required more time and effort to evaluate and act on written whole-class feedback. For example, it made them go through their work slowly and check through everything carefully because the feedback did not identify the exact location of a specific error. Some students accepted this as part of their preparation for the future (i.e., secondary school) whilst other students complained that this was "*time-consuming*" and "*time-wasting*".

#### **5.4.1.4 Summary**

Overall, findings from both School A and School B were relatively consistent. Students believed written whole-class feedback supported improvement, helped them to correct mistakes, and provided them with information about their work. However, they observed that written whole-class feedback was not as effective as written individual feedback in fulfilling these functions. Students generally did not respond to written whole-class feedback in a personal way. However, some students had a negative emotional response to having received written whole-class feedback as opposed to written individual feedback. Students processed written whole-class feedback by trying to evaluate if and which feedback items applied to their work. They engaged in checking their work with differing levels of accuracy, systematicity and thoroughness.

Students at both school sites expressed a number of concerns with regard to written whole-class feedback. For example, they believed that the general nature of written whole-class feedback prevented them from identifying and correcting mistakes that were specific to their work. They believed that this hindered them from improving and achieving the best mark possible. Students also reported that it was difficult to accurately identify which feedback items were applicable to their work, and commented on how written whole-class feedback required them to spend more time and effort checking their work.

#### **5.4.2 Artefacts**

This section will compare and synthesise findings from School A and School B in relation to artefacts. Findings from School A and School B were compared via a meta-matrix (see Table 5.14). The framework of the meta-matrix was based on key findings that had emerged during intrinsic analysis. These findings were: (a) types of responses to feedback, and (b) patterns in feedback use. Issues of interest associated with each finding were entered into the relevant cell in the meta-matrix.



Table 5.14

*Meta-Matrix Synthesising Key Issues from Artefacts (Term B)*

Finding	School A	School B	Synthesis
<p><b>Types of responses to feedback</b> <i>How students used specific items of feedback</i></p>	<p>Students responded to an applicable item of written whole-class feedback in one of three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Fully used – No clear feedback patterns (e.g., some items were simple and straightforward, some items required more substantial work or checking).</li> <li>(b) Partially used - Feedback generally related to formatting (i.e., including pictures on slides).</li> <li>(c) Did not use – Feedback was varied and did not show any trends.</li> </ul>	<p>Students responded to an applicable item of written whole-class feedback in one of three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Fully used – No clear feedback patterns (e.g., some items were simple and straightforward, some items required more substantial work or checking).</li> <li>(b) Partially used - Feedback was varied and did not show any trends.</li> <li>(c) Did not use – Feedback was varied and did not show any trends.</li> </ul>	<p>Students typically used an applicable item of written whole-class feedback in one of three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) fully use</li> <li>(b) partially use</li> <li>(c) do not use</li> </ul> <p>No patterns or trends were observed in the feedback items that students fully used, partially used, and did not use.</p>
<p><b>Patterns in feedback use</b> <i>General patterns in how groups of students used feedback</i></p>	<p>Based on students' types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback, three groups were evident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Group 1 - Students who used all applicable feedback in some way.</li> <li>(b) Group 2 - Students who used some applicable feedback items (number of used items was greater than or equal to not used items). Students tended to use feedback relating to content (e.g., including required information) but did not use feedback relating to formatting.</li> <li>(c) Group 3 - Students who hardly used applicable feedback (number of not</li> </ul>	<p>Based on students' types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback, three groups were evident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Group 1 - Students who used all applicable feedback in some way. Nearly all students fully used every item of applicable feedback.</li> <li>(b) Group 2 - Students who used some applicable feedback items (number of used items was greater than or equal to not used items). Feedback items that students did not use varied.</li> <li>(c) Group 3 - Students who hardly used applicable feedback (number of not</li> </ul>	<p>Based on students' types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback, three groups were evident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Group 1 - Students who used all applicable feedback in some way.</li> <li>(b) Group 2 - Students who used some applicable feedback items (number of used items was greater than or equal to not used items).</li> <li>(c) Group 3 - Students who hardly used applicable feedback (number of not used items greater than used items).</li> </ul> <p>No clear trends in feedback not used.</p>

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used items greater than used items). No clear trends in feedback not used.

Cross-checking each group of students with categories that emerged during thematic analysis revealed the following characteristics:

- (a) Group 1 – Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Emphasised evaluation of feedback (e.g., determining which feedback applied to work). Took action in response to feedback (e.g., checking work, asking for help). Did not always understand feedback.
- (b) Group 2 – Focussed on improvement and correction functions of feedback but felt that whole-class feedback was less effective in pointing out specific errors in work. Did not always understand how to use whole-class feedback.
- (c) Group 3 - Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Engaged in evaluation of feedback and were surprisingly confident when determining which feedback applied to them.

used items greater than used items). No clear trends in feedback not used.

Cross-checking each group of students with categories that emerged during thematic analysis revealed the following characteristics:

- (a) Group 1 – Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Emphasised evaluation of feedback (e.g., determining which feedback applied to work).
- (b) Group 2 – Focussed on improvement and correction functions of feedback but felt that whole-class feedback was less effective in pointing out specific errors in work. Engaged in evaluation of feedback and were confident when determining which feedback applied to them.
- (c) Group 3 – Focussed on improvement and correction functions of feedback. Did not understand feedback (e.g., meaning of feedback items, feedback in general).

Characteristics of each group could be identified based on common key categories that emerged during thematic analysis:

- (a) Group 1 – Focussed on improvement function of feedback. Emphasised evaluation of feedback (e.g., determining which feedback applied to work). Students in School A also stressed action and understanding.
  - (b) Group 2 – Focussed on improvement and correction functions of feedback but felt that whole-class feedback was less effective in pointing out specific errors in work. Students may have engaged in evaluating feedback and may have had difficulty understanding feedback.
  - (c) Group 3 – Focussed on improvement. Like Group 2, students may have engaged in evaluating feedback and may have had difficulty understanding feedback. Students in School B also focussed on the correction function of feedback.
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Table 5.14 shows that issues pertaining to key findings of ‘types of responses to feedback’ and ‘patterns in feedback use’ were generally similar across both school sites. However, some small differences were evident. Findings from School A and School B will now be compared in more detail.

#### ***5.4.2.1 Finding 1: Types of responses to feedback***

Data showed that students had three typical responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback. They either *fully used* applicable feedback, *partially used* applicable feedback, or *did not use* applicable feedback. Students did not always respond to every item of applicable feedback in the same way. These were consistent findings across both school sites.

In general, students’ use of particular written whole-class feedback items was not related to the type of feedback that was provided. For example, students at both School A and School B did not use a range of written whole-class feedback items. Some items were simple and straightforward whilst other items required more substantial work or checking. The same finding was present in relation to written whole-class feedback items that students fully used. One difference emerged in relation to partially used feedback items. In School A, students tended to partially use feedback items that related to formatting (e.g., including pictures on slides). However, in School B no clear trends were evident.

It was interesting to observe that the distribution of types of responses varied across School A and School B (see Table 5.15). Overall, students in School A tended to fully use applicable items of written whole-class feedback more than students in School B.

Table 5.15

*Comparison of Types of Responses to Applicable Items of Feedback (Term B)*

Type of response	School A ( <i>n</i> = 51)	School B ( <i>n</i> = 56)
Fully used	53%	39%
Not used	29%	39%
Partially used	18%	21%

*Note.* *n* = total number of applicable feedback items provided to students during Term A.

**5.4.2.2 Finding 2: Patterns in feedback use**

General patterns in feedback use across both school sites were quite similar. Results showed that students could be classified into three broad groups based on their types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback. The first group of students used all applicable feedback items. The second group of students used some applicable feedback items. The third group of students hardly used any applicable feedback items. Students in each group generally exhibited similar characteristics in both School A and School B. However, some differences were evident.

Characteristics of each of these three groups will now be explored in more detail.

Students in Group 1 generally made good use of applicable items of written whole-class feedback. They used every item of applicable feedback in some way (i.e., fully used or partially used). Students in this group focussed on the improvement function of feedback and placed emphasis on evaluating the feedback they received (e.g., determining which feedback items applied to their work). It was interesting to note that some students were able to confidently identify which feedback items applied to their work whilst others experienced difficulty doing so. This finding was present in both School A and School B. Examining the data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions also revealed some interesting similarities in terms of contextual factors. Students in this group typically self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher. The contextual factors surrounding students in Group 1

were very similar across both school sites. In spite of these similarities, some differences were noticeable. Students in School A took action in response to written whole-class feedback (e.g., checking work, asking for help) and reported that they did not always understand written whole-class feedback. These findings were not replicated in School B.

Students in Group 2 used some applicable items of written whole-class feedback. The number of feedback items that students used was greater than or equal to the items that students did not use. Students in this group focused on the improvement and correction functions of feedback but expressed reservations about the correction function of written whole-class feedback. For example, students at both school sites felt that written whole-class feedback was less effective in helping them identify specific mistakes they had made. Data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group generally reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher. These contextual factors were generally consistent across both school sites. Despite these similarities, two differences were evident. Firstly, students in School A tended to use written whole-class feedback that related to content (e.g., adding required information) but did not use written whole-class feedback that related to formatting (e.g., distributing content across several slides). In School B, feedback items that students did not use varied and showed no clear patterns. Secondly, students in School A did not always understand how to use written whole-class feedback. This was not observed in School B. Instead, students in School B engaged more in evaluating written whole-class feedback and were confident in determining which items of feedback applied to their work.

Students in Group 3 hardly used any applicable items of written whole-class feedback. The number of feedback items that students did not use was greater than the number of items they did use. No clear trends were observable in relation to the type of feedback that students did not use (e.g., some feedback items were relatively simple and straightforward whilst other items required more significant checking or changing). This finding was consistent across both School A and School B. Students

in Group 3 generally focussed on the improvement function of feedback. Apart from this, the characteristics of students in this group differed slightly from one school site to the other. In School A, students engaged more in evaluating written whole-class feedback and were surprisingly confident when determining which feedback items applied to their work. In School B, students focussed on the correction function of feedback and reported that they did not understand feedback. These differences were somewhat similar to the differences identified in Group 2. Data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students from School B generally self-reported lower levels of interest in the subject and a poorer relationship with the teacher-researcher compared to students from School A. However, students at both school sites self-reported low to moderate levels of ability in relation to music.

#### **5.4.2.3 Summary**

In summary, the first finding indicated that students had three types of responses to applicable items of written whole-class feedback. They either *fully used* applicable feedback, *partially used* applicable feedback, or *did not use* applicable feedback. Students did not always respond to every item of applicable feedback in the same way. It was interesting that students in School A tended to fully use applicable feedback more so than students in School B. The second finding highlighted general patterns in relation to how groups of students responded to applicable items of written whole-class feedback. Three groups of students were evident.

Students in Group 1 used all applicable items of written whole-class feedback in some way. They focussed on the improvement function of feedback and emphasised evaluating the applicability of written whole-class feedback to their work. It was striking that some students in this group were able to confidently recognise which feedback items applied to their work whilst other students were not. According to students' Likert scale self-descriptions, they also generally self-reported a high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 2 used some applicable items of written whole-class feedback but did not use others. They emphasised the improvement and correction functions of feedback. However, students in this group felt that written whole-class feedback was less effective in helping them to correct specific errors in their work. Some differences were noticeable across School A and School B. These differences suggested that students in Group 2 may have engaged more in evaluating written whole-class feedback and may have experienced difficulty in understanding written whole-class feedback. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group generally self-reported a moderate to high level of interest in the subject of music, a moderate to high level of ability in relation to music, and a good relationship with the teacher-researcher.

Students in Group 3 hardly used any applicable items of written whole-class feedback. The feedback items that students did not use did not demonstrate any noticeable patterns. Students in this group focussed on the improvement function of feedback. Apart from these similarities, the characteristics of this group varied slightly across both school sites. These differences were similar to the differences identified in Group 2. That is, students in Group 3 may also have evaluated the written whole-class feedback they received and may not have had understood written whole-class feedback well. Differences were also noticeable in relation to the data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions. Students from School B tended to self-report lower levels of interest in the subject and a poorer relationship with the teacher-researcher. However, students at both school sites generally self-reported low to moderate levels of ability in relation to music.

## **5.5 Summary**

This chapter has presented findings in relation to students' reflections on and use of written whole-class feedback. Data was collected from two school sites through several instruments (i.e., questionnaires, semi-structured interview, artefacts, teacher-researcher journal). Results from School A and School B were first reported individually in an intrinsic analysis. Findings from both school sites were then

synthesised in an instrumental analysis that focussed on issues of interest. The results from this analysis suggested that data had reached saturation point as students' reflections on written whole-class feedback were reiterated across the various instruments. Taken together, results from the instrumental analyses revealed four overarching themes.

Firstly, students had fairly consistent perspectives on written whole-class feedback. They believed that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work, enabled them to correct mistakes, and provided them with information. However, students also expressed some concerns about the effectiveness of written whole-class feedback in relation to these three perspectives. For example, students felt that written whole-class feedback did not correct student-specific mistakes, provided only general information that was of limited use, and therefore did not support improvement as well as written individual feedback.

Secondly, students processed written whole-class feedback primarily by evaluating it and determining which feedback items applied to their work. Students accomplished this with varying degrees of accuracy and confidence. For example, some students incorrectly asserted that no items of written whole-class feedback applied to their work. Students did not always understand written whole-class feedback (e.g., how to use written whole-class feedback, what constitutes feedback, meaning of feedback items). The confusion that some students experienced in relation to written whole-class feedback suggested that students may have had additional difficulty understanding a new or different type of feedback. Students also acted upon written whole-class feedback by checking their work. However, students' checking processes varied in accuracy, systematicity and thoroughness. It was interesting that students identified two main concerns in relation to processing written whole-class feedback: (a) they found it difficult to evaluate which items applied to their work and (b) they reported that it required more time and effort to evaluate and act on written whole-class feedback as compared to written individual feedback.



Thirdly, students' responses to written whole-class feedback were considerably less personal in nature in comparison to written individual feedback. Overall, students did not respond emotively to written whole-class feedback. However, some students did experience negative feelings (e.g., annoyance, nervousness, fear) as a result of having received written whole-class feedback instead of written individual feedback. This was an interesting finding.

Finally, students demonstrated patterns in their use of written whole-class feedback. Collating data on each student's feedback use revealed three groups of students. Students in Group 1 used all items of applicable written whole-class feedback in some way. They focussed on the improvement function of feedback and emphasised evaluation of feedback. Data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group generally self-reported higher levels of interest and ability in relation to music. Students in Group 2 used some items of applicable written whole-class feedback but did not use others. They focussed on the improvement and correction functions of feedback. Students in this group may also have engaged in evaluating written whole-class feedback or may have experienced difficulty understanding written whole-class feedback. They typically self-reported moderate to high levels of interest and ability in relation to music. Students in Group 3 hardly used any applicable written whole-class feedback items. They focussed on the improvement function of feedback. Like Group 2, students in Group 3 may also have engaged in evaluating written whole-class feedback and may have experienced difficulty understanding written whole-class feedback. Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in School B generally self-reported lower levels of interest in music and a poorer relationship with the teacher-researcher. One commonality, however, was that students from both school sites generally self-reported low to moderate levels of ability in relation to music.

The four overarching themes that emerged from the findings indicated that students at both school sites often compared written whole-class feedback with written individual feedback. Comparison between the two types of written feedback was not the focus of this study as the purpose of this research was simply to explore students' experiences of a variety of written feedback methods. However, it is acknowledged

that students at both School A and School B generally expressed a preference for written individual feedback. It would therefore be appropriate to briefly summarise key findings in relation to this. Table 5.16 collates salient points that were made by students at both school sites in their reflections on written whole-class feedback. This table does not present any new data. It simply summarises findings that were addressed throughout this chapter.

Table 5.16

*Comparison of Written Individual Feedback and Written Whole-Class Feedback*

Students identified that written individual feedback...	Students identified that written whole-class feedback...
Addresses individual mistakes	May not address individual mistakes
Makes it easy to identify applicable feedback	Makes it difficult to identify applicable feedback
Generates more emotive responses	Generates less emotive responses
Creates more work for teacher	Creates more work for students
Increases chance of getting higher marks	Decreases chance of getting higher marks
Points out positive aspects	Rarely points out positive aspects
Provides assurance teacher has seen work	Provides less assurance that teacher has seen work
Addresses harder mistakes	Addresses simple mistakes
Provides more specific information	Provides more general information

Table 5.16 shows that students generally favoured written individual feedback over written whole-class feedback. This concludes the presentation of findings in relation to written whole-class feedback. The next chapter will discuss findings from this study in relation to both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. It will also consider the implications of these findings for classroom practice and future research.

# Chapter Six

## Discussion and Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how upper primary students reflected on and responded to written teacher feedback provided in a formative assessment context. Findings from this study highlighted the different ways in which students responded to written teacher feedback, the different preferences that students had in relation to feedback, and the different strategies that students applied when responding to feedback. In general, four overarching themes were evident: (a) students' perspectives on written teacher feedback emphasised the concepts of improvement, correction and information, (b) students demonstrated personal responses to written teacher feedback but this was more prominent in relation to written individual feedback, (c) students processed written teacher feedback in a variety of ways, and (d) students demonstrated patterns in their use of written teacher feedback. The purpose of this final chapter then is to discuss findings from this study in greater detail, making links to the conceptual framework of this study (see Chapter Two), and seeking explanations for the themes that emerged from the data.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section will address the five research questions of this study. Each of the research questions will be discussed individually, synthesising findings and providing an interpretation of the themes and student profiles that arose from the analysis of data in Chapters Four and Five. The second section will introduce and discuss a new theoretical model of written feedback based on findings from this study. The third section of this chapter will investigate possible implications of this research for classroom practice. In line with the aims of this study as outlined in Chapter One, these implications are practical in nature and are intended to be useful in empowering students to use written teacher feedback more effectively. The fourth section will identify further research possibilities whilst the fifth section will critically consider the limitations of this study. This chapter will conclude with a final section that summarises the main argument of this thesis.

## **6.2 Answering the research questions**

This study investigated the responses of upper primary students to two types of written teacher feedback: written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. In this study, both types of written teacher feedback were provided to students by the teacher-researcher in a formative assessment context (i.e., draft music history/appreciation project). Overall, findings showed that upper primary students were generally capable of reflecting on written teacher feedback. However, their reflections were somewhat limited in scope. This could be seen in the way students tended to reiterate similar ideas. Although this aligned with general cognitive developmental expectations of children aged 10-12 (see section 2.5.2), findings from this study suggested that students could benefit from explicit teaching of reflection strategies. With this in view, answers to the five research questions of this study will now be presented and discussed.

### **6.2.1 Research question one: How do upper primary students reflect on written individual feedback received on a draft music project component?**

Analysis of the data from this study revealed that students' reflections on written individual feedback centred around three key themes. These themes were:

(a) perspectives on feedback, (b) processing of feedback, and (c) personal responses to feedback. Each theme will now be examined in more detail.

#### ***6.2.1.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback***

Students reflected on written individual feedback by considering their perspectives and views on its purposes. Their reflections emphasised the belief that written individual feedback helped them to improve and gave them an opportunity to make their work better. This view was very consistent with cognitive theoretical perspectives, in particular, the idea that facilitative feedback (i.e., feedback that helps learners to improve) can result in enhanced future performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). It was interesting that students associated improvement with different end-points. For example, they equated improvement with getting a better grade or mark, learning new things, or gaining a better understanding of the subject. However, getting better grades or marks was the main consideration for students. Possible reasons for this will be discussed in relation to Research Question Five.

Students also reflected on how written individual feedback identified errors or weak areas in their work, and allowed them to make the necessary corrections. In spite of this, students frequently commented on how identification of errors needed to be balanced with the identification of positive aspects of their work. Students explained that affirmative (positive) feedback provided them with encouragement. It motivated them to continue doing things a certain way and gave them reassurance that they were on the right track. This finding supported behaviourist views of feedback and the concept of feedback as positive reinforcement (Skinner, 1958; Thorndike, 1911). It also agreed with the general recommendation that teachers should aim to provide a balance of affirmative (positive) and constructive (negative) feedback to students (Agius & Wilkinson, 2014; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

To a lesser extent, students reflected on how written individual feedback provided them with information. For example, students explained that written individual feedback told them about their work or progress, and gave them information about what teachers were looking for. Students reflected spontaneously on the differences between feedback as written information and feedback as spoken information. This was an unexpected occurrence as the focus of this study was not on spoken feedback. Students' reflections were nonetheless noteworthy as they emphasised the different ways in which feedback information was received. Students identified that they received written feedback differently to spoken feedback (e.g., written feedback was easier to “take” and more time-efficient but spoken feedback was usually easier to understand and better for more complicated explanations). These reflections on the information-providing function of feedback drew attention to the significance of feedback characteristics (e.g., content, mode), and highlighted how the giving of feedback could affect the receiving of feedback (Brookhart, 2008).

Overall, students' perspectives on written individual feedback were not new but rather aligned with existing understandings of feedback and in particular, cognitive theoretical views. Cognitive models of feedback emphasise the role of feedback in facilitating improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), correcting error responses (Butler & Winne, 1995; Kulhavy & Stock, 1989), and providing learners with helpful information (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Shute, 2008). These same perspectives were very evident throughout students' reflections. This was not surprising given that written individual feedback in this study was provided within a formative assessment context.

As explained in Chapter Two, formative feedback is closely linked to cognitive theoretical perspectives due to the strong focus of both on providing information that corrects and facilitates improvement (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It is therefore possible that students' perspectives on feedback were impacted by the formative assessment context of this study. Another possible explanation for students' predominantly cognitive view of feedback could be their past experiences. Given the prevalence of cognitive perspectives on feedback, it is

likely that students would have received formative feedback from other teachers at some point throughout their schooling. As one student noted:

*“Well, from my previous experiences, most of the feedback I get back actually, um, helps me in what I do and gets me, like, better marks with things so, like, I take that and because of it, want to use feedback more...”*

Past experiences such as these may have informed and shaped students' views on written individual feedback.

### **6.2.1.2 Theme 2: Processing of feedback**

Students reflected on written individual feedback by actively processing it and making decisions about how to respond to it. Three key processes were evident in students' reflections: understanding, evaluation, and action. These processes corresponded broadly with elements of reflection (e.g., Kolb, 1984; Oosterbaan et al., 2010). Each of these key processes will now be explained in more detail.

In relation to the process of understanding, students in this study typically sought to make sense of written individual feedback rather than simply ignore it. This initial cognitive engagement could be attributed to the timing of feedback in this study. That is, students had the opportunity to use the written individual feedback they had received to make improvements to their music history/appreciation projects before submitting their projects for formal assessment. Some have suggested that conditions such as this promote student engagement with feedback as compared to conditions where there is no opportunity for revision (Brookhart, 2012; Carless, 2007). In addition, the reflective component built into this study through the use of questionnaires could also have encouraged students to engage more readily with feedback. This confirms findings from studies conducted in university contexts that highlight the synergistic relationship between reflection and feedback (Duijnhouwer et al., 2012; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Findings from this study therefore suggest that results from feedback and reflection research conducted with university students may also have application to primary school students.

Although students tried to make sense of written individual feedback, they were not always successful in their endeavours. Some students reflected on how easy and understandable the feedback was, whilst others had difficulty making sense of it. This was linked to various problems, for example, students had trouble understanding feedback that contained unclear explanations or subject-specific terms. Teachers should therefore be aware of this and the impact that this could have on students' use of feedback. Expectedly, students in this study typically did not use written individual feedback if they did not understand it. This finding corresponded with existing literature that stressed the importance of providing understandable, clear and specific feedback to students (e.g., Brookhart, 2008; Bruno & Santos, 2010; Fonseca, Carvalho, Conboy, Valente, & Gama, 2015; Santos & Pinto, 2011). It could, however, be challenging for teachers to determine what constitutes understandable feedback for any given student. What may be understandable, clear and specific for one student may not be so for another. As one student in this study observed:

*“[Teachers should] Write it in a way that we can understand but also a way that doesn't make us look like— make us sound like we're really stupid. You have to make sure it's at the perfect level otherwise people will be thinking 'Great, now my teacher thinks I'm stupid' or 'Well, my teacher is too smart for me because it looks like gibberish'.”*

Interestingly, two students in this study (Belle and Neymar) consistently demonstrated a very limited understanding of the general concept of feedback. Their reflections showed that they experienced considerable difficulty in understanding the meaning of feedback messages, what to do with the feedback they received, as well as the expectations of the music history/appreciation task. The overall lack of understanding that Belle and Neymar demonstrated was strikingly different to the majority of students in this study. Their reflections suggested that their past experiences with feedback and learning in general may not have been entirely positive (e.g., unable to understand feedback from teachers, difficulties in learning). Data from the Likert scale self-descriptions showed that Belle and Neymar had self-reported low levels of ability in relation to music. It is therefore possible that students



who, in Belle's own words, "*struggle with some things because they're very hard*" may be particularly challenged when trying to understand and use written individual feedback. This finding agreed with the general observation that students who struggle academically are less likely to understand the requirements of an assignment and the feedback they receive (Brookhart, 2008). However, the anomalous responses of students such as Belle and Neymar have rarely been highlighted in current feedback research. Instead, as explained in Chapter One, it is generally and implicitly assumed that all students will know what feedback is and how to use it. This study has therefore added to existing understandings of feedback by emphasising the differences amongst students in the way that they reflect on and understand written feedback. Practical implications for this will be discussed later in this chapter.

With regard to the process of evaluation, students' reflections showed that they actively appraised and made decisions about written individual feedback. For example, one student explained: "*I just think about it and what they're trying to say and say, 'Well, does it make sense or am I right? Or should I use this part or should I go my own way?'*" Students judged the accuracy of feedback and considered the relative importance of the subject or task when responding to feedback. They decided if and how much feedback they would use based on a variety of factors such as ease of use, amount of work involved, interference with original plans, and level of ability. This type of reasoning corresponded with mental activities typically associated with reflection. For example, Oosterbaan et al.'s (2010) model of reflection proposed that reflection consists of a range of thinking activities such as analysing, selecting, and concluding. Thinking activities such as these were evident in the responses of students in this study.

The level of evaluative reasoning that students engaged in accorded with developmental theories. Piaget's (1954) theory of cognitive development suggested that students in the concrete operational stage can be expected to reason about feedback in a logical and organised way. Findings from this study supported this position and indicated that upper primary students were usually capable of reflecting on and processing written individual feedback with some support (e.g., prompting questions, written reflective frameworks). This supported the findings of general

research on the reflective capacities of primary school-aged children (e.g., Bond & Ellis, 2013; Michalsky et al., 2009; Zuckerman, 2004).

Some students in this study observed that the language of feedback contributed to their evaluative decisions and use of written individual feedback. For example, if an item of feedback gave them a choice, then students would actively make their own decision about whether or not to use it. This was a point of interest in this study. Literature generally suggests that written feedback should take on a conversational or non-directive tone in order to engage students and reduce the likelihood of students reacting defensively towards feedback (McGrath et al., 2011; Muncie, 2000; Parr & Timperley, 2010). However, the present study has indicated that there may be hidden pitfalls in doing so. Avoiding a direct tone by using tentative phrases such as “maybe include” and “if you want to” may in fact encourage upper primary students *not* to use feedback. Students may interpret polite linguistic conventions literally and construe feedback as an optional suggestion rather than constructive criticism (Crisp, 2007; Small & Attree, 2016). This poses a problem. If teachers’ intentions in providing feedback are that students will in fact use it, and if it is acknowledged that feedback is only effective when it is acted upon (Black & Wiliam, 2009), then the efficacy of avoiding directive language could be questioned. Nonetheless, it could also be argued that the use of directive language may undermine the active role that students play in their learning and promote compliance over genuine engagement. This appears to be a debatable issue in relation to the giving of feedback.

The final process of action concerned steps that students reported they had taken or would take in response to written individual feedback. Reflection on action followed on naturally from the previous two processes of understanding and evaluation. Indeed, models of reflection typically include the taking of some sort of action as the final stage in the reflective process (e.g., Dewey, 1916; Kolb, 1984). Findings from this study showed that students differed in how they acted upon written individual feedback. For example, some students identified that if written individual feedback created too much work for them, they would use only a few items of feedback, or they would use the feedback in a way that involved minimal changes. Other students explained that they invested whatever time and effort was necessary to respond to

written individual feedback (e.g., by listening to a music recording again, doing additional research, re-reading resources on a topic). These findings corresponded with cognitive models of feedback such as Handley et al.'s (2008) processual model which highlighted the way students can take different courses of action in relation to feedback. Students' varied responses to written individual feedback could be linked to additional factors such as their personal goals and motivations (Rowe, 2011). Reasons such as these will be explored more thoroughly in relation to Research Questions Two and Five.

Students also reported that they took action by asking for help from their peers, parents and teacher when they did not understand feedback. Interestingly, cross-checking this finding with the teacher-researcher journal revealed that few students in this study asked the teacher-researcher for assistance in relation to the feedback they had received. Those who did ask for help were generally students who self-reported a high level of ability in relation to music and who ultimately used written individual feedback well. This finding seemed to suggest that many students were either reluctant or unable to recognise when to seek help from the teacher. Help-seeking behaviours have been linked to self-regulation (Fletcher, 2018). Students who self-regulate well are more likely to ask for help when they encounter a problem that is too hard for them to solve on their own (Marchand & Skinner, 2007). Findings from this study lend support to this view. However, this calls attention to a potential problem: students who are in need of the most help may in practice be less likely to seek help from the person best placed to provide it (i.e., the teacher).

Feedback literature emphasises that feedback is ultimately ineffective if it is not acted upon (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Price et al., 2010; Winstone, Nash, Rowntree, & Parker, 2017b). In order to increase the effectiveness of feedback, traditional studies have focussed more on the delivery or giving of feedback (Shute, 2008). Yet, findings from this study have suggested that different students can act upon similar items of written individual feedback in different ways, and can apply a diverse range of strategies in response to feedback. This implies that an important variable may be the student rather than the teacher or the feedback alone. These findings agree with results from more recent studies conducted in

university contexts (e.g., Carless & Boud, 2018) and suggest that the conclusions drawn from these studies also have application to primary school situations. That is, there is a need to find ways to help students make better and more productive use of teacher feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018).

### **6.2.1.3 Theme 3: Personal responses to feedback**

Findings from this study showed that students reflected on written individual feedback based on a variety of personal elements, in particular, their emotions, preferences, and social context. Each of these personal elements will now be discussed in greater depth. Firstly, students' reflections showed that they experienced different emotions in response to written individual feedback. In general, positive feelings such as happiness, pride and confidence were associated with affirmative feedback (i.e., feedback that identified what a student had done well), and negative feelings such as annoyance, embarrassment and sadness were associated with constructive feedback (i.e., feedback that indicated errors and provided advice on what to do next). This generally agreed with behaviourist views on feedback and the assumption that feedback on errors can result in negative emotional responses (Kulhavy & Wager, 1993). However, it was interesting that some students demonstrated more emotional responses to written individual feedback than others.

Variations in the emotional responses of students highlighted individual differences amongst students. These differences may have been developmental in nature. For example, according to developmental theories, some upper primary students may interpret constructive feedback as a message of failure and ridicule, and if so, may experience feelings of inferiority (Erikson, 1951). Alternatively, students may have different 'mindsets' (Dweck, 2016) or personalities (Evans, 2013) and vary in the way they face up to difficulty. Students may also have had negative past experiences with feedback resulting in a heightened emotional response. Notwithstanding the possible reasons behind students' emotional responses to feedback, findings from this study have suggested that the recommendation to avoid feedback at the self level is insufficient on its own (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Instead, upper primary

students may need to be explicitly supported and taught how to interpret feedback from a less self-involved perspective.

Secondly, students in this study reflected on written individual feedback in light of their personal preferences. For example, some students preferred constructive feedback to be phrased in an encouraging way, whilst others preferred constructive feedback to be direct and straight to the point. Findings showed that students connected feedback preferences to their own personal characteristics. For instance, some students identified that they had *“thick skin”* and took constructive criticism well whereas others explained that they were *“very sensitive”* and needed feedback to be delivered in a gentle way. Again, these findings highlighted the potential for written individual feedback to be interpreted in different ways by different students.

An unexpected finding in relation to preferences was that students in School A wanted the teacher to engage in follow-up discussions with them regarding the feedback they had received. It was interesting that students expressed a wish for the teacher to be the one to initiate this dialogue. For example, they wanted the teacher to allocate *“a slot of time”* to discuss feedback with them. They wanted the teacher to offer them help and *“pull them to the side and say ‘Can I read your feedback to you?’”*. One student explained that they preferred the teacher to initiate discussions about feedback because sometimes they felt *“too scared to go up to the teacher”*. This finding agrees with sociocultural views on feedback and the importance of cultivating a classroom environment that supports dialogue around feedback (Rae & Cochrane, 2008). The traditional idea of feedback as a one-way message being transmitted from teacher to student may not be entirely helpful. Instead, the feedback process could be thought of as two-way dialogue or, to borrow Askew and Lodge’s (2000) metaphor, feedback ping-pong. Granted, it may not be feasible for teachers to engage in this practice with every student in a class given the constraints and realities of classroom life. Yet perhaps a balance could be found between empowering students to initiate dialogue with the teacher based on their personal needs, and teacher-initiated dialogue especially with students who may be afraid, shy or less inclined to start a conversation.

Findings pertaining to student preferences aligned with the idea that individual differences can have an impact on student responses to feedback (Carless, 2006; Goldstein, 2001; Evans, 2013; Evans & Waring, 2011a; Smyth, 2012). However, it should be noted that limited studies exist which investigate the exact relationship between students' personal characteristics and their responses to feedback. If it is assumed that the personal characteristics of students can influence their responses to feedback, then it would be helpful for teachers to know their students well. As one student in this study observed:

*“If it’s like a normal class teacher and they’ve been around [students] for a long time... they get to know you throughout the year. Maybe they can see if you’re a person who can take quite a lot of feedback and use it, or if that’s a person that does not like feedback at all or, like, is really sensitive.”*

Some have identified that psychometric instruments could be used to differentiate between students who have strong self-concepts and require direct feedback, and those who are more sensitive and require more subtle feedback (King et al., 2009). However, the applicability of this approach to all teaching contexts is doubtful. Two alternative solutions could be suggested. First, it may be helpful for teachers to get to know their students well and to take the individual characteristics of their students into account when preparing written individual feedback (Askew & Lodge, 2000; Brookhart, 2012). Second, students could identify what their feedback preferences are when submitting their work to the teacher (e.g., in a brief note written on their work) (Nicol, 2010). This approach may be useful in situations where teachers have limited contact time with students and therefore limited opportunities to become familiar with students (e.g., specialist subject teachers).

The final type of personal response to feedback relates to social context. Findings demonstrated that students reflected on written individual feedback by considering the wider social setting of feedback. Students generally expressed respect for the teacher-researcher's feedback because of her position as a teacher and her knowledge of the subject. They believed that the teacher-researcher knew best and trusted the written individual feedback that she provided. Yet, findings from this study also

showed that students' trust in and respect for the teacher may have been linked to wider issues. For example, some students reported that they would use written individual feedback because it came from the teacher who would also be summatively assessing their final music project submissions. As one student put it: *"If the person giving you feedback is the same person marking it, I will never ignore it."* Students' acceptance of feedback was therefore not only mediated by their level of trust in the teacher and how much they valued the teacher's opinion but also a cognisance of the wider assessment context. This finding corresponded with sociocultural theoretical perspectives on feedback and the assumption that educational contexts such as assessment tasks can have an influence on the way students respond to feedback (Goldstein, 2004).

#### **6.2.1.4 Summary**

The preceding discussion has explored three key themes that emerged in relation to Research Question One. Students' perspectives on written individual feedback were not novel or unique. Instead, they were consistent with cognitive theories of feedback. Students believed that written individual feedback gave them an opportunity to improve, provided them with information, and allowed them to make corrections. Whilst students reflected strongly on the improvement function of feedback, they tended to equate improvement with the achievement of good marks.

Students processed written individual feedback by trying to understand it, evaluating it and acting on it. These findings agreed with general models of reflection and indicated that upper primary students were usually capable of engaging reflectively with written individual feedback. However, they did so in different ways (e.g., some had significant difficulty understanding written individual feedback, others engaged more in evaluating and appraising written individual feedback). Consequently, the actions which resulted from students' cognitive engagement with written individual feedback also differed from one student to another.

Students' personal responses to written individual feedback emphasised the differences amongst students and the effect that these differences could have on how

students responded to written individual feedback. These findings highlighted the importance of viewing the feedback process through a wider lens as well as acknowledging the unique individual and social contexts that surround the giving and receiving of feedback. This aligned with sociocultural views on feedback. As evidenced from this discussion, viewing the feedback process through multiple theoretical perspectives was helpful as it afforded more insight into the feedback process.

## **6.2.2 Research question two: How do upper primary students use written individual feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?**

Findings from this study revealed that upper primary students ultimately used written individual feedback in different ways. This corresponded with findings relating to Research Question One. Students had different types of responses to written individual feedback and could be classified into one of three groups based on their patterns in feedback use.

### ***6.2.2.1 Types of responses to feedback***

In this study, students received multiple items of written individual feedback. Data showed that students typically used an item of written individual feedback in one of four ways. Students either fully used a feedback item, partially used a feedback item, did not use a feedback item, or deleted their original work in response to a feedback item. It was interesting to observe that students did not always respond to every item of written individual feedback in the same way (e.g., a student may have fully used some feedback items but not used others).

On the whole, students fully used feedback items that required straightforward changes. However, some students also fully used items that required significant change, work, or checking. Students tended to partially use feedback that required application to multiple parts of their work or that contained multiple suggestions.



Items of feedback that students did not use varied. Students reported that they may not have used an item of feedback for a range of reasons. For example, they may have believed that their work was fine the way it was, or they may not have understood the feedback that they received. Students also deleted their original work in response to feedback. That is, instead of making meaningful changes to their work, students simply removed the part of their work to which feedback referred (e.g., a sentence). Students tended to delete their work if they thought that feedback was too hard to use. However, this was a less common response in comparison to the other types of responses. (See section 4.4.2.1 for a more complete description of these four types of responses.)

In general, students' varied use of written individual feedback agreed with the proposition that students can choose to take different courses of action in relation to teacher feedback (Handley et al., 2008). Handley et al. (2008) focussed more on internal actions that students could take in response to feedback (e.g., internalising, ignoring, re-interpreting). In contrast, this study concentrated more on the external changes that students made (or did not make) to their work in response to feedback. One of the few studies that focussed similarly on students' feedback use was conducted by Crisp (2007) who investigated how university students used written teacher feedback on one assessment in the production of a second assessment within a single unit. Results showed that university students generally did not use feedback to make changes to their subsequent work. This contrasted with findings from the present study. Although upper primary students in this study demonstrated four different types of responses to the feedback they received, the overall distribution of responses showed that, on average, 63% of the total number of feedback items were either fully used or partially used (see section 4.4.2.1).

This difference in findings could be due to two contextual reasons. Firstly, written teacher feedback was provided in differing assessment contexts. In this study, students were given the opportunity to use feedback on a draft to improve their final submission (Carless, 2007). A strong link therefore existed between students' draft and final music history/appreciation projects. Secondly, a reflective component was embedded in this present study (Duijnhouwer et al., 2012). Students completed

questionnaires and participated in a semi-structured interview that encouraged them to reflect on feedback and contemplate future actions. These differences may have contributed to the better use of written individual feedback in this study.

### **6.2.2.2 *Patterns in feedback use***

Patterns that emerged from the data showed that certain groups of students had similar ways of using written individual feedback. This resulted in the identification of three broad groups of students:

1. students who used all written individual feedback,
2. students who used some written individual feedback, and
3. students who hardly used written individual feedback.

Students in Group 1 used every item of written individual feedback they received in some way. Students in this group were more likely to fully use feedback that required substantial change, work or checking. They generally focussed strongly on the improvement function of feedback and were concerned about achieving good marks. Students did not respond to feedback in a highly personal way but instead emphasised action in response to feedback. For example, they asked the teacher-researcher for help, were willing to put in time and effort to make the necessary changes in their work, and tried to use written individual feedback as much as possible. These findings suggested that students in this group were more focussed on achieving academic goals and were able to employ a range of action-oriented strategies in response to feedback.

The characteristics of students in Group 1 corresponded with Butler and Winne's (1995) cognitive model of feedback. This model proposed that students who are able to combine external teacher feedback with their own internal feedback to achieve their personal goals are effective self-regulated learners. People with high self-regulatory capacities are more likely to accept and use feedback, particularly constructive feedback (Ruttan & Nordgren, 2016). Findings relating to students in Group 1 resonated with these conclusions in that students in this group were intent on achieving the goal of good marks and were able to take appropriate actions in

response to written individual feedback. Interestingly, data from students' Likert scale self-descriptions showed that students in this group tended to self-report higher levels of interest in the subject of music and higher levels of ability in relation to music as compared to the remaining two groups. It is therefore possible that these contextual factors may also have had an impact on students' use of written individual feedback (Goldstein, 2001; Katz et al., 2006).

Students in Group 2 used some written individual feedback items. Like students in the previous group, students in Group 2 also focussed on the improvement function of feedback and were interested in achieving good marks. However, students in this group tended to fully use the items that required only straightforward changes. This suggested that students were either unwilling or unable to effect substantial change in their work. Students also engaged more in evaluating the feedback they received and demonstrated more personal responses to feedback. For example, students made their own decisions about written individual feedback (e.g., did not think they needed it, thought it was too much work), and tended to respond to feedback based on personal elements such as their emotions or expectations (e.g., discouraged by constructive feedback, expected to do better). These findings indicated that students in this group had competing concerns and more evaluation-oriented responses to feedback. These characteristics provided a possible explanation as to why students in this group used some feedback items but did not use others.

The issue of competing concerns is consistent with cognitive theoretical perspectives on feedback. Butler and Winne's (1995) feedback model proposed that students can adopt different types of goals simultaneously, for example, students can have a desire to achieve better marks as well as a desire to avoid too much work. However, when coexisting goals conflict, students face a problem: achievement of one goal can negate or reduce achievement of the other. Students who regularly face conflicting goals may therefore experience emotional tensions (Butler & Winne, 1995). This could help to explain the more pronounced personal responses to written individual feedback that students in Group 2 tended to have.

Students in Group 3 hardly used any of the written individual feedback items they received. No clear trends were evident in the feedback that students did not use. That is, some feedback items were relatively easy and straightforward whilst others required more substantial changes. Students' comments during their semi-structured interview suggested that this was usually due to a limited understanding of the feedback or the task itself. The characteristics of students in this group were inconsistent. In School A, students exhibited characteristics that were similar to students in Group 2. However, in School B students showed considerably less understanding of written individual feedback and less awareness of the improvement function of feedback. The limited understanding and awareness that students at School B demonstrated in relation to written individual feedback could be explained by the fact that School B had a higher representation of students who identified that they struggled to learn in music (see section 3.3.2.2).

Findings pertaining to this group of students were somewhat challenging to interpret given the inconsistency between School A and School B. However, it would appear that a key difference that distinguished this group of students from the previous two groups related to the issue of understanding. If students did not understand written individual feedback, they were unlikely to use it. As mentioned previously, this agreed with much of the existing literature concerning the importance of providing understandable and clear feedback to students. Findings from this study suggested that in spite of a teacher's best intentions to make written comments clear enough for students to understand autonomously, some students still struggled in comprehending meaning. Butler and Winne (1995) have proposed that this could be due to gaps in students' domain knowledge or strategy knowledge. In situations such as these, re-teaching would be more appropriate than providing feedback (Hattie, 2009).

It was also interesting that most students in Group 3 reported that they would ask the teacher-researcher for help if they did not understand the feedback they received. Yet, data from this study showed that these students did not actually do so. This highlighted a potential problem within the feedback process and the gulf that can exist between the giving and receiving of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). General recommendations in feedback literature relating to the giving of feedback

are certainly relevant. However, this study has shown that students' understanding of feedback may also be moderated by their own help-seeking strategies. If students do not understand written individual feedback and if they do not seek appropriate help, it is unlikely that their confusion will be resolved. This aspect of the feedback process has received limited attention in current feedback research.

### **6.2.2.3 Summary**

This study has shown that students may not use all items of written individual feedback in exactly the same way and herein lies the problem for teachers. Students may fully use, partially use, or not use a feedback item. They may even delete their original work in response to feedback. This finding agreed with cognitive models of feedback and the premise that students can choose to take different courses of action in response to feedback (Handley et al., 2008). Yet in spite of this, results from this study showed that students generally did make use of the written individual feedback they received. The assessment context and the inclusion of a reflective element in this study may have contributed to this result.

Examining overall patterns in students' feedback use revealed three broad groups of students. Students in Group 1 used all written individual feedback, demonstrated a higher degree of self-regulation, and were more action-oriented. Students in Group 2 used some written individual feedback, tended to have conflicting goals, and demonstrated more evaluation- and personal-oriented responses to feedback. Students in Group 3 hardly used written individual feedback and to some extent were more understanding-oriented. Students in this group generally did not ask the teacher-researcher for help if they did not understand feedback. These findings highlighted differences amongst students.

The identification of three broad groups of students was a unique finding given that few, if any, feedback studies have resulted in the profiling of students based on their use of written teacher feedback. Research Questions One and Two have focussed on how upper primary students reflect on and use written individual feedback. The

following two research questions will discuss students' reflections on and use of written whole-class feedback.

### **6.2.3 Research question three: How do upper primary students reflect on written whole-class feedback received on a draft music project component?**

Students in this study generally reflected on written whole-class feedback in a similar manner to written individual feedback. Findings revealed the presence of three key themes pertaining to students' reflections on written whole-class feedback:

(a) perspectives on feedback, (b) personal responses to feedback, and (c) processing of feedback. Although these themes were identical to those found in connection with written individual feedback during Term A, the ideas within each theme differed.

#### ***6.2.3.1 Theme 1: Perspectives on feedback***

Students' reflections showed that their perspectives on written whole-class feedback were comparable to their perspectives on written individual feedback. As such, points that were discussed in the previous section will not be reiterated here. Instead, this section will focus more on differences in students' perspectives on written whole-class feedback and possible reasons for these differences. Overall, students believed that written whole-class feedback helped them to improve their work, enabled them to correct mistakes, and provided them with information. These perspectives aligned with cognitive views on feedback (e.g., Butler & Winne, 1995; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kulhavy & Stock, 1989; Shute, 2008). However, students expressed some reservations about the effectiveness of written whole-class feedback in relation to these perspectives.

Students' concerns were tied to the nature of written whole-class feedback. For example, they explained that written whole-class feedback:

- tended to provide only general information,
- did not identify positive aspects of their work,
- made it difficult for them to identify if and where they had made errors in their work,
- might not have addressed errors that were unique to their work, and
- increased the risk of more errors as it might cause them to inadvertently change something that was originally correct.

Students believed that these shortcomings made written whole-class feedback less effective than written individual feedback. As such, they generally expressed a strong preference for written individual feedback. These findings agreed with the general observation that feedback provided to a group of students can cause confusion (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, limited comparisons can be made to existing research given that few studies have investigated whole-class feedback or group feedback in educational settings.

A surprising finding that emerged from this study was that competent students, who had used written individual feedback well during the previous term, felt somewhat short-changed by written whole-class feedback. They believed that written whole-class feedback prevented them from obtaining the best marks possible. For example, students explained that since written whole-class feedback did not address "*harder*" or "*higher-level*" mistakes, this hindered them from making improvements to their work. In a rare study on whole-class feedback, Ice et al. (2008) explored the feedback preferences of Master's-level and Doctoral-level students. Results showed that Master's-level students tended to prefer individual feedback whilst Doctoral-level students preferred group feedback. Preferences ultimately boiled down to whether students wanted to engage in analysing their own work or if they preferred the instructor to provide them with the analysis. Findings from this present study demonstrated that upper primary students generally wanted the teacher to provide them with an analysis of their work. This could be attributed to the cognitive developmental characteristics of students at Piaget's (1954) concrete operational

stage and the likelihood that whole-class feedback required more challenging deductive reasoning on the part of students.

### **6.2.3.2 Theme 2: Personal responses to feedback**

Students' reflections on written whole-class feedback showed that they placed less emphasis on personal elements as compared to written individual feedback. In other words, students did not reflect as personally and emotively on written whole-class feedback. This was a significant finding of this study. Students' minimal personal responses to written whole-class feedback could be linked to feedback theories based on the concept of 'locus of attention' (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). These theories suggest that feedback can direct a student's attention to different loci such as the task at hand or the student's self. The main assumption is that praise or personal comments draw students' attention away from a learning task and onto themselves, thus undermining the effectiveness of feedback. While praise and personal comments were avoided in this study, Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) concept of 'locus of attention' seems relevant to written whole-class feedback as this type of feedback could reduce the attention to self that written individual feedback inevitably creates.

One anomaly was that some students experienced feelings of annoyance or nervousness. This was not in relation to the feedback itself but rather to the fact that written whole-class feedback had been provided instead of written individual feedback. As mentioned earlier, students felt that written whole-class feedback lessened their chances of doing well and achieving the best mark possible. This resulted in negative feelings such as worry, disappointment and annoyance. It was interesting that the students who experienced these emotions were typically more competent students who ultimately used written whole-class feedback well and who also used written individual feedback well during the previous term. As one student explained:

*"Maybe it's because like the first project, I relied a lot on the feedback that you gave us to, like, kind of reassure myself... I would've said to myself that you've read through it and then these*



*are the things that you found so if I correct those things, if you read it again, you wouldn't find them again. So, I'd say that that's it and I've done it and it should be perfect... [but with written whole-class feedback] I'm constantly thinking, 'What if I miss something? What if I didn't add something? What if I did this or that?''*

However, the same student later conceded that receiving whole-class feedback was good preparation for high school as they believed that high school teachers would require more independence from them. This finding highlighted a concern, namely, the potential for students to become reliant on individualised feedback.

A number of conjectures could be made as to why students had become dependent on written individual feedback. For instance, students may have become accustomed to receiving one type of feedback alone, or may have lacked the independence and confidence required to use feedback in a different form. Researchers have voiced similar concerns in relation to university students (e.g., Carless & Boud, 2018; Orsmond & Merry, 2013; Sadler, 2010). It has been suggested that over-reliance on teacher feedback could be reduced by promoting alternative approaches such as self-assessment (Orsmond & Merry, 2013) and peer assessment (Sadler, 2010). Findings from this study seem to indicate that primary school teachers should be encouraged to make use of different types of feedback and provide sufficient scaffolding to students when introducing a new type of feedback. This could help students build trust in their ability to use non-individualised feedback and engage more in self-evaluation.

### **6.2.3.3 Theme 3: Processing of feedback**

Processing of written whole-class feedback was a significant theme for students as this type of feedback seemed to involve more complex and deductive thinking. Students' reflections showed that they primarily processed written whole-class feedback by evaluating if and which items of feedback applied to their work. Some students were able to accurately identify which feedback applied to them whilst others were not. For example, some students were unsure if an item of feedback was intended for them and others erroneously believed that most of the feedback did not

apply to their work. Findings such as these agreed with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) observation that when feedback messages are delivered to a group, they may be confounded by students' perceptions of relevance to themselves or to others in the group. Apart from this general observation, very little is known about how students receive written whole-class feedback. However, what appears to be clear from this study is that the effectiveness of group or whole-class feedback depends heavily on students' ability to accurately identify if and which feedback applies to their work.

Students identified that evaluating written whole-class feedback required more time and effort as compared to written individual feedback. It made them go through their work slowly and check through everything carefully because the feedback did not identify the specific location of an error. Bruno and Santos (2010) observed that when feedback comments are not notated next to the relevant section of work, students can experience difficulty in trying to determine what aspect of their work a comment is referring to. Although Bruno and Santos' (2010) observation was made in relation to written individual feedback, it appears to be equally applicable to written whole-class feedback as this was provided to students on a separate A4 handout in this study. As one student observed: *"I think if people had those types of mistakes, they would probably want to know exactly where in the PMI chart or the listening map or something, where they needed to fix their mistakes."* Being able to identify *"exactly where"* errors were located was therefore a challenge for students as they processed written whole-class feedback.

Some students accepted the difficulty of evaluating written whole-class feedback as part of their learning whilst other students complained that this made the feedback process *"time-consuming"* and *"time-wasting"*. This response was interesting as it suggested that written whole-class feedback necessitated more effort and engagement on the part of students. A similar finding appeared in Jonsson's (2012) analysis of feedback studies which found that less specific and individualised feedback could force students to engage more actively with feedback information. Findings from the present study appear to support this view. This challenges traditional assumptions relating to the ideal model of specific individualised feedback (e.g., Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Shute, 2008). Written whole-class feedback requires more involvement

from students. It encourages students to assume a more active and autonomous role in the feedback process. This aligns well with the rationale of assessment as learning (Earl & Katz, 2013) and the idea of encouraging students to self-monitor, self-assess, self-regulate, and self-reflect on actions they could take to improve their work or learning.

Students also processed written whole-class feedback by trying to understand it. They reported that lack of understanding could be linked to unclear explanations, or conflicts with past experiences (e.g., feedback contradicted research on the internet). These findings mirrored those that had emerged in relation to written individual feedback. However, it was interesting that some students initially did not understand how to use written whole-class feedback. As mentioned in Chapter Three, written whole-class feedback was an unfamiliar type of feedback to the students in this study. Thus, before written whole-class feedback was provided to students, the teacher-researcher explained what it was and how to use it. In spite of these measures, students did not understand what they were expected to do with written whole-class feedback. For some, their perplexity was resolved when they read the feedback and worked it out on their own, whilst others asked a peer or the teacher-researcher for help. This suggested that students' level of familiarity with different forms of feedback could have an impact on their responses. According to Butler and Winne's (1995) cognitive model, students' prior knowledge, beliefs and thinking act as a filter to mediate the effects of external feedback. Butler and Winne (1995) suggested that students filter feedback through their prior knowledge about a particular subject or learning in general. However, results from this study indicated that students could also filter feedback through their prior knowledge of feedback practices. Teachers as well as feedback researchers should therefore take this into consideration when introducing new or different methods of feedback in a classroom.

Finally, students in this study processed written whole-class feedback by taking some form of action. The main type of action that students engaged in was to check their work. This involved comparing written whole-class feedback to aspects of their work and checking to see if any changes were necessary. Indeed, one student observed that written whole-class feedback was not feedback at all but rather marking one's own

work. The predominant use of checking or, in the words of yet another student, “*self-marking*” was interesting. This result was surprising given that students had employed a much wider range of strategies when responding to written individual feedback. Students engaged in the checking process with varying degrees of sophistication. Some checked their work systematically and thoroughly, making changes if necessary. Others were not as methodical and relied on their memory rather than reading their work again. Differences in students’ effectiveness in checking their work could be explained in several ways. Students may not have been able to locate errors in their work or may have mistakenly believed that the feedback did not apply to them (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). They may not have known how to engage in the checking process (Sadler, 1998), or they may have been uninterested in making changes to their work (Dann, 2014). Despite the variances in the way that students checked their work, findings from this study clearly indicated that written whole-class feedback encouraged active rather than passive participation in the feedback process.

Written whole-class feedback involved significant cognitive activity on the part of students. The challenges that students encountered during this process could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it could be concluded that written whole-class feedback was beyond students’ level of cognitive development and therefore not well-suited to upper primary students. Secondly, it could be argued that written whole-class feedback encouraged more cognitive engagement with feedback thus supporting the concept of assessment as learning. Given the results of students’ ultimate use of written whole-class feedback, it is proposed that the latter view is more plausible (see section 6.2.4).

#### **6.2.3.4 Summary**

This section has discussed how students reflected on written whole-class feedback. Students’ perspectives on written whole-class feedback echoed their perspectives on written individual feedback. However, students expressed several concerns about written whole-class feedback. For example, they felt that the general nature of written whole-class feedback made it difficult for them to correct errors and make

improvements to their work. Some students also experienced difficulty processing written whole-class feedback and trying to identify which feedback items applied to them. These findings supported general observations about the potential difficulties of group feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Nevertheless, some advantages of written whole-class feedback were evident in students' reflections. Written whole-class feedback helped to curb students' over-reliance on individualised feedback, and encouraged students to engage more in self-assessment and self-monitoring. It also produced minimal personal and emotive responses to feedback. These advantages aligned with features of assessment as learning and the recommendation to avoid feedback that draws attention to a student's person or self (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

#### **6.2.4 Research question four: How do upper primary students use written whole-class feedback on a draft music project component in the production of a final music project submission?**

Findings pertaining to Research Question Four built on points discussed previously in relation to Research Question Three and as such, some parallels will be evident. As with written individual feedback, this study found that upper primary students used written whole-class feedback in different ways. Students had different types of responses to written whole-class feedback and could be classified into three groups based on their patterns in feedback use. At this point, it should be reiterated that analysis of data focussed specifically on how students used applicable items of written whole-class feedback (see section 3.5.1.3).

##### ***6.2.4.1 Types of responses to feedback***

Data from this study showed that students fully used applicable feedback, partially used applicable feedback, and did not use applicable feedback. Similar to the written individual feedback provided in Term A, students did not always respond to every item of applicable whole-class feedback in the same way. However, in contrast to findings from Term A, no patterns were evident in students' use of written whole-class feedback items. For example, trends could not be identified in relation to the

items of feedback that students chose to fully use or partially use. Some feedback items were simple and straightforward whilst others required more substantial work or checking. Students' varied use of written whole-class feedback was most likely linked to their evaluations of feedback (i.e., students did not use written whole-class feedback if they believed it did not apply to their work) (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This explanation agrees with findings pertaining to Research Question Three.

It was interesting to observe that students in this study generally did make use of applicable written whole-class feedback. The overall distribution of responses showed that on average, 66% of the total number of applicable written whole-class feedback items were either fully used or partially used whilst 34% of items were not used (see section 5.4.2.1). This was very similar to the results that emerged from Term A in relation to written individual feedback (see section 4.4.2.1). The similarity between results from Term A and Term B was surprising. It suggested that in practice, students' use of written whole-class feedback was generally comparable to their use of written individual feedback (see Appendix N). This was in spite of the fact that students had expressed a strong dislike of written whole-class feedback and had experienced difficulties processing it. This finding agreed with results from Jonsson's (2012) research which found that whilst university students may prefer highly specific and individualised feedback, evidence indicates that less specific and individualised feedback can be equally effective in improving student performance.

#### **6.2.4.2 *Patterns in feedback use***

Patterns that emerged from the data showed that certain groups of students had similar ways of using written whole-class feedback. As with findings from Term A, analysis of the data resulted in the development of three broad groups of students:

1. students who used all written whole-class feedback,
2. students who used some written whole-class feedback, and
3. students who hardly used written whole-class feedback.

Students in Group 1 used all applicable items of written whole-class feedback in some way. They focussed on the improvement function of feedback and emphasised

evaluating the feedback they received (e.g., determining which feedback items applied to their work). It could be assumed that students in this group were able to confidently identify which feedback items were relevant to them. However, findings from this study showed that this was not always so. Some students in this group experienced uncertainty during this evaluative process. For example, students in this group remarked, *“I didn’t know if that was for me or not”* and *“I couldn’t tell exactly what I needed to change”*.

Students in Group 2 used some but not all items of applicable written whole-class feedback. Students in this group focussed on the improvement and correction functions of feedback but felt that written whole-class feedback was less effective in helping them correct errors in their work in comparison to written individual feedback. Students in this group also had different levels of understanding in relation to written whole-class feedback (e.g., they may not have known how to use it) and had varying levels of confidence in evaluating which feedback applied to them.

Students in Group 3 hardly used any items of applicable written whole-class feedback. No trends were noticeable in relation to the type of feedback that students did not use (e.g., some feedback items were relatively simple and straightforward whilst other items required more significant changes or checking). Students in this group focussed on the improvement function of feedback. Like students in Group 2, students in Group 3 also had different levels of understanding and varying levels of confidence in relation to written whole-class feedback.

In general, the characteristics of students in each group were more similar than different. For example, issues pertaining to the evaluation of written whole-class feedback were relevant to most students regardless of which group they were in and how well they ultimately used written whole-class feedback. In other words, students in all three groups demonstrated uncertainty when trying to identify which feedback items were applicable to them. This contrasted with findings from Term A which showed more distinct differences between the characteristics of students in each of the three groups.

It is possible that this discrepancy could be linked to the nature of written whole-class feedback, and the fact that this was a new type of feedback to all the students in this study. These findings suggested that students may not have been as confident with unfamiliar types of feedback or with less-directive forms of feedback. As alluded to previously, a possible implication of this is that students need support to recognise and use feedback in different forms. It could also be beneficial for teachers to vary the type of feedback they provide. In so doing, students would essentially develop what some have described as ‘feedback literacy’ (Carless & Boud, 2018; Havnes et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, this does not explain why some students used written whole-class feedback better than others. For example, although students in Group 1 reported that they had difficulty evaluating written whole-class feedback, they still managed to use written whole-class feedback better than students in Group 3. This suggested that other factors were likely to be involved. According to data from students’ Likert scale self-descriptions, students in Group 3 typically self-reported lower levels of interest in music, lower levels of ability in music and a less positive relationship with the teacher-researcher compared to the other two groups. It is therefore possible that these characteristics could explain their more limited use of written whole-class feedback. This finding supports the idea that students’ use of feedback may be linked to individual differences amongst students, for example, their interest in a topic and their level of proficiency (Goldstein, 2001; Katz et al., 2006).

#### **6.2.4.3 Summary**

Findings relating to how students used written whole-class feedback were somewhat similar to findings that had emerged in relation to written individual feedback.

Students responded differently to applicable items of written whole-class feedback: they either fully used, partially used or did not use applicable feedback items. Results showed that students’ ultimate use of written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback were similar. This was surprising given that students in this study had reported that they disliked written whole-class feedback and found it difficult to use. The implication of this is that whilst students may express a preference for one type



of feedback, it does not necessarily negate the usefulness of other types of feedback (Jonsson, 2012).

Overall patterns in students' use of written whole-class feedback revealed the presence of three groups of students. Students in Group 1 used all items of written whole-class feedback. Students in Group 2 used some items of written whole-class feedback. Students in Group 3 hardly used written whole-class feedback. In general, the characteristics of students in each group were quite similar. For example, students in all three groups demonstrated varying degrees of certainty and accuracy when evaluating the applicability of written whole-class feedback to their work. However, students in Group 3 generally self-reported lower levels of interest in music, lower levels of ability in music and a less positive relationship with the teacher-researcher compared to students in the other two groups. It is possible that these factors could be linked to students' more limited use of written whole-class feedback. Research Questions Three and Four have focussed on how upper primary students reflected on and used written whole-class feedback. The next research question will discuss reasons behind students' responses to written teacher feedback in general.

#### **6.2.5 Research question five: Why do upper primary students respond to feedback in the way that they do?**

The fifth research question of this study focussed on exploring why upper primary students responded to written teacher feedback in the way that they did. To some extent, this question has been addressed in passing throughout the preceding sections. This section, however, will discuss findings relating to Research Question Five in a more structured way. Students in this study provided several key reasons for responding to written teacher feedback in the way that they did. These reasons could be clustered into two themes: (a) advantages of feedback and (b) considerations relating to feedback. The following discussion will examine each of these themes.

### **6.2.5.1 Advantages of feedback**

Students in this study reflected on the potential advantages or benefits of written teacher feedback. They reported that they used written teacher feedback for two main reasons: to improve their work and to correct errors that they had made. These reasons echoed findings that emerged in relation to the theme of perspectives on feedback (see Research Question One and Research Question Three).

Students explained that they used written teacher feedback because it enabled them to improve. They responded to feedback with the expectation that it would help them do better or produce better work. However, students typically connected this to an interest in achieving good marks or grades. Students' preoccupation with academic achievement could be linked to their personal goals. Indeed, a keen focus on accomplishing tasks successfully and achieving goals would be typical of children at Erikson's (1951) 'Industry vs. Inferiority' stage of development. Literature generally suggests the presence of two broad classes of goals: performance goals and learning goals (Grant & Dweck, 2003). Most students in this study focussed on performance goals (i.e., achieving good grades or marks). This could have been due to the broader assessment context of this study. Students were aware that their music history/appreciation projects would ultimately be formally assessed and would contribute to their school semester reports. If this situation had been different, it is possible that students' focus on obtaining good marks may not have been as pronounced. For example, if written teacher feedback had been provided on non-assessed work that did not contribute to students' semester grades, it is possible that students may not have been as eager to use it. This aligned with sociocultural theories and the premise that assessments tasks provide a unique context for feedback, and as such could have an impact on students' responses to feedback (Goldstein, 2004).

Students also used written teacher feedback because they could see the mistakes that they had made and wanted to correct these errors. When students recognised their errors, they generally evidenced a sense of dissatisfaction and sought to make the necessary corrections. As one student reflected: "*I see the errors there that I didn't see before so I always correct them if I get feedback.*" However, being able to "see"

errors was an important factor. In other words, students were more likely to correct errors that they concurred with and could clearly recognise. This finding agreed with cognitive perspectives on feedback. For example, King et al. (2009) explained that when students become aware of a gap in their learning or work, they typically feel pressure to reduce this gap. This cognitive pressure could help to explain students' inclination to fix mistakes or areas of weakness in their work.

In summary, students generally cited improvement of work and correction of errors as being the main reasons behind why they used written teacher feedback. Yet, in spite of this, results from this study have shown that students did not always use written teacher feedback. This suggested that students' responses to feedback may also have been influenced by other considerations.

#### ***6.2.5.2 Considerations relating to feedback***

Students in this study had a range of considerations and concerns when responding to written teacher feedback. The main considerations that students reported in this study were: (a) evaluation, (b) understanding, (c) ability, (d) work and time, and (e) social context. These considerations reflected findings that had emerged in relation to the theme of processing of feedback (see Research Question One and Research Question Three).

Students identified that their evaluations of written teacher feedback influenced their subsequent use of feedback. For example, they explained that they would not use written teacher feedback if they thought that their work was good enough or if they believed the feedback was incorrect. This interesting occurrence could be linked to students' perceptions of their work. According to Sadler (2010), students can focus partly on their work as it was submitted and partly on what they had envisaged their work to be. Sadler (2010) also observed that students' personal investment in the production of their work could further blur the boundary between these two perspectives. Thus, students may believe feedback to be incorrect because they see their work as it was intended to be rather than what it actually is. Alternatively, it is also possible that teachers can misinterpret or misunderstand students' work. As one

student explained, “[T]he ones that I don’t really use are... if the person that is giving you feedback doesn’t understand... doesn’t quite see or read [your work] correctly.” These explanations could help to shed light on students’ disagreement with feedback.

The evaluative reasons that students provided emphasised the way in which they cognitively engaged with written teacher feedback and actively made their own decisions about it. Models of reflection suggest that this type of cognitive activity is an essential part of the reflective process (Oosterbaan et al., 2010). However, it was interesting that written individual feedback elicited more personal-related evaluations (e.g., it interferes with my plans, I think my work is good enough, it is too much work) whilst written whole-class feedback elicited more applicability-related evaluations (e.g., it does not apply to me). This difference in the way that students evaluated written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback was interesting.

Students explained that their use of written teacher feedback was also dependent on their understanding of it. They generally did not use feedback that they did not understand. This applied to both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. Findings from this study showed that factors such as the language used in feedback, students’ confidence to ask for clarification, and students’ prior experiences could have an impact on their understanding of feedback. The importance of understanding in the feedback process was an expected finding that agreed with existing literature (Brookhart, 2008; Bruno & Santos, 2010; Fonseca et al., 2015). What was less expected was that some students in this study did not understand the general concept of feedback as well as the task they were required to complete. The considerable variation in levels of understanding amongst students highlighted the individual differences that are likely to be present in any class of students and the need for teachers to be sensitive to this (Brookhart, 2008; Goldstein, 2001). Whilst acknowledged incidentally, this difference amongst students has not often been highlighted or featured in feedback research.

Students who believed that written teacher feedback was beyond their ability generally would not use it. For example, some students in this study felt that they had already done their best and therefore could not do any better. A sense of helplessness was evident in their responses. As one student explained:

*“Sometimes you feel like you've done really bad at it. Like you can't do anything about it and, like, you can't improve or anything because you've done it wrong already and you can't improve it... because when you write it down, you feel like that's it and, like, that's what I'm going to stick with and it's really good and then when you get your feedback, it's like, ‘Oh, I don't think I can change it because... that's, like, the only thing that I really know.’”*

Interestingly, in relation to written individual feedback, this sentiment was generally limited to students in Group 2 or Group 3 (i.e., students who used some written individual feedback, students who hardly used written individual feedback). This finding suggested that students’ beliefs about their ability or capacity as learners may have affected their responses to feedback, particularly if they perceived the feedback as being challenging or difficult. This could be linked to sociocultural theories and the influence of wider factors such as students’ general school experiences and educational histories (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Goldstein, 2006; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008). For example, past struggles with learning may have contributed to the feelings of helplessness that some students experienced.

Students’ beliefs about their ability could also be linked to Dweck’s (2016) concept of ‘mindset’. According to mindset theory, some students may view their ability as being relatively fixed and unchangeable whilst others may view their ability as something that can be grown and developed (e.g., through experience, application, support) (Nottingham & Larsson, 2019). Dweck (2016) has suggested that students with a ‘fixed mindset’ are likely to avoid challenges, ignore constructive feedback, and give up easily in the face of challenge. However, students with a ‘growth mindset’ tend to embrace challenges, persevere and learn from criticism. Teachers may therefore need to help students change their view of their ability, and teach them

alternative responses when faced with challenging feedback (e.g., asking for help, locating and re-reading resources, discussing ideas with a knowledgeable peer).

Students also considered the cost of using written teacher feedback in terms of work and time. Some students explained that they would use written teacher feedback even though it involved additional work or research. However, others took an opposing view and stated that they would not use feedback because it required too much time and effort. Sometimes, students tried to reach a compromise by partially using feedback items or selectively choosing items of feedback to use. This finding supported Hattie and Timperley's (2007) research which identified that students' engagement with feedback depends on their consideration of the 'transaction costs' involved. Transaction costs could include how much effort is required to achieve one's personal goals, how others will perceive these efforts and whether or not one's interpretation of feedback information is likely to be accurate. If transaction costs outweigh the perceived benefits, then students are likely to refrain from engaging with feedback. Although Hattie and Timperley (2007) were referring primarily to the transaction costs involved in seeking feedback, this concept appears to be equally applicable to responding to feedback.

Finally, students considered the social context of written teacher feedback. In particular, they gave thought to the person providing them with feedback. Students in this study explained that they used feedback from the teacher-researcher because they trusted her advice, believed that she knew best, and wanted to produce work that she would like. It was interesting that some students were also mindful of broader assessment contexts, and were therefore strategic in their use of feedback. They knew that the teacher-researcher would ultimately assess their final music project submissions, and therefore chose to use the feedback that she had provided even at the expense of their own intentions. As one student observed:

*“If they're the ones marking it, if they say that I should improve or something, or if I need to do anything with my work, because they're the one marking it, I'm going to kind of say that what they're saying is right.”*

These findings demonstrated that students' acceptance of feedback could be mediated by the level of trust that they had in the person providing them with feedback and how much they valued the opinion of that person (Evans & Waring, 2011b). However, it also showed that broader sociocultural factors (e.g., the power dynamic between teacher and student, assessment contexts) could also exert an influence on how students received and used feedback (Goldstein, 2001; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008).

Overall, considerations relating to feedback demonstrated that multiple factors could impinge on students' responses to written teacher feedback. Some of these factors highlighted individual differences amongst students (e.g., personal evaluations of feedback, beliefs about ability). Other factors emphasised sociocultural contexts (e.g., general school experiences, assessment contexts, power relationships between teacher and student).

### **6.2.5.3 Summary**

In summary, students in this study responded to written teacher feedback in different ways for a variety of reasons. Students generally used written teacher feedback because they believed it would help them improve their work and correct errors that they had made. These advantages were often linked to an underlying interest in achieving good marks. However, students also had other considerations that influenced the way they responded to feedback (e.g., understanding, work and time). The reasons that students provided in this study were consistent with cognitive theoretical perspectives (Butler & Winne, 1995). Findings also supported sociocultural theoretical perspectives and the importance of considering individual, social, and broader contextual influences upon the feedback process (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Goldstein, 2006). This section answered the fifth and final research question of this study. The next section of this chapter will introduce and discuss a theoretical model of feedback that integrates findings of this study with relevant aspects of the conceptual framework of this study.

### 6.3 Reflective model of written feedback

Findings from this study have demonstrated that primary school music students are capable of reflecting on written feedback, and that their responses to written feedback can be impacted by a range of factors. Figure 6.1 presents a new reflective model of the written feedback process that integrates findings of this study with relevant aspects of the conceptual framework as outlined in Chapter Two (see Figure 2.6). The significance of this theoretical model is that it focusses on the *reflective* process in relation to written feedback in the *context* of music education. This model also has wider implications for primary school education.

The reflective model shown in Figure 6.1 stands in contrast to one of the few existing models of feedback that explicitly incorporates reflection. Quinton and Smallbone's (2010) model depicted the feedback process as a loop of assessment, reflection on feedback, recording of reflection, and forward action. However, Quinton and Smallbone's (2010) model did not explicate the reflective processes that students engaged in. Instead, it focussed on how reflection could be included within the feedback and assessment process in tertiary education. The author of this thesis is not aware of any existing model that depicts how primary school music students can be expected to reflect on written feedback, let alone primary school students in general. This model therefore represents an original contribution to the fields of feedback, music education and assessment.



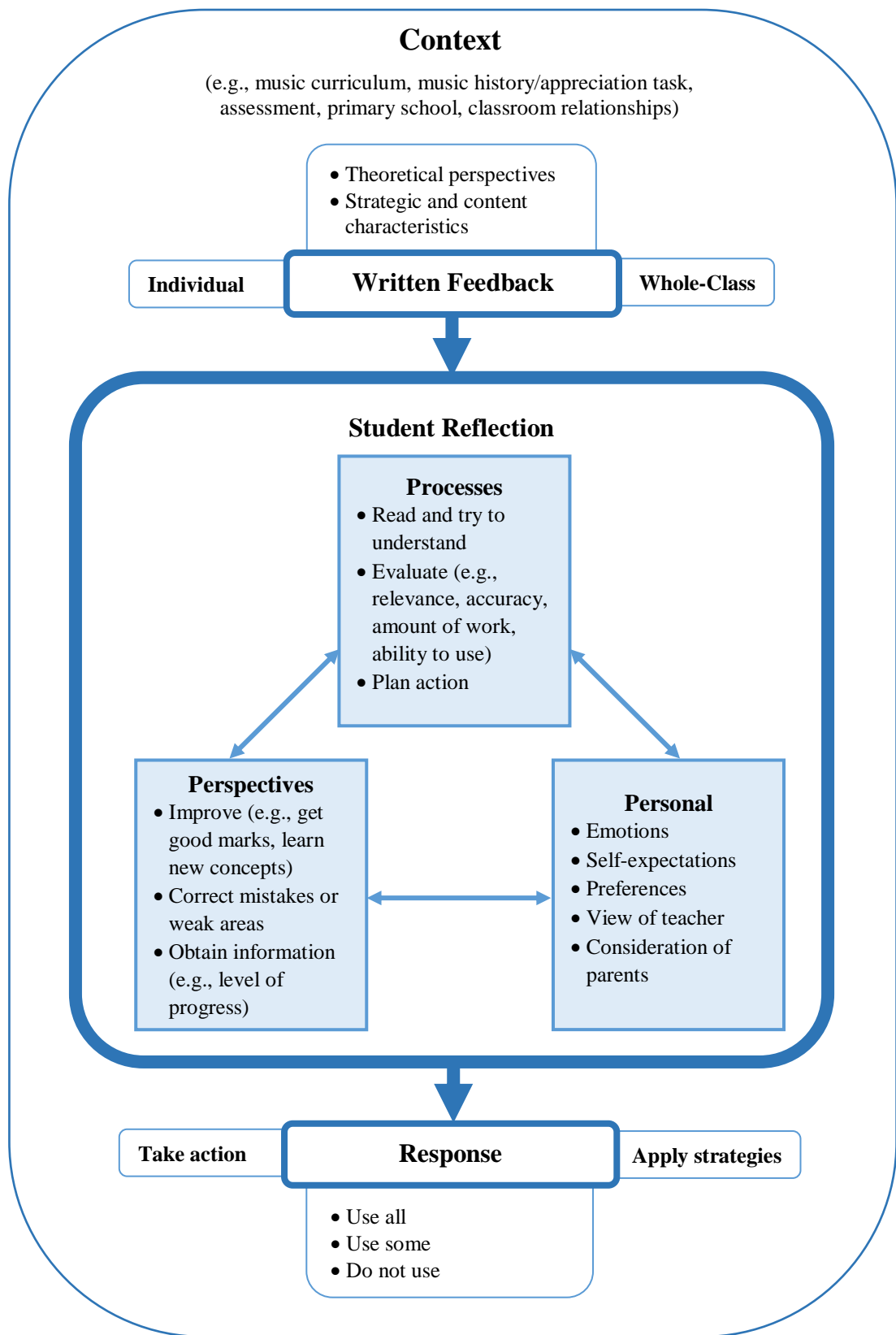


Figure 6.1. A reflective model of written feedback in the context of music history/appreciation education.

The reflective model of written feedback shown in Figure 6.1 indicates that written feedback (individual or whole-class) is not provided to students within a vacuum. Instead, it sits within a broader *context* (e.g., music curriculum, assessment, learning task). This element of the model reflects sociocultural views on feedback and the premise that contextual factors can influence the way that students respond to feedback (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Goldstein, 2006; Lee, 2014). For example, in this study students were aware that their draft music history/appreciation project would ultimately be summatively assessed by the teacher-researcher. Students were therefore more inclined to make use of the written feedback they received.

*Written feedback* provided by a teacher is inevitably informed by some form of theoretical perspective and contains certain strategic and content characteristics. These elements can also shape the feedback process. For instance, the distinctive characteristics of written whole-class feedback prompted certain reflections and responses from students in this study that were not evident in relation to written individual feedback (e.g., less emotive and personal responses). This aspect of the model therefore acknowledges that written feedback characteristics can have an impact on student responses (Brookhart, 2008; Hattie & Gan, 2011; Shute, 2008).

Students who read and *reflect* on written feedback cognitively engage with it. To borrow a term from Butler and Winne (1995), students pass the feedback they receive through various cognitive ‘filters’. Whilst Butler and Winne (1995) proposed that students filter feedback through knowledge and beliefs, findings from this study showed that students specifically filtered the written feedback they received in three ways: (a) by considering their perspectives on feedback (e.g., beliefs about the purpose and advantages of feedback), (b) by cognitively processing feedback (e.g., trying to understand it, evaluating it based on a range of criteria), and (c) by interacting with the feedback in a personal way (e.g., based on emotions and preferences). This element of the model is significant as it shines a spotlight on the centrality of individual students within the feedback process, and highlights a range of factors that could affect how individual students respond to written feedback. This has not always been well-captured in current feedback literature.

Ultimately, the internal reflective process can be expected to result in some form of external *response*. In this study, the obvious external response was that students either used all of the feedback, used some of the feedback or did not use the feedback at all. However, other ancillary external responses were also evident. For example, students may have applied strategies or taken additional action by re-reading resources, listening to a piece of music again, or asking for help from the teacher-researcher. These strategies and actions (or lack thereof) also contributed to students' use of written teacher feedback. It is interesting to observe that whilst a large research base currently exists in relation to feedback-giving strategies (e.g., Brookhart, 2008; Hattie & Gan, 2011; Shute, 2008), limited literature exists in relation to feedback-receiving strategies apart from some general advice found in guides for university students (e.g., Race, 2007).

Taken as a whole, this reflective model emphasises the way in which contextual factors, written feedback factors, and individual student factors can have a bearing on students' responses to written individual and written whole-class feedback. Drawing attention to these factors and the relationships that exist between them could contribute to helping music teachers understand how and why students respond to written feedback in particular ways. These understandings could also have wider application to primary school teachers. This may assist teachers in constructing more effective written feedback and/or providing more useful support to students during the stages of reflection and response. As mentioned previously, literature currently contains many recommendations with regard to the provision of effective written feedback (e.g., Brookhart, 2008; Hattie & Gan, 2011). However, limited attention has been given to the idea of supporting students as they reflect on and respond to written feedback. The next section of this chapter will focus particularly on this issue.

## **6.4 Implications for classroom practice**

This section will discuss key implications of this research for classroom practice and music education. Before these implications are considered, it would first be helpful

to set the context for this discussion. What became clearer throughout the present research was that students are different and respond to written teacher feedback in particular ways for particular reasons. The reflective model of written feedback presented in the preceding section highlighted this point and emphasised the reflective process by which students received and responded to written feedback in relation to a music history/appreciation project. Currently, much of the emphasis in Australian educational policy and general feedback literature is on the giving of good quality, high-impact, and effective feedback (Department of Education and Training, Victoria, 2017; Education Services Australia, 2011). However, the model shown in Figure 6.1 suggests that this is but one part of the equation. Attention should also be given to supporting students as they reflect on and respond to written feedback.

Findings from this study revealed three broad groups of students (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.4). Each group of students demonstrated certain patterns or characteristics in the way that they responded to written teacher feedback. This was a unique finding given that few, if any, feedback studies have resulted in the profiling of students based on their use of written feedback. Implications for classroom practice will therefore be discussed in light of this key finding. Table 6.1 summarises information about the three groups of students in relation to written individual feedback.

Table 6.1

*Student Profiles in Relation to Written Individual Feedback*

Group of Students	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	<p><b>Use all feedback</b>  <i>"I agree with everything because I know that I will get good marks if I do what the feedback says."</i></p>	<p><b>Use some feedback</b>  <i>"If I think that I don't need it then I just won't put it in really."</i></p>	<p><b>Hardly use feedback</b>  <i>"I don't usually use it because I don't normally get it."</i></p>
Characteristics	<p>Action-oriented            Achievement goals            Self-regulated</p>	<p>Evaluation-oriented            Conflicting goals            Personal responses</p>	<p>Understanding-oriented            Unclear goals            Limited action strategies</p>

Table 6.1 shows noticeable differences in the general characteristics of students in each group. However, differences in characteristics were not as clear-cut in relation to written whole-class feedback. As mentioned previously, this could be attributed to the collective nature of the feedback itself, or to the fact that written whole-class feedback was a new and unfamiliar type of feedback to the students in this study. Table 6.2 illustrates how the characteristics of students in each group were more similar than different in relation to written whole-class feedback.

Table 6.2

*Student Profiles in Relation to Written Whole-Class Feedback*

Group of Students	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	<p><b>Use all feedback</b>  <i>“I’m constantly thinking, ‘What if I miss something? What if I didn’t add something? What if I did this or that?’”</i></p>	<p><b>Use some feedback</b>  <i>“Since it was a whole-class feedback, I couldn’t mainly tell which ones I needed to work on personally and individually, so I think that made it a bit hard for me to understand.”</i></p>	<p><b>Hardly use feedback</b>  <i>“I didn’t really like it as much because I couldn’t, like, see if there was anything wrong with mine and it wasn’t very specific, um, and it was, like, in general sort of comments... I couldn’t really technically go, ‘Oh, yeah, definitely didn’t do that.’”</i></p>
Characteristics	<p>Concerned with improvement  Engaged more in evaluating feedback  Demonstrated varying levels of confidence in evaluating work</p>	<p>Concerned with improvement  Demonstrated different levels of understanding (e.g., how to use feedback)  Demonstrated varying levels of confidence in evaluating work</p>	<p>Concerned with improvement  Demonstrated different levels of understanding (e.g., how to use feedback, meaning of feedback)  Demonstrated varying levels of confidence in evaluating work</p>

Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 indicate that the characteristics of student groups were significantly different in relation to written individual feedback but less distinct in relation to written whole-class feedback. As such, implications for classroom practice will be explored in specific relation to each of the three groups of students with respect to written individual feedback. However, general recommendations for classroom practice will be outlined in relation to written whole-class feedback.

#### **6.4.1 Helping students to use written individual feedback**

##### ***6.4.1.1 Group 1***

Findings from this study showed that students in Group 1 typically used written individual feedback well and had a good understanding of how the feedback process worked. Their perspectives on feedback were closely connected to cognitive theoretical views on feedback, and their responses to feedback corresponded with characteristics of self-regulated learners (Butler & Winne, 1995). Thus, it could be assumed that students in this group would not require much additional support from teachers. Brookhart (2008) has identified that it can be easy for teachers to skimp on feedback for successful students, and instead focus more on providing feedback to struggling students who seem to need it more. However, it is important for teachers to continue to provide successful students with good quality feedback according to the general recommendations in literature (Brookhart, 2008).

Students in Group 1 tended to focus strongly on performance goals (Grant & Dweck, 2003), in particular, achieving good marks. In order to support students' development, teachers could encourage students in this group to look beyond immediate marks alone and to consider general learning processes or skills that could be extrapolated from the feedback they receive. However, Carless and Boud (2018) have observed that if feedback is task-oriented (i.e., aligned to a specific task), this could make it difficult for students to generalise feedback to other situations. This is something that teachers may need to consider when providing written individual feedback to students.

#### 6.4.1.2 Group 2

Students in Group 2 recognised that written individual feedback was linked to improvement. Yet in spite of this, they tended to respond to written individual feedback in a very personal way (e.g., experiencing negative emotions in response to constructive feedback). One implication of this is that students in this group may need to be supported to understand that feedback is not intended to criticise them or disparage their work. Instead, the purpose of feedback is to help them move from where they currently are to where they need to be (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). As one student from this study explained:

*“Some people usually find it kind of discouraging so you kind of have to point it out to them that it is trying to help you. It’s not trying to point out your faults, it’s trying to show you where you’ve done good and how you can improve... because I know some people usually think that they’re just trying to point out where they’ve done bad.”*

It could be presumed that students’ understanding of the purpose of feedback would help to alleviate potential negative feelings. However, Langer (2011) has observed that even if students are fully aware of the purpose of feedback, the most immediate effect of providing any information about one’s performance is likely to be some form of emotive response. The reflective component that was built into this study went some way to addressing this phenomenon as it gave students the opportunity to acknowledge their immediate affective responses to feedback (Goh & Walker, 2015; Quinton & Smallbone, 2010).

Findings from this study showed that some students, particularly those in Group 1, were able to move forward from their initial affective responses and had developed ways to manage their emotions such as by using self-talk to encourage themselves, focussing on what they should do to improve, and accepting that the teacher was trying to help them. However, students from Group 2 demonstrated limited ways of managing their initial emotions. This suggested that simply allowing students to acknowledge their emotions without providing any guidance as to how to handle

them may leave some students in the lurch. Zumbrunn, Marrs, and Mewborn (2016) have recommended that one way to address this may be for teachers to set aside time to engage students in private conversations about feedback. ‘Feedback-on-the-feedback’ dialogues could help to reduce negative feelings and support students in managing their emotions (Värlander, 2008).

Students in Group 2 tended to demonstrate more evaluative responses to written individual feedback and cited a range of reasons as to why they would not or could not use the feedback they had received. In this regard, they often exhibited conflicting goals (Butler & Winne, 1995). For example, students reported that they wanted to improve but at the same time wanted to avoid doing too much work. Students in Group 2 were therefore reluctant to take action in response to some items of feedback despite their awareness of the advantages of feedback and their sound understanding of the feedback they received. Situations such as this present a dilemma for teachers. One possible solution is for teachers to help students develop a sense of personal responsibility for their learning, and to cultivate ‘proactive recipience’ of feedback amongst students (Winstone et al., 2017a). Teachers can promote shared responsibility for improving student learning, encourage students to see themselves as agents of their own change, and help them to understand the value of being active in this way.

### **6.4.1.3 Group 3**

Findings from this study showed that students in Group 3 hardly used written individual feedback at all. However, the characteristics of students in this group varied. Some demonstrated similar characteristics to students in Group 2 whilst others showed a very limited understanding of feedback and what to do with it. As the issue of understanding seemed to distinguish this group from the previous two groups, focus will be given to this area.



The most obvious implication is that teachers need to provide clear and understandable feedback to students with the intent that students will be able to make sense of written individual feedback independently (Brookhart, 2008; Bruno & Santos, 2010; Fonseca et al., 2015). Yet, as this study has shown, some students may not even have a good understanding of what feedback is and what to do with it. Teachers should therefore be aware of the diverse range of learners in their classrooms and recognise when explicit teaching or personalised guidance in relation to feedback may be necessary (Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008; Zumbrunn et al., 2016). Students in this group also had difficulty understanding the music history/appreciation task that had been set and this inevitably had an impact on their ability to understand the written individual feedback they received. As alluded to earlier, written individual feedback might not be entirely suitable in these types of situations. Instead, re-teaching may be more helpful (Hattie, 2009).

Interestingly, students in Group 3 had a limited range of action strategies, many of which were scant as well as nebulous, for example, “*think about it*”, “*add more*” and “*try again*”. The discrepancy in action strategies between students in Group 1 and students in Group 3 was very evident in this research. This implies that students may need to be intentionally supported and taught strategies for using written individual feedback. This recommendation concurs with Sadler (1998) who suggested that students’ skills in using and responding to feedback should be explicitly developed as these skills may not come naturally to all students.

Exactly what strategies students could be taught is likely to differ from one learning context to another. In this study, written individual feedback was provided within a music education context, and more specifically, a formatively-assessed music history/appreciation project. The strategies that were effective in this situation thus may not be entirely useful in other contexts (e.g., written feedback on a science project, written feedback on a spelling test). With this proviso in mind, effective strategies that appeared to be most helpful to the other students in this research were:

- checking strategies (e.g., checking work thoroughly and systematically, making necessary changes, reading feedback more than one time)
- help-seeking strategies (e.g., asking the teacher for help, asking knowledgeable peers for help, not being afraid to ask for help multiple times), and
- study strategies (e.g., revisiting resources, managing time well, doing necessary research).

The challenge for teachers lies in finding ways to help students in this group develop and practice strategies such as these. This would equip students with an arsenal of feedback-receiving strategies that they could draw on when responding to written individual feedback. However, as noted earlier in this chapter, a balance should be struck between teachers empowering students to be proactive in their help-seeking, and teachers taking the time to initiate conversations with students about feedback (Zumbrunn et al., 2016). Based on findings from this study, this would seem to be particularly important for students in Group 3.

The implications for classroom practice and music education outlined in this section are innovative in that they build on new findings that emerged from this study (i.e., student profiles). However, it is acknowledged that these implications would be most useful in situations where teachers knew their students well and had a reasonable idea of which group a student was likely to belong to. As such, these recommendations may not be practicable in all situations. However, rather than discarding these suggestions, it is submitted that they should be taken as an indication of two broader implications: (a) students can and should be supported to make more effective use of written individual feedback, and (b) differences amongst students may necessitate more nuanced approaches when providing this support. Table 6.3 summarises the implications for classroom practice in relation to written individual feedback.

Table 6.3

*Student Profiles in Relation to Written Individual Feedback with Implications for Classroom Practice*

Group of Students	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	<p><b>Use all feedback</b>  <i>"I agree with everything because I know that I will get good marks if I do what the feedback says."</i></p>	<p><b>Use some feedback</b>  <i>"If I think that I don't need it then I just won't put it in really."</i></p>	<p><b>Hardly use feedback</b>  <i>"I don't usually use it because I don't normally get it."</i></p>
Student characteristics	<p>Action-oriented            Achievement goals            Self-regulated</p>	<p>Evaluation-oriented            Conflicting goals            Personal responses</p>	<p>Understanding-oriented            Unclear goals            Limited action strategies</p>
Implications for classroom practice	<p>Continue to provide feedback based on general recommendations in literature            Encourage students to look beyond achievement of marks to the development of generalisable skills and processes</p>	<p>Emphasise the instructional purpose of feedback            Support students as they manage emotions            Encourage students to assume more responsibility for improving learning and performance</p>	<p>Explicitly teach the purpose of feedback and how to use it            Recognise when re-teaching may be necessary            Equip students with feedback-receiving strategies            Initiate dialogue with students about feedback</p>

#### 6.4.2 Helping students to use written whole-class feedback

The preceding section has addressed classroom implications in relation to written individual feedback. In this section, attention will be turned to practical steps that teachers can take to help students use written whole-class feedback more effectively. In general, findings from this study showed that students in all three groups demonstrated varying levels of confidence when evaluating the applicability of written whole-class feedback to their work. They were not always certain if their assessment of their work was accurate. A practical implication of this is that it may

be helpful for teachers to read through written whole-class feedback with students and to encourage discussion or clarification-seeking during this time. This was not done in the present study in order to maintain similar research conditions as to how written individual feedback was given during Term A (see section 3.3.3.3). However, reading through and verbally explaining written whole-class feedback to students could be an efficient way to help students evaluate their work based on the expectations and concepts of quality conveyed in feedback. This approach aligns with Hounsell et al.'s (2008) notion of providing guidance and supplementary support to students during the feedback process.

As mentioned previously, students in this study were unfamiliar with written whole-class feedback. Findings suggested that this could have had an impact on their responses to feedback. It is therefore possible that students may need time and practice to become comfortable using new forms of feedback. This recommendation agrees with Zumbrunn et al.'s (2016) observation that students need time and structured experiences to become familiar with the feedback process and its potential benefits. Students will be more likely to appreciate the benefits and advantages of written whole-class feedback, if they have had sufficient opportunity to experience these benefits for themselves. Teachers and feedback researchers should take this into consideration when introducing new types of feedback to students.

Additionally, findings pertaining to written whole-class feedback also suggested that some students, especially those in Group 2 and Group 3, had varying levels of understanding in relation to written whole-class feedback. Implications for classroom practice would therefore be similar to those outlined in relation to written individual feedback (see section 6.4.1.3). For example, students may need to be taught the purpose of written whole-class feedback and be shown how to use it (Zumbrunn et al., 2016). Teachers could demonstrate how to systematically check, compare, and correct work using written whole-class feedback. They could also model the use of additional support strategies such as seeking help from the teacher or getting a second opinion from a peer. Table 6.4 provides an overview of the implications for classroom practice in relation to written whole-class feedback.

Table 6.4

*Student Profiles in Relation to Written Whole-Class Feedback with Implications for Classroom Practice*

Group of Students	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	<p><b>Use all feedback</b>  <i>"I'm constantly thinking, 'What if I miss something? What if I didn't add something? What if I did this or that?'"</i></p>	<p><b>Use some feedback</b>  <i>"Since it was a whole-class feedback, I couldn't mainly tell which ones I needed to work on personally and individually, so I think that made it a bit hard for me to understand."</i></p>	<p><b>Hardly use feedback</b>  <i>"I didn't really like it as much because I couldn't, like, see if there was anything wrong with mine and it wasn't very specific, um, and it was, like, in general sort of comments... I couldn't really technically go, 'Oh, yeah, definitely didn't do that.'"</i></p>
Student characteristics	<p>Concerned with improvement  Engaged more in evaluating feedback  Demonstrated varying levels of confidence in evaluating work</p>	<p>Concerned with improvement  Demonstrated different levels of understanding (e.g., how to use feedback)  Demonstrated varying levels of confidence in evaluating work</p>	<p>Concerned with improvement  Demonstrated different levels of understanding (e.g., how to use feedback, meaning of feedback)  Demonstrated varying levels of confidence in evaluating work</p>
Implications for classroom practice	<p>Read through and verbally explain feedback with the whole class  Encourage discussion and clarification-seeking during verbal explanation  Allow time and practice for students to become familiar with new types of feedback  Teach the purpose of written whole-class feedback and how to use it  Model how to make judgements about work (e.g., systematic checking, comparing and correcting)  Re-teaching may be necessary if students demonstrate significant difficulty in understanding feedback or task</p>		

It could be suggested that written whole-class feedback be avoided altogether in primary classroom contexts given the difficulties and concerns that students in this study reported. However, it could also be argued that written whole-class feedback may help to reduce students' strong dependence on written individual feedback. Some have suggested that "because students typically desire feedback that specifies exactly what they should do... educators have a responsibility to challenge these expectations, by encouraging practices that promote self-regulation rather than dependence on explicit instruction" (Winstone et al., 2017b, p. 2038). The comparability of results in students' use of written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback in this study indicates that written whole-class feedback may be just as effective as written individual feedback. However, this is an area that warrants further investigation particularly in primary school settings.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, comparison between written whole-class feedback and written individual feedback was not the focus of this study as the purpose of this research was simply to explore students' experiences of a variety of written feedback methods. However, given the results of this study and the incidental comparisons that students made (see section 5.5), it would be remiss not to consider the advantages and disadvantages of both types of feedback. Table 6.5 therefore collates key advantages and disadvantages of written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback as identified throughout this study. In general, written individual feedback was easier for students to understand and use, but the personal nature of individual feedback did have drawbacks (e.g., more emotive responses from students, more dependence on teacher). Written whole-class feedback actively engaged students and made students work harder cognitively even though they did not necessarily like this. However, the collective nature of whole-class feedback was confusing and dissatisfying for some students.

Table 6.5

*Advantages and Disadvantages of Written Individual Feedback and Written Whole-Class Feedback*

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Written individual feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier for students to identify errors or areas in need of improvement</li> <li>Provides personalised positive feedback</li> <li>Gives assurance that teacher has seen work</li> <li>Can address specific and harder mistakes (e.g., for more competent students)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates more emotive and personal responses</li> <li>Can increase student dependence on teacher</li> <li>Requires more work on part of teacher</li> </ul>
<b>Written whole-class feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases active engagement with feedback</li> <li>Promotes actions such as self-monitoring, self-assessment, and self-regulation (i.e., assessment <i>as</i> learning)</li> <li>Generates less emotive and personal responses</li> <li>Requires less work on part of teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More difficult for students to identify which feedback applies to their work</li> <li>Limited to addressing simple, common or general mistakes</li> <li>Rarely provides positive feedback</li> </ul>

Disagreement currently exists in feedback literature with regard to the audience of feedback. For example, some have suggested that group feedback of any kind is usually less effective (e.g., Hattie & Timperley, 2007) whilst others argue that group feedback can be used to benefit students (e.g., Brookhart, 2008). However, these have been largely general observations or recommendations. Very little research has actually been conducted into written whole-class feedback or group feedback in educational contexts with the exception of Ice et al.'s (2008) study. The information in Table 6.5 as well as the findings presented throughout this thesis (e.g., Chapter Five, section 6.2.3, section 6.2.4) have therefore helped to contribute new knowledge to an under-researched area in the field of feedback research.

In summary, this section has explored possible implications for classroom practice in relation to both written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback. These implications highlight the significance of supporting students to make more effective use of written teacher feedback. Taking the time to teach students strategies for using written teacher feedback is important as it “cannot simply be assumed that when students are ‘given feedback’ they will know what to do with it” (Sadler, 1998, p. 78). This approach aligns with fundamental principles of assessment as learning. As Swaffield (2011) has observed, from an assessment as learning perspective, teachers have the power to create and shape conditions that facilitate students’ learning but it is students themselves who must do the actual learning.

Teaching students how to receive and respond to written feedback fits solidly within the purview of assessment as learning given that this would not only support students’ learning but also empower students to become better self-regulated learners. However, it has been acknowledged that given the differences in personal characteristics amongst students, it may also be necessary for teachers to strike a balance between expecting students to be proactive and setting aside time to initiate dialogue with individual students in relation to feedback (Rae & Cochrane, 2008). Whilst conversing individually with every student in a class is unlikely to be practical, whole-class discussions and selective teacher-initiated discussions may go some way to cultivating a classroom environment that encourages dialogue around feedback. The following section will consider implications of this study for future research.

## **6.5 Implications for future research**

The focus of this study has been on how upper primary students reflected on and used written individual feedback and written whole-class feedback within the context of a music history/appreciation project. Four key issues have emerged from this study that could provide a focus for future research.



Firstly, this study has resulted in the development of a theoretical model of feedback as depicted in Figure 6.1. The next logical step would be to apply and test this model in other situations. Students' reflections on and use of written teacher feedback in this study took place within the specific context of a music history/appreciation project. Findings from this study suggest that wider sociocultural factors (e.g., assessment contexts) exerted an influence on students' responses to feedback (Goldstein, 2001; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008). Future research could therefore explore students' responses to written feedback in different assessment contexts, for example, in relation to other music tasks that are not summatively assessed and that do not contribute to semester grades. This study could also serve as a framework for research which examines students' responses to written teacher feedback in other subject areas and learning contexts, for example, written feedback on an English essay or written feedback on a science assignment. This would help to shed light on more general reflective processes and patterns of use that primary school students might demonstrate in relation to written teacher feedback.

Secondly, this research has highlighted the way that students utilise different strategies when responding to feedback (e.g., checking, asking for help, doing further research). Findings from this study suggest that the usefulness of these strategies can vary. However, as this was an exploratory case study, there is a need for future research to test this assumption. A large research base currently exists with regard to feedback-giving strategies (Brookhart, 2008; Hattie & Gan, 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). This present study points towards the need to expand our understanding of feedback-receiving strategies. Future research could potentially develop a typology or model of students' strategies for using written teacher feedback. This in turn could lead to more comprehensive and generalizable studies. Whilst some non-empirical advice can be found in guides for university students (e.g., Race, 2007), to date and knowledge, no research-based model or typology has been formally developed and tested. Taking a step in this direction would contribute to the emerging trend in feedback research which places emphasis on how students as agentic learners receive and use feedback (e.g., Carless & Boud, 2018; Goh & Walker, 2018; Winstone et al., 2017a).

Thirdly, findings from this study revealed some interesting themes concerning written whole-class feedback. For example, students expressed a dislike for written whole-class feedback because it created uncertainty, was difficult to understand and required them to do more work. However, written whole-class feedback also encouraged students to self-regulate and check their work more thoroughly. This suggests that written whole-class feedback or group feedback, could contribute to achieving the purposes of assessment as learning (Earl, 2003). Yet, very limited research exists in relation to written whole-class or group feedback let alone within the context of assessment as learning. Perhaps this is because group feedback is often seen as a ‘quick and dirty’ solution (O’Donovan et al., 2016). Findings from this exploratory case study have contributed to shedding some light on this under-researched area. However, these emergent findings call for further examination and validation of the possible link between written whole-class feedback and assessment as learning.

Finally, this study has shown that upper primary students use written teacher feedback in different ways and are likely to require support to make effective use of written teacher feedback (Sadler, 2010; Zumbunn et al., 2016). Potential steps that teachers could take to support students have been identified and discussed in the preceding section on implications for classroom practice. These have been summarised in Table 6.3 and Table 6.4. Future research could test and further develop these recommendations. The next section will consider the limitations of the present study.

## **6.6 Limitations of the study**

Despite the positive contributions of the present study, several limitations can be identified. As this was a practitioner research exploratory case study, findings are not generalisable but rather designed to generate context-specific insights into students’ responses to written teacher feedback. Further research is therefore needed to test the generalizability of findings from this study to different students, tasks, subject areas and settings. However, as has been put forward in Chapter Three (see section 3.6.4),

findings from this study are transferable as audiences are free to determine if and how these findings might apply in their situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009).

Students' reflections on written teacher feedback in this study may have been shaped by the reflection instruments that were used (e.g., *Questionnaire 1*, semi-structured interview). These instruments were supported by the conceptual framework and literature review of this study as well as existing reflection tools (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). (See Chapter Three for a full description of the reflection instruments used.) However, it is acknowledged that the use of an alternative reflective framework may have elicited different responses from students. This might then have led to the identification of different overarching themes and patterns.

Students who participated in this study generally identified themselves as having average to high levels of ability in relation to music. This may have resulted in a somewhat more limited range of perspectives on and responses to written feedback. In this study, a more balanced sample was not achieved due to the availability of participants. It should also be noted that data was not collected regarding potential diagnosed learning difficulties or disabilities that students in this study may have had. On hindsight, this was a regrettable omission as this information may have helped to explain some of the findings that emerged from School B in relation to students in Group 3.

Students in this study were free to discuss feedback with the teacher-researcher and their peers. These interactions were unavoidable as the teacher-researcher had to adhere to standard Western Australian school requirements (SCSA, 2014b). For example, it was necessary for the teacher-researcher to maintain normal classroom practices such as providing help where necessary and answering student questions about feedback. It is acknowledged that this may have had an impact on how students used feedback in this study. However, the classroom support provided to students at both school sites during Term A and Term B was comparable and consistent.

Furthermore, as evidenced in the spontaneous reflections that students in this study provided, it would have been helpful to have examined students' experiences of written feedback versus spoken feedback. However, whole-class spoken feedback alone would not have met school reporting requirements, and individual spoken feedback would not have been feasible given that music lessons took place only once a week. However, it is possible that this could be explored with further planning and in a different context.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

The present study investigated upper primary students' reflections on and use of written teacher feedback within a formative assessment context. Results from this study indicated that providing written teacher feedback to upper primary students is a complex process. Students' responses to written teacher feedback can depend on a variety of elements, for example, the cognitive 'filters' that students apply when reflecting on feedback, the characteristics of the feedback message itself, and the context within which feedback is given. Individual differences amongst students and the impact that these differences could have on the way that students respond to written teacher feedback were particularly highlighted in this research. As a result of these findings, a new reflective model of written feedback was introduced and discussed in this chapter. A key implication of this model was that students can and should be supported to make better use of written feedback.

Hattie and Gan (2011) have observed that educators know all about the power of feedback. However, harnessing that power and transforming it into visible learning outcomes is a challenge. Findings from this study have suggested that for the power of written teacher feedback to have full effect, students need to be taught the purpose of written teacher feedback and how to respond to it. Whilst this is no guarantee that students will use written teacher feedback in every situation, it is argued that supporting students as they reflect on feedback, and equipping students with a range of feedback-receiving strategies would go some way to helping students make the best use of written teacher feedback. This is because students need to know what to

do with feedback in order to engage with it (O'Donovan et al., 2016). Teachers in music education cannot compel students to respond to or act upon written teacher feedback. However, they can potentially influence the decisions that students make in relation to feedback (Handley et al., 2008). They can also help students develop the skills they need to use feedback more effectively (Jonsson, 2012). To this end, a range of recommendations for classroom practice were outlined in this chapter. These recommendations were innovative in that they were premised on new findings that had emerged from this study (i.e., student profiles).

The completion of this research is timely, since in Australia, there has been a push by educational policy-makers to improve the feedback practices of teachers in schools. Evidence from the present research indicates that the feedback process is a two-way street. Therefore, educating teachers in feedback 'best practice' alone may not be sufficient. As a prominent feedback researcher has observed:

“The only thing that matters is what students do with it. No matter how well the feedback is designed, if students do not use the feedback to move their own learning forward, it's a waste of time”  
(Wiliam, 2014, para. 1).

Teachers therefore need to be prepared to help equip students with skills that support the use of feedback in any form. They need to realise that students are different and, as a result of these differences, may require more tailored support. If issues such as these are overlooked, both teachers and students may easily become disillusioned with feedback and its advertised positive effects. This thesis does not discount previous research about what constitutes effective feedback, nor does it seek to absolve teachers from giving thought to the quality of the written feedback they provide. However, it does argue that teachers need to be aware that the feedback process is just as much a matter of giving as it is of receiving. The main implication of this is that a system of giving, receiving, and using feedback needs to be developed in primary school classrooms within which both teachers and students can assume joint responsibility for improving learning.

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## Appendix A

### Western Australian ‘Arts Responding’ Syllabus Objectives

Western Australian syllabus objectives addressed in the music history/appreciation project for Term A.

Year Five ‘Arts Responding’ syllabus objectives (SCSA, 2014a)	Year Six ‘Arts Responding’ syllabus objectives (SCSA, 2014a)
Role of music from different times and cultures	Factors that influence musical styles in particular cultures, times and contexts
Responses that identify and describe how the elements of music work together to convey meaning and purpose, using music terminology	Responses that identify and explain how the use and combination of the elements of music define a particular style or context, using relevant music terminology

*Note.* From “Music,” by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a. Copyright 2014 by School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Government of Western Australia.

Western Australian syllabus objectives addressed in the music history/appreciation project for Term B.

Year Five ‘Arts Responding’ syllabus objectives (SCSA, 2014a)	Year Six ‘Arts Responding’ syllabus objectives (SCSA, 2014a)
Role of music from different times and places	Factors that influence musical styles in particular cultures, times and contexts
Responses that identify and describe how the elements of music work together to convey meaning and purpose, using music terminology	Responses that identify and explain how the use and combination of the elements of music define a particular style or context, using relevant music terminology

*Note.* From “Music,” by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a. Copyright 2014 by School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Government of Western Australia.

## Appendix B

### Draft Music Project Components: Term A

Students in Year Five were required to complete the following four-page draft music project component in Term A. This draft music project component was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

<h1 style="font-family: cursive;">Draft Worksheet</h1>				
Title: _____				
Composer: _____				
	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>
1) Why did the composer write this piece?				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very complete explanation.</li> </ul>

2) Draw a listening map of the first six minutes of the piece (from 0:00 to about 6:16).  
Listen for different sections.

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>• Listening skills not demonstrated yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but it had many errors (e.g. sections were missing or in the wrong order).</li> <li>• Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but it had some errors.</li> <li>• Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map contained all important sections and had very few or no errors.</li> <li>• Good listening skills.</li> </ul>

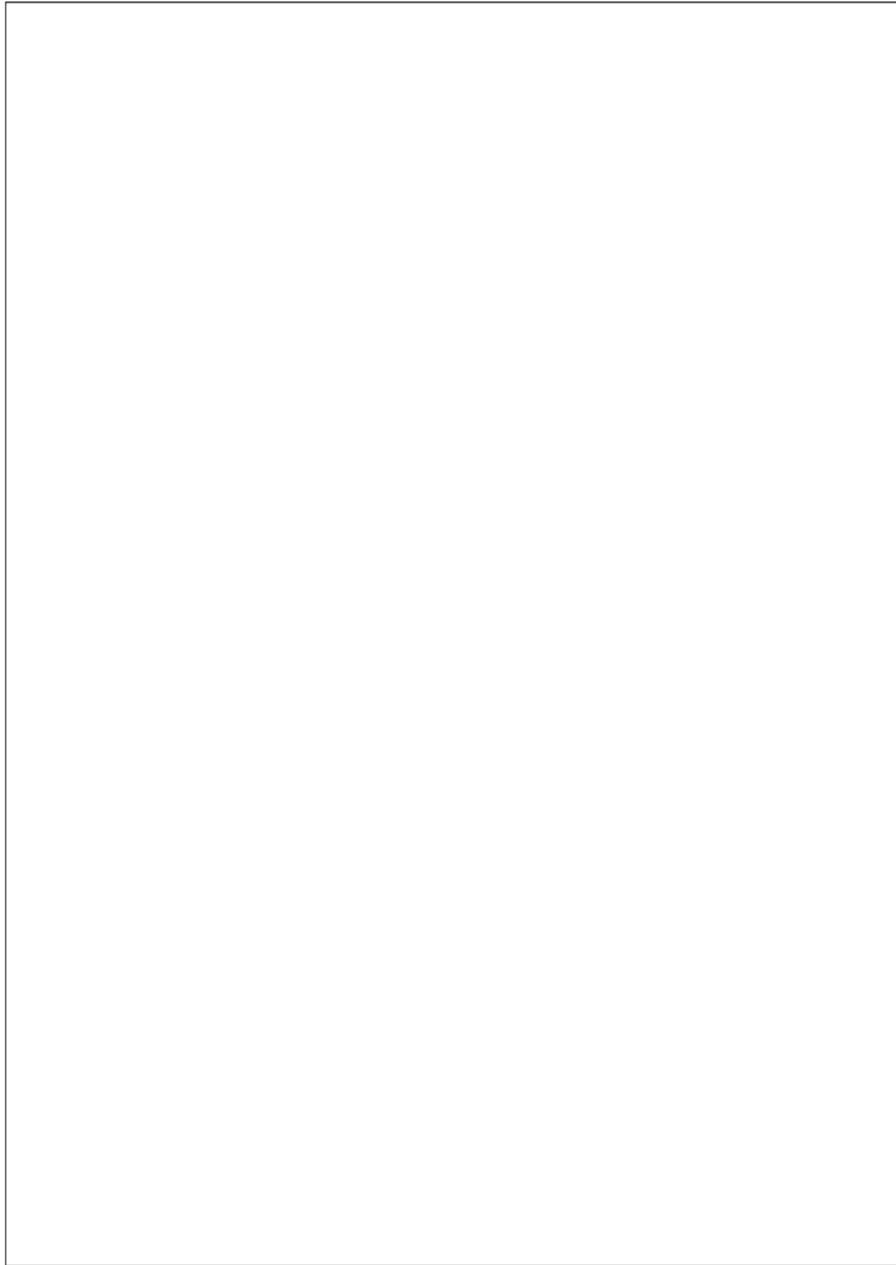
3) Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of *Kakadu*. Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.

Plus	Minus	Interesting

Musical Elements	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Tried to use some music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music quite well.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time or all of the time.</li> </ul>



4) Use this template to show what your good copy will look like.



	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Little attention to presentation.</li><li>• Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some attention to presentation.</li><li>• Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good presentation.</li><li>• Creative and easy to understand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very good presentation.</li><li>• Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li></ul>

Students in Year Six were required to complete the following four-page draft music project component in Term A. This draft music project component was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

## Draft Worksheet

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Composer: \_\_\_\_\_

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>

1) Why did the composer write this piece?

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	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very thorough explanation.</li> </ul>

2) Draw a listening map of the first six minutes of the piece (from 0:00 to about 6:16).  
Listen for different sections.

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>• Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but some sections were missing or in the wrong order.</li> <li>• Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but it had some small errors.</li> <li>• Good listening skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was accurate and contained all important sections.</li> <li>• Great listening skills.</li> </ul>

3) Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of *Kakadu*. Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.

Plus	Minus	Interesting

Musical Elements	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (minimal response).</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (narrow response).</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (relevant response).</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (thoughtful and insightful response).</li> <li>Described the music clearly and accurately.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology all of the time.</li> </ul>

4) Use this template to show what your poster will look like.



	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Little attention to presentation.</li><li>• Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good presentation.</li><li>• Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very good presentation.</li><li>• Creative and easy to understand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excellent presentation.</li><li>• Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li></ul>

## Appendix C


### Music History/Appreciation Project Assessment Criteria: Term A

Students in Year Five were provided with the following assessment criteria in Term A. This was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

Exploring...

# Kakadu

Music Project = Term 2



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kakadu\\_National\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kakadu_National_Park)

This Term, you will be learning about *Kakadu* by Peter Sculthorpe. You will also be creating a project about this piece of music.

**Term 2 Music Project - Marking Criteria**

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very complete explanation.</li> </ul>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>Listening skills not demonstrated yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had many errors (e.g. sections were missing or in the wrong order).</li> <li>Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had some errors.</li> <li>Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map contained all important sections and had very few or no errors.</li> <li>Good listening skills.</li> </ul>
Musical Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Tried to use some music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music quite well.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time or all of the time.</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some attention to presentation.</li> <li>Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good presentation.</li> <li>Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very good presentation.</li> <li>Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>

Students in Year Six were provided with the following assessment criteria in Term A. This was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

**Exploring...**


# Kakadu

**Music Project - Term 2**

This Term, you will be listening to *Kakadu* by Peter Sculthorpe. You will also be creating a project about this piece of music.

**Term 2 Music Project - Marking Criteria**

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very thorough explanation.</li> </ul>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but some sections were missing or in the wrong order.</li> <li>Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had some small errors.</li> <li>Good listening skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was accurate and contained all important sections.</li> <li>Great listening skills.</li> </ul>
Musical Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (minimal response).</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (narrow response).</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (relevant response).</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (thoughtful and insightful response).</li> <li>Described the music clearly and accurately.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology all of the time.</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good presentation.</li> <li>Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very good presentation.</li> <li>Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent presentation.</li> <li>Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kakadu\\_National\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kakadu_National_Park)

## Appendix D

### Draft Music Project Components: Term B

Students in Year Five were required to complete the following four-page draft music project component in Term B. This was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

# Draft Worksheet

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Composer: \_\_\_\_\_

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>• Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>• Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>

1) Why did the composer write this piece?

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>• A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>• Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>• Very complete explanation.</li> </ul>



2) Draw a listening map of the piece. (Please use the Herbie Hancock and Lang Lang version.) Listen for different sections.

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>• Listening skills not demonstrated yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but it had many errors (e.g. sections were missing or in the wrong order).</li> <li>• Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but it had some errors.</li> <li>• Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map contained all important sections and had very few or no errors.</li> <li>• Good listening skills.</li> </ul>

3) Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.

Plus	Minus	Interesting

Musical Elements	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Tried to use some music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music quite well.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time or all of the time.</li> </ul>

4) Use this template to show what each slide in your good copy is going to look like. You do not have to use all the slides.

Slide 1	Slide 2	Slide 3	Slide 4
Slide 5	Slide 6	Slide 7	Slide 8

Presentation	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>• Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good presentation.</li> <li>• Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good presentation.</li> <li>• Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent presentation.</li> <li>• Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>

Students in Year Six were required to complete the following four-page draft music project component in Term B. This was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

# Draft Worksheet

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Composer: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>

1) Why did the composer write this piece?

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	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very thorough explanation.</li> </ul>

2) Draw a listening map of the piece. (Please use the Herbie Hancock and Lang Lang version.) Listen for different sections.

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>• Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but some sections were missing or in the wrong order.</li> <li>• Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was included but it had some small errors.</li> <li>• Good listening skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening map was accurate and contained all important sections.</li> <li>• Great listening skills.</li> </ul>

3) Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting framework to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.

Plus	Minus	Interesting

Musical Elements	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (minimal response).</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (narrow response).</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (relevant response).</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (thoughtful and insightful response).</li> <li>Described the music clearly and accurately.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology all of the time.</li> </ul>

4) Use this template to show what each slide in your good copy is going to look like. You do not have to use all the slides.

Slide 1	Slide 2	Slide 3	Slide 4
Slide 5	Slide 6	Slide 7	Slide 8


Presentation	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>• Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good presentation.</li> <li>• Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good presentation.</li> <li>• Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent presentation.</li> <li>• Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>

## Appendix E

### Music History/Appreciation Project Assessment Criteria: Term B


Students in Year Five were provided with the following assessment criteria in Term B. This was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

Exploring...



# Rhapsody in Blue

Music Project = Term 3



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Gershwin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Gershwin)

This Term, you will be listening to *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin. You will also be creating a project about this piece of music.


**Term 3 Music Project - Marking Criteria**

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very complete explanation.</li> </ul>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>Listening skills not demonstrated yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had many errors (e.g. sections were missing or in the wrong order).</li> <li>Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had some errors.</li> <li>Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map contained all important sections and had very few or no errors.</li> <li>Good listening skills.</li> </ul>
Musical Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Tried to use some music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music quite well.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time or all of the time.</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some attention to presentation.</li> <li>Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good presentation.</li> <li>Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very good presentation.</li> <li>Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>




Students in Year Six were provided with the following assessment criteria in Term B. This was created by the teacher-researcher as part of the regular teaching/learning program for students at School A and School B.

**Exploring...**



# Rhapsody in Blue



**Music Project - Term 3**

This Term, you will be listening to *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin. You will also be creating a project about this piece of music.

**Term 3 Music Project - Marking Criteria**

	<b>Just learning</b>	<b>Getting there</b>	<b>Got it</b>	<b>Expert</b>
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very thorough explanation.</li> </ul>
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but some sections were missing or in the wrong order.</li> <li>Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had some small errors.</li> <li>Good listening skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was accurate and contained all important sections.</li> <li>Great listening skills.</li> </ul>
Musical Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (minimal response).</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (narrow response).</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (relevant response).</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music (thoughtful and insightful response).</li> <li>Described the music clearly and accurately.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology all of the time.</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good presentation.</li> <li>Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very good presentation.</li> <li>Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent presentation.</li> <li>Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>

## Appendix F

### Written Whole-Class Feedback Provided to Students in this Study

Written whole-class feedback provided to Year Five students in School A.

#### Year 5 Feedback - Rhapsody in Blue

##### Title and Composer

- There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling and see if you have missed any words.

##### Question 1 - Why

- We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few weeks later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.

##### Question 2 - Listening map

- If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.
- Make sure every section in your listening map describes two different musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).

##### Question 3 - PMI chart

- This section is getting better!
- Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.
- Try not to write about the same thing twice (for example, putting wah wah mute in "Plus" and "Minus"). Good PMI charts said something different for each point.

##### Question 4 - Layout

- You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.
- Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.

Written whole-class feedback provided to Year Six students in School A.

## Year 6 Feedback - Rhapsody in Blue

### Title and Composer

- Double-check your spelling.

### Question 1 - Why

- This was done quite well!

### Question 2 - Listening map

- If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.
- Make sure every section in your listening map describes three different musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood).
- Use dot points instead of full sentences. This will fit better on your good copy.

### Question 3 - PMI chart

- Check that your sentences make sense. Try reading each sentence out loud or asking a friend what they think.
- Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word "because". This will help you show better thinking.
- Make sure you have 3-4 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.

### Question 4 - Layout

- Try not to include additional information like "About the composer" or "About Lang Lang". It's a nice idea but you will not be marked on this. 😊
- Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.

## Year 5 Feedback - Rhapsody in Blue

### Title and Composer

- There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling.

### Question 1 - Why

- Check your facts (don't make things up). Listen to the radio show on Google Classroom to see if your explanation is correct.

### Question 2 - Listening map

- If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.
- Make sure every section in your listening map describes two different musical elements (for example, instruments and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.

### Question 3 - PMI chart

- Check that your points make sense. Try reading each point out loud or asking a friend what they think.
- Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.
- Describe the music that Gershwin wrote, not the performers (for example, you don't have to comment on Herbie Hancock's facial expression).
- Try not to write about the same thing twice (for example, putting wah wah mute in "Plus" and "Minus"). Good PMI charts said something different for each point.
- Check the words you have used carefully. Some did not make sense (for example, accento, chorus, mute stick and paste).

### Question 4 - Layout

- Try not to include additional information like "Interesting facts". It's a nice idea but you will not be marked on this. ☺
- You might need two or more slides for your listening map.
- Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.

## Year 6 Feedback - Rhapsody in Blue

### Title and Composer

- There were some mistakes here. Double-check this carefully.

### Question 1 - Why

- Check that you have all the important points and the correct sequence of events. Try listening to the radio show or reading the “Why did George Gershwin...” document on Google Classroom again.

### Question 2 - Listening map

- Make sure every section in your listening map describes three different musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.
- If you used the word “medium” or “moderate” in your listening map, please be more specific. Do you mean medium tempo or dynamics?

### Question 3 - PMI chart

- Check that your points make sense. Try reading each point out loud or asking a friend what they think.
- Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word “because”. This will help you show better thinking.
- Try to write about different things (for example, instruments, tune and dynamics). Good PMI charts described a few different musical elements.
- Make sure you have 3-4 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.

### Question 4 - Layout

- You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.
- Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.

## Appendix G

### Questionnaires

All questionnaires in this study were created by the teacher-researcher. However, items included in *Questionnaire 1* were adapted from Quinton and Smallbone's (2010) feedback reflection framework as well as a general learning and attitudinal questionnaire for primary school students (Tinson, 2009).

#### *Questionnaire 1* (2 pages)


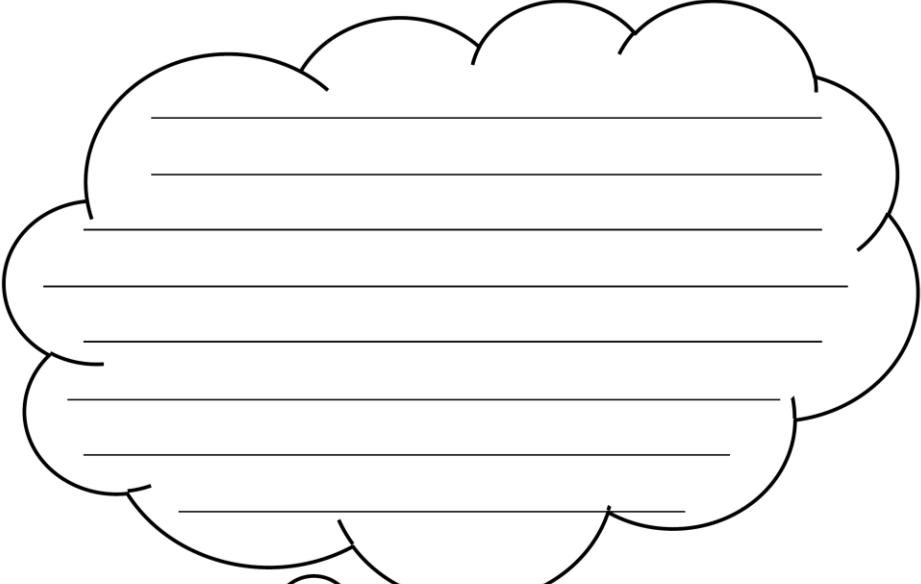
1. What is feedback?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How did the feedback make you feel? What did you think when you read the feedback?



3. What feedback do you agree with? (Explain why.)

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4. What feedback do you disagree with? (Explain why.)

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5. Was the feedback what you had expected? (Explain why.)

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6. Tick the box which best describes what you will do next. If you like, you can write your own description on the line.

- I will use all of the feedback.
  I will use some of the feedback.
  I don't think I'll use any of the feedback.
  I'm confused about the feedback and need to get some help.
- \_\_\_\_\_

7. Read each sentence. Then circle or highlight the face which best describes you.

	Definitely No	No	Sort Of	Yes	Definitely Yes
I like music.					
I am good at music.					
I like doing music projects.					
I try hard in music.					
I find it easy to learn in music.					
I get along well with my music teacher.					
My family likes me to do well in music.					

Questionnaire 2 (1 page)

Why do you think teachers give you feedback?

What might stop you from using feedback?

What type of feedback is helpful?



Questionnaire 3 (2 pages)

1. Tick the box which best describes you. If you like, you can write your own description on the line.

When I saw my results...

- I thought I would do better.
- I thought it was about right.
- I thought I did better than I expected.
- I didn't know what to think.
- I didn't really care.
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you understand why you received this result? (Explain why.)

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3. What feedback on your draft did you use in your final music project?

Feedback I used	Why I used it

4. What feedback on your draft did you decide not to use?

Feedback I didn't use	Why I didn't use it

5. In general, do you usually use feedback? Why?

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6. What do you like about feedback? What don't you like about feedback?

 Like	 Don't like

7. How do you prefer to get your feedback?

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## Appendix H

### Sample of Completed Draft Music Project Component and Final Music Project Submission

Sample of a student's draft music project component from Term A.

# Draft Worksheet

Title: Kakadu

Composer: Peter Sculthorpe

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not identify the title of the piece or the composer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> <li>Some small errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identified the title of the piece and the composer.</li> </ul>

1) Why did the composer write this piece?

Peter Sculthorpe was at his desk one night when the phone rang.

Manny Papper asked him if he could write a piece of music for his

wife's 60th birthday but Sculthorpe was way too busy. Every time

Sculthorpe said no Pappers put the price up. After feeling embarrassed

Sculthorpe asked about Papper's wife and after talking for a while

he said yes. Papper had one condition: that it had some

Austration feel and that it had a chance of being put in a

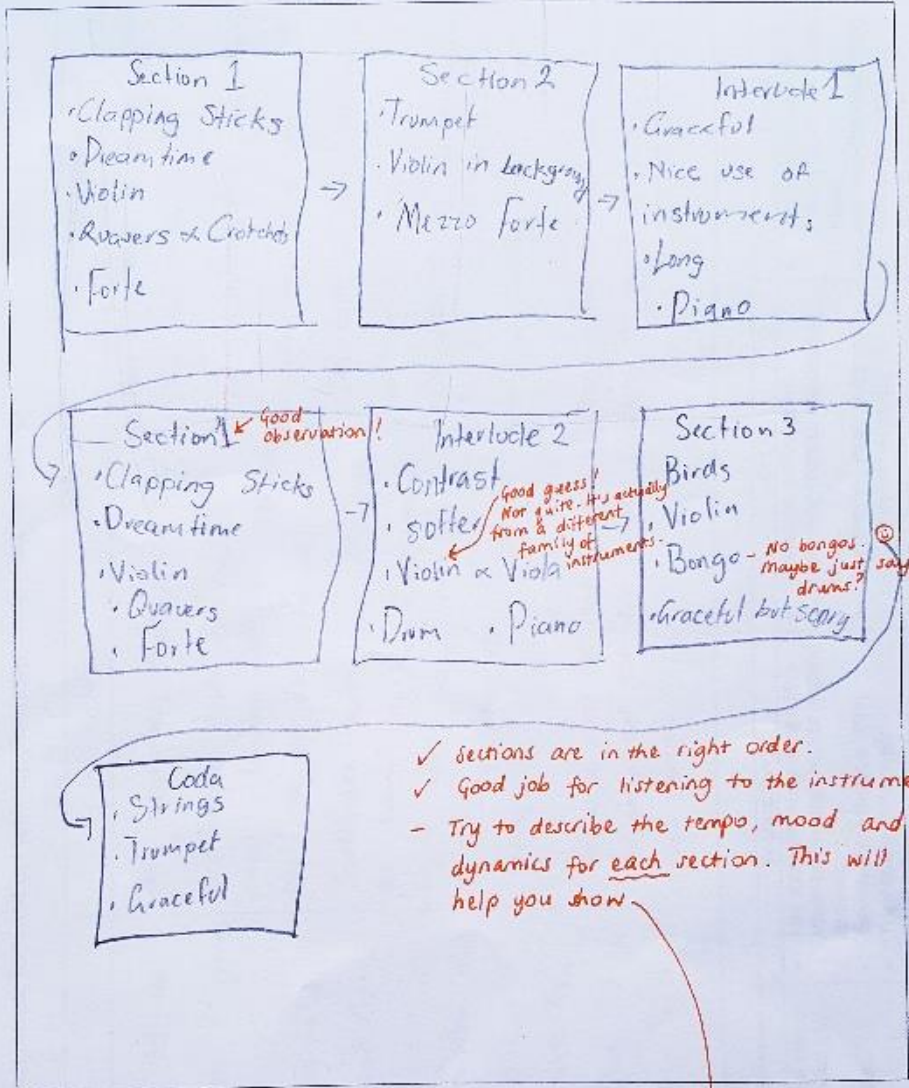
concert.

*Well done for identifying the important points, [redacted]!*

*This is a great explanation. I love how you used your own words to tell the story.*

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried to explain why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>A lot of information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Some information may be missing or incorrect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly explained why the composer wrote the piece.</li> <li>Very complete explanation.</li> </ul>

2) Draw a listening map of the first six minutes of the piece (from 0:00 to about 6:16).  
Listen for different sections.



	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Listening Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not include a listening map.</li> <li>Listening skills not demonstrated yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had many errors (e.g. sections were missing or in the wrong order).</li> <li>Listening skills are beginning to develop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map was included but it had some errors.</li> <li>Listening skills are developing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening map contained all important sections and had very few or no errors.</li> <li>Good listening skills.</li> </ul>



3) Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to describe the positives, negatives and interesting aspects of *Kakadu*. Try to focus on the musical elements of the piece (for example, tempo, dynamics, mood, form and instruments). Remember to use music terminology.

	Plus	Minus	Interesting
Musical Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I love the contrasts of the different sections because it gives dynamics</li> <li>The violin part is great because it gives a rest from the other sections</li> <li>The beginning captivates the audience</li> <li>The piece is wonderful because it gives a lot of emotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The beginning sound is blurry</li> <li>Sculthorpe could have put a pause between different sections so it is not so crowded</li> <li>Sculthorpe could have left out the drums in the bird part so it was more clear</li> <li>It is very long so it is quite boring</li> </ul> <p>This is a great PMi chart, [redacted]! Your comments are thoughtful and you have provided a reason for most of your opinions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The beginning is scary but hooks the audience</li> <li>It is interesting how the instruments die out</li> <li>The birds are interesting element</li> <li>The choice of instruments for the whole piece</li> </ul> <p>Your comments are thoughtful and you have provided a reason for most of your opinions.</p>

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Musical Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Did not describe the music.</li> <li>Did not use any music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had some difficulty using a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music a little.</li> <li>Tried to use some music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music quite well.</li> <li>Used some correct music terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very able to use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to respond to music.</li> <li>Described the music well.</li> <li>Used correct music terminology most of the time or all of the time.</li> </ul>

4) Use this template to show what your good copy will look like.

Pic Kakadu

Title

Composer

Pic Kakadu

Q.1

L.M

P M I

Peter Sculthorpe


Cockatoo

*This looks easy to understand.*

	Just learning	Getting there	Got it	Expert
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little attention to presentation.</li> <li>• Too simple or too difficult to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some attention to presentation.</li> <li>• Good try at being creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good presentation.</li> <li>• Creative and easy to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good presentation.</li> <li>• Attractive, creative and very easy to understand.</li> </ul>




Sample of the same student's final music project submission from Term A.



# Kakadu

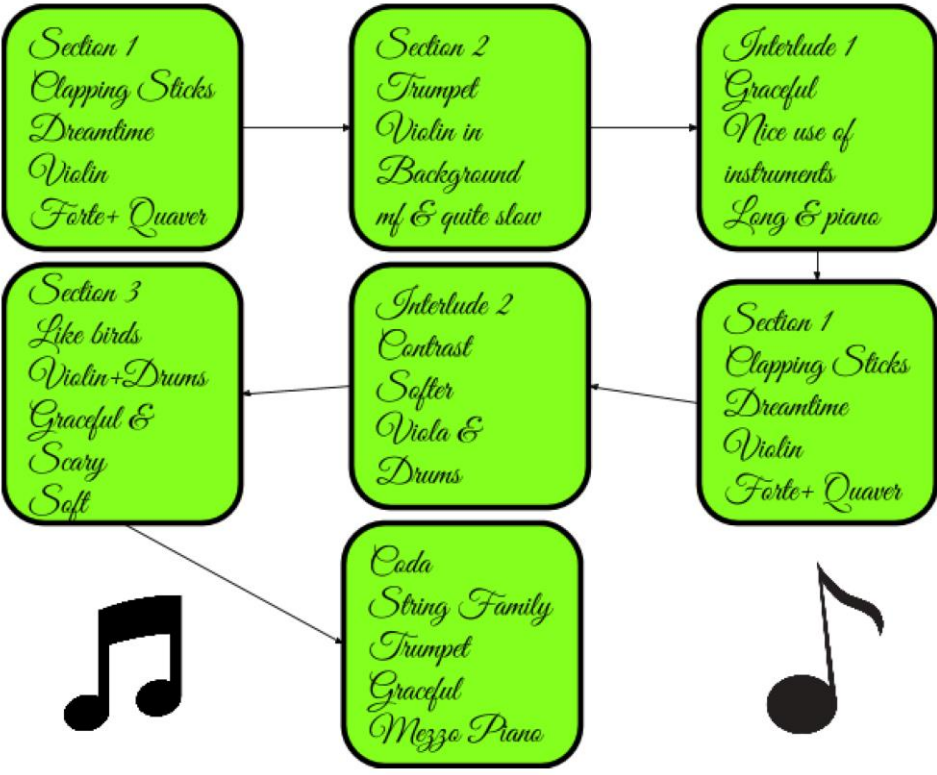
By Peter Sculthorpe





## How it all started

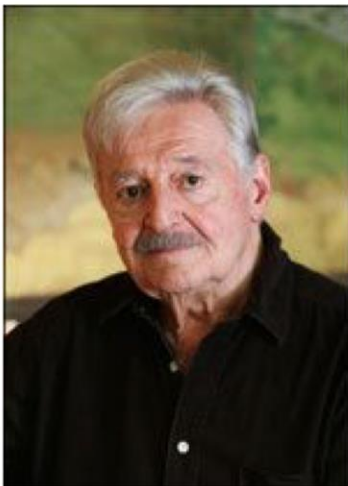
Peter Sculthorpe was at his desk one night when the phone rang. Manny Papper asked him if he could write a piece of music for his wife's 60th birthday but Sculthorpe was way too busy. Every time Sculthorpe said no Papper put the price up. After feeling embarrassed Sculthorpe asked about Papper's wife and after talking for a while he said yes. Papper had one condition : that it had some Australian feel and that it had a chance of being put in a concert.



```
graph TD; S1[Section 1  
Clapping Sticks  
Dreamtime  
Violin  
Forte+ Quaver] --> S2[Section 2  
Trumpet  
Violin in  
Background  
mf & quite slow]; S2 --> I1[Interlude 1  
Graceful  
Nice use of  
instruments  
Long & piano]; I1 --> S3[Section 1  
Clapping Sticks  
Dreamtime  
Violin  
Forte+ Quaver]; S3 --> I2[Interlude 2  
Contrast  
Softer  
Viola &  
Drums]; I2 --> S4[Section 3  
Like birds  
Violin+Drums  
Graceful &  
Scary  
Soft]; S4 --> C[Coda  
String Family  
Trumpet  
Graceful  
Mezzo Piano];
```



<i>Plus</i>	<i>Minus</i>	<i>Interesting</i>
<i>I love the contrast of the different sections because it gives dynamics</i>	<i>The beginning is not nice because the sound is blurry and chaotic</i>	<i>The beginning is scary but hooks the audience</i>
<i>The violin part is great because it gives a sense of relief from the other sections</i>	<i>Sculthorpe could have put a pause between sections so it isn't crowded</i>	<i>It is interesting how the instruments die out</i>
<i>The beginning captivates the audience because it has a variety of instruments</i>	<i>Sculthorpe could have left out the drums in the bird part to make it distinct</i>	<i>The birds are interesting</i>
<i>The piece is wonderful because it gives a lot of emotion</i>	<i>It is very long so it gets quite boring</i>	<i>The choice of instruments for the whole piece is interesting</i>

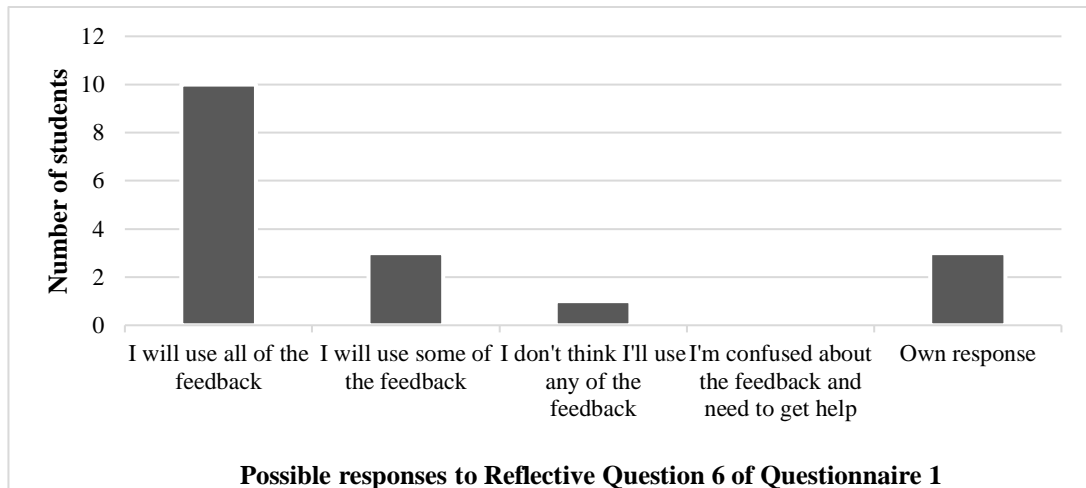




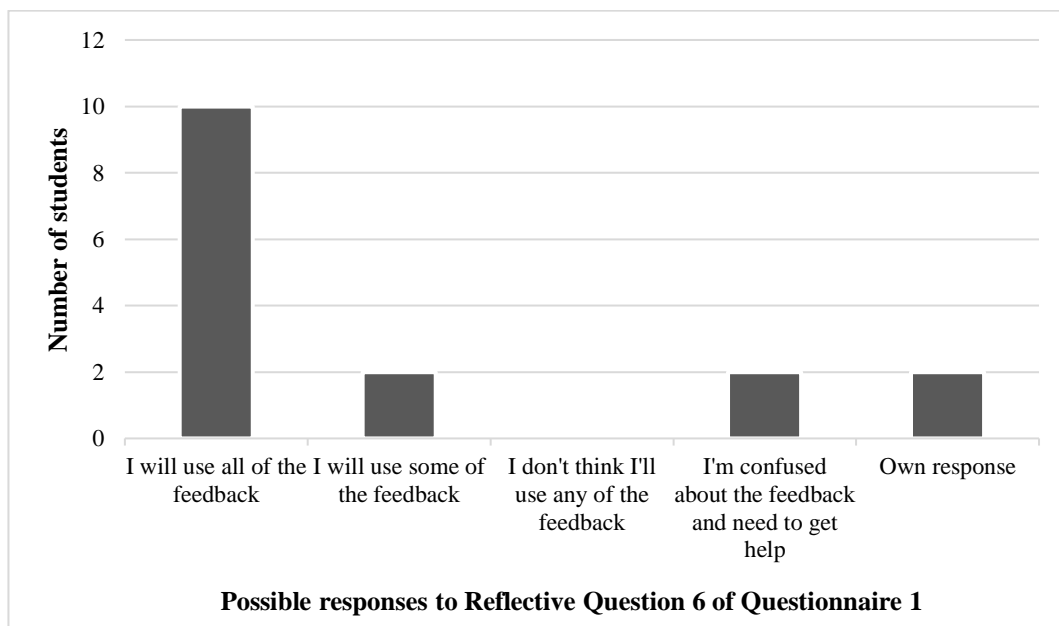
## Appendix I

### Graphs Showing Students' Responses to Reflective Question 6 of 'Questionnaire 1'

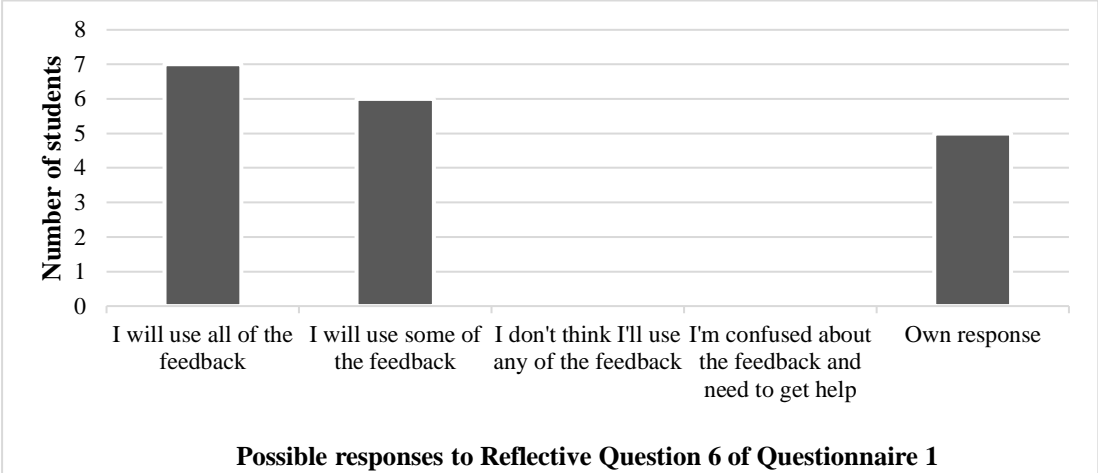
Student responses indicating how they would use written individual feedback  
(School A, Term A).



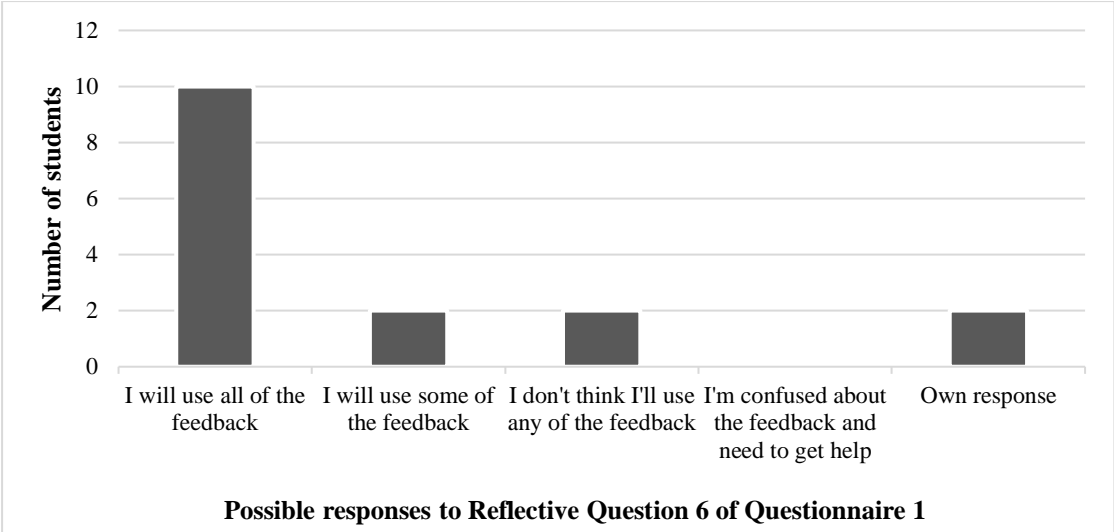
Student responses indicating how they would use written individual feedback  
(School B, Term A).



Student responses indicating how they would use written whole-class feedback (School A, Term B).



Student responses indicating how they would use written whole-class feedback (School B, Term B).



## Appendix J

### Sample Analysis of Artefacts

A sample data display showing how a student used written individual feedback from their draft music project component in their final music project submission (Term A).

<b>Tanisha – Term A</b>					
	Item 1 (Title/Composer)	Item 2 (Why)	Item 3 (Listening Map)	Item 4 (PMI Chart)	Item 5 (Layout)
<b>Feedback on draft music project component</b>		Good start, Tanisha. Why did the man on the phone want Peter to write the music? Why didn't Peter want to accept the job at first? What made him change his mind?	Good description of tempo, mood and instruments. What was the dynamic like? Try to include this information in <u>each</u> section. It will help you show better listening skills.  This is fine. Keep it as it is. Good observation!  Good guess but it's not from the brass family! 😊 Have another listen to the music. See what you think!	Maybe double-check this.  Do you think this matches the idea of Kakadu?  Good start. These sections just need one or two more points.	
<b>Colour code - How student used feedback in final music project submission</b>					
	Fully used				
	Partially used				
	Not used				
	Deleted original work				

A sample data display showing how a student used written whole-class feedback from their draft music project component in their final music project submission (Term B).

Ivy					
	Item 1 (Title/Composer)	Item 2 (Why)	Item 3 (Listening Map)	Item 4 (PMI Chart)	Item 5 (Layout)
Feedback on draft (applicable to student)			Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.	Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word "because". This will help you show better thinking.	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Feedback on draft (not applicable to student)	There were some mistakes here. Double-check this carefully.	Check that you have all the important points and the correct sequence of events. Try listening to the radio show or reading the "Why did George Gershwin..." document on Google Classroom again.	If you used the word "medium" or "moderate" in your listening map, please be more specific. Do you mean medium tempo or dynamics?	Check that your points make sense. Try reading each point out loud or asking a friend what they think.  Try to write about different things (for example, instruments, tune and dynamics). Good PMI charts described a few different musical elements.  Make sure you have 3-4 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.	You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.


  

Colour code - How student used feedback in final music project submission	
	Used
	Partially used
	Not used
	Deleted original work

# Appendix K

## Information Letters and Consent Forms


Information letter and consent form provided to the Principals in this study.




*Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools*

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31 January 2016



Dear ,

**INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

HREC Project Number:	RDHU-03-16
Project Title:	<i>Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools</i>
Principal Investigator:	Dr Jennifer Howell
Student Researcher:	Kimberley Goh
Version Number:	1
Version Date:	31/01/2016

We are seeking to undertake a research study at  in relation to how Year Five and Year Six music students receive and use teacher feedback. Our project is entitled *Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools*.

Currently, limited knowledge is available on how primary students respond to teacher feedback. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring how Year Five and Year Six students reflect on and respond to written teacher feedback during the completion of music history/appreciation projects. We anticipate that findings from this research will assist primary school teachers in empowering their students with the skills they need to use feedback more effectively.

Your participation in this research would consist of:

1. Giving consent for twelve students to complete four written reflections on feedback. Reflections will be completed during music lessons as part of the normal Term 2-3 music program. Each reflection will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.
2. Giving consent for twelve students to have their work (i.e. draft and final music projects) copied and analysed for research purposes. Music projects will be completed as part of the normal Term 2-3 music program.
3. Giving consent for twelve students to participate in two recorded interviews that will be conducted by Kimberley Goh. One interview will take place in Term 2 and the second will take place in Term 3. Students will be withdrawn from their classroom to participate in these interviews at a time negotiated with their classroom teacher. Each interview will be limited to 20 minutes to minimise any inconvenience. Interviews will be conducted in a room negotiated with you which considers the students.
4. Giving consent for observations to be made of twelve students, for example, questions or comments posed by students about the feedback they received.

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Principal information sheet and consent form, Version 1, 31/01/2016 Page 1 of 3

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Electronic data will be password-protected and hard copy data will be in locked storage. The information we collect in this study will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for seven years after the research has ended and then it will be destroyed in accordance with Curtin University's data management plan requirements. The results of this research will be used by Kimberley Goh to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy at Curtin University. It may also be presented at conferences or published in professional journals. Students will not be identified in any results that are published or presented as pseudonyms will be used to protect their identities.

Non-participation in the study will not have any bias and/or impact on students' grades and regular learning. If your permission is obtained, Kimberley Goh will manage the administration and collection of information letters and consent forms from students and their parents/carers. Kimberley Goh will hold the dual role of teacher and researcher throughout this study. However, she will ensure that she negotiates these roles in an ethical and professional way by drawing on her previous experience as a teacher-researcher.

We are attaching a consent form which we ask you to sign and return to us if you are willing to allow this research study to proceed. Please note that the school is free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. If you have questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Dr Jennifer Howell: [REDACTED]

Dr Rebecca Walker: [REDACTED]

Kimberley Goh: [REDACTED]

This project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: RDHU-03-16). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone who not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Kind regards,

**Dr Jennifer Howell**  
Principal Investigator / Supervisor

**Dr Rebecca Walker**  
Co-Supervisor

**Kimberley Goh**  
Student Researcher

**Principal / Head of Primary Consent Form**

HREC Project Number:	RDHU-03-16
Project Title:	<i>Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools</i>
Principal Investigator:	Dr Jennifer Howell
Student Researcher:	Kimberley Goh
Version Number:	1
Version Date:	31/01/2016

I have read the information statement version listed above and I understand its contents.

I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of this research project.

I give my consent for the researcher to conduct the study with students of Year Five and Year Six, should parent/carer permission be obtained.

I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I agree to the school's participation in the study as outlined to me.

I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

Principal / Head of Primary Name:	
Principal / Head of Primary Signature:	
Date:	

**Declaration by researcher:** I have supplied an Information Letter and Consent Form to the Principal / Head of Primary who has signed above, and believe that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of this project.

Researcher Name:	
Researcher Signature:	
Date:	

Information letter and consent form provided to students and parents/carers in this study.



*Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools*

8 March 2016

Dear Parent/Carer and Student,

**INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

HREC Project Number:	RDHU-03-16
Project Title:	<i>Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools</i>
Principal Investigator:	Dr Jennifer Howell
Student Researcher:	Kimberley Goh
Version Number:	1
Version Date:	31/01/2016

**Tell us what you think!**

We are inviting you to take part in a research study at [redacted] that will explore how primary school students respond to teacher feedback. Before you decide whether you would like to or not it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. If you do not understand anything just ask us.

**Who are we?**

Our names are Jennifer Howell, Rebecca Walker and Kimberley Goh. Kimberley Goh is doing this study as part of her Doctor of Philosophy degree. Here are our contact details:

Dr Jennifer Howell: [redacted]  
Dr Rebecca Walker: [redacted]  
Kimberley Goh: [redacted]

**What are we doing?**

At the moment, we do not know much about how primary school students respond to teacher feedback. We hope that this research will provide us with more information about how Year Five and Year Six students respond to written teacher feedback as they complete music history/appreciation projects. We hope that findings from this research will help teachers become better at giving feedback to students.

**What will you have to do?**

As a student, we would like you to:

1. Complete four written reflections on feedback. Each reflection will take about 15 minutes to complete. You will complete these reflections during your normal classroom music lessons. Everyone in your class will participate in these reflection activities so it will not require any extra work or time from you.
2. Allow your work (i.e. draft and final music projects) to be copied and analysed for research purposes. You will complete these music projects as part of the normal Term 2-3 music program.
3. Take part in two interviews with Kimberley Goh. You will be withdrawn from your classroom to participate in these interviews at a suitable time. Each interview will take 20 minutes so that you are not away from your class for too long. We



will make an audio recording of these interviews to make sure we collect accurate data and some notes may be taken during the interview. After the interviews, we will type up the recording. The first interview will take place in Term 2 and the second interview will take place in Term 3. Interviews will be held in a room in the school where you feel comfortable.

4. Be observed by Kimberley Goh during music lessons. For example, she might make notes about how you respond to feedback or questions you ask about the feedback you receive.

Apart from giving up some of your classroom time to take part in two interviews, you will not suffer any risk or inconvenience if you choose to take part in this study. Also, your responses to questions and feedback will not affect the relationship you have with your teacher.

#### What will we ask you about?

We are interested in:

- What you think about the feedback you receive at school
- What you do when you receive feedback

#### What will happen to the information we collect from you?

All the information we collect from you will be coded with a fake name to protect your real identity. This information will be stored in locked storage or on a password-protected device during the study. After the study has ended, this information will be kept safely at Curtin University for seven years and then it will be destroyed following Curtin University's data management plan requirements.

At the end of the study, Kimberley Goh will use the information we have collected from you and other students to write a thesis for her Doctor of Philosophy at Curtin University. Results from the study may also be presented at conferences or published in journals. People who hear about the research will not know what you said or did because we will use a fake name to protect your identity. These people will have access to the information we collect in this research: Jennifer Howell, Rebecca Walker, Kimberley Goh and the Curtin University Ethics Committee.

#### Do I have to take part in this study?

No. It is your choice to take part or not. You do not have to agree if you do not want to. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay, you can leave the study. You do not have to give us a reason; just tell us that you want to stop. If you choose not to take part or start and then stop the study, it won't affect your learning, grades or relationship with your teacher.

Parents/carers, we would encourage you to talk about the research with your child. If you as a student would like to take part in this study, and if you as a parent/carer are willing to allow your child to participate, please complete and return the attached consent form to Kimberley Goh.

This project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: RDHU-03-16). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone who is not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Kind regards,

**Dr Jennifer Howell**  
Principal Investigator / Supervisor

**Dr Rebecca Walker**  
Co-Supervisor

**Kimberley Goh**  
Student Researcher

*Student and parent/carer information sheet and consent form, Version 2, 31/01/2016*

Page 2 of 3

**Student and Parent/Carer Consent Form**

HREC Project Number:	RDHU-03-16
Project Title:	<i>Written feedback: Exploring the reflections of upper primary music students at two Western Australian schools</i>
Principal Investigator:	Dr Jennifer Howell
Student Researcher:	Kimberley Goh
Version Number:	1
Version Date:	31/01/2016

- I have read the information statement version listed above and I understand what it says.
- I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this research project.
- I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
- I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

Student Name:	
Student Signature:	
Date:	

- I have read the information statement version listed above and I understand its contents.
- I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of the research project and have talked about this with my child.
- I voluntarily consent for my child to take part in this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
- I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

Parent/Carer Name:	
Parent/Carer Signature:	
Date:	

**Declaration by researcher:** I have supplied an Information Letter and Consent Form to the student and parent/carers who have signed above, and believe that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of this project.

Researcher Name:	
Researcher Signature:	
Date:	

## Appendix L

### Data Displays Showing Student Use of Written Individual Feedback

Data displays showing how students used written individual feedback items (School A, Term A).

#### Fully used

Student	Feedback item
Alison	Maybe double-check spelling. 😊
Barack	Do you know where to find this information, Barack?  Good start but this needs more detailed information. Maybe read “Peter Sculthorpe - Interview Transcript” again. (It’s on Google Classroom.)
Bardon	Who gave these instructions? Maybe start this as a new sentence.
Charlie	Hmm...not quite! Maybe Google “Australian bicentennial”. 😊
Curry	Good guess! Sculthorpe actually used another family of instruments to create the bird sounds.  Good comments here. You talked about the instruments, mood, form and dynamics. What do you think about the tempo? Did it match the idea of Kakadu?  This looks clear and easy to understand. I wonder if adding some pictures of Kakadu might help to make it more interesting.
Daniel	Great “mood” words! Try to do this for each section.  - Maybe try to include information about the mood, tempo and dynamics you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show good listening skills. 😊  Do you mean soft?
Dove	Nearly! Just check the spelling of the last part.  Did he actually go up to Peter?
Jake	Maybe put Peter’s name here so that we know who you’re talking about.  How was it informative?  This looks easy to understand, Jake. I wonder if adding some pictures of Kakadu might make your good copy look more interesting?
Jonathan	Maybe join these sentences up.  Which family do you think the solo instrument comes from?  These two points seem to contradict or disagree with each other. Maybe choose one and change the other.

	<p>This looks easy to understand. I wonder if you will be able to fit your listening map on this page? Do you mean PMI chart?</p>
Lizzie	<p>his?</p> <p>Not quite correct. Try to read “Peter Sculthorpe-Interview Transcript” again (it’s on Google Classroom). ☺</p> <p>(Comment on scrap sheet of working out paper) Yes! Put this in your listening map. ☺</p>
Madeline	<p>Madeline, this presentation is really creative but you seem to be missing a <u>listening map</u> of the music. Do you have this on another sheet of paper? Don’t forget to put it in your good copy! ☺</p>
Michelle	<p>Maybe double-check spelling. ☺</p> <p>price?</p> <p>The order of the sections is nearly there! Try to keep it to 5-7 sections. Maybe think about which two you could combine?</p> <p>Would they really?</p> <p>I’m not sure if this is the right word to use. Could you explain what you mean a little more?</p>
Nels	<p>Do you mean “his”?</p> <p>Good. What were the dynamics like? Mostly loud or soft?</p> <p>Good guess! It’s not the clarinet but it’s from the same family. ☺ Maybe just say wind instrument?</p> <p>The bird noise wasn’t made by a wind instrument. Have another listen to the music. See what you think!</p> <p>Dynamic?</p> <p>-One section is missing between B and C.</p>
Olive	<p>Maybe double-check the spelling. ☺</p>
Russell	<p>Maybe double-check spelling. ☺</p> <p>Will you be adding any pictures (e.g. of Kakadu) in your good copy?</p>
Serena	<p>This answer has all the important points, Serena. If you want to put in a little more detail, maybe read “Peter Sculthorpe-Interview Transcript” again.</p> <p>Good guess but the main instrument isn’t from the string family. Have another listen to the music-see if you can tell which family the main instrument is from. ☺</p>
Tanisha	<p>Good description of tempo, mood and instruments. What was the dynamic like? Try to include this information in <u>each</u> section. It will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>This is fine. Keep it as it is. Good observation!</p>

	<p>Good guess but it's not from the brass family! ☺ Have another listen to the music. See what you think!</p> <p>Maybe double-check this.</p> <p>Good start. These sections just need one or two more points.</p>
Tara	<p>Interesting! I wonder if keeping the P,M and I boxes in the same sort of area would make it easier to understand?</p>

### Partially used

Student	Feedback item
Alison	
Barack	
Bardon	
Charlie	<p>What was the <u>tempo</u> like? Try to include all this information for each section. It will help you show better listening skills. ☺</p>
Curry	
Daniel	<p>This is a good start, Daniel. I think you will be able to find more detailed information by reading "Peter Sculthorpe - Interview Transcript" on Google Classroom. Maybe aim to write another five sentences?</p> <p>Good job for using words like "mood" and "dynamics"! I think you could also talk about "tempo". For example, what tempo did the piece have at the start? Do you think this matched the idea of Kakadu?</p>
Dove	
Jake	<p>This is not quite the same as the other Section B because Peter Sculthorpe changes the tune and uses a different main instrument. Try listening to the music again. See if you can tell what the instrument is.</p>
Jonathan	<p>This answer has all the important bits, Jonathan. If you want to put in more detail, maybe read "Peter Sculthorpe - Interview Transcript" again. (It's on Google Classroom.)</p>
Lizzie	<p>These two sections have good descriptions! They describe the mood, dynamics and instruments. Do the other sections describe the mood, dynamics and instruments too?</p>
Madeline	<p>Good job for talking about the mood and instruments! I think you could also talk about the tempo and dynamics. For example, what was the tempo (speed) of the music? Did it match the idea of 'Kakadu'?</p>
Michelle	
Nels	<p>-Try to include information about the tempo, dynamics and mood you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>You're on the right track, Nels! Here are a few more ideas: Did the introduction have a fast or slow tempo? Do you think this matched the idea of Kakadu? Did the piece start loud or soft? Do you think this was a good idea?</p>
Olive	
Russell	

Serena	-Maybe try to include information about the tempo and dynamics you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show good listening skills.
Tanisha	Good start, Tanisha. Why did the man on the phone want Peter to write the music? Why didn't Peter want to accept the job at first? What made him change his mind?
Tara	Good start, Tara! Did Peter want to accept the job at first? What made him change his mind? Did Manny have any special instructions for Peter?  You have listened very carefully to the music but I think you have too many sections here. There are only about 5-7 "important" or "main" sections altogether. For example, (3) (4) (3) sound quite similar. Maybe they could be considered one section?

### Did not use

Student	Feedback item
Alison	This answer has most of the important bits, Alison. If you want to put in more detail, maybe read "Peter Sculthorpe - Interview Transcript" (on Google Classroom).  Good description of mood! What was the tempo like? Dynamics? Try to include this information in each section.  Good start, Alison! Here are a few more ideas: Did the introduction have a loud or soft dynamic? Do you think this was a good choice? Did the introduction have a fast or slow tempo? Do you think this matched the idea of Kakadu?
Barack	- Try to include information about the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show good listening skills.  Good job for talking about the instruments. I think you could also talk about the tempo and dynamics. For example, was the introduction loud or soft? Do you think this was a good choice? Did the introduction have a fast or slow tempo? Did this match the idea of Kakadu?
Bardon	- Maybe try to include information about the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show good listening skills.  Good job for talking about the "mood" and "instruments". I think you could also use the words "dynamics" and "tempo". Did you like Sculthorpe's choices?
Charlie	
Curry	Maybe double-check this. ☺  Do you mean cor anglais?
Daniel	
Dove	✓ Good "mood" words like "frightening" and "peaceful". (Try to do this for all the sections.)  Great start, Dove! You have some super ideas here. Here's another one: What was the tempo of the music? Do you think it matched the idea of 'Kakadu'?  This looks easy to understand. I wonder if adding some pictures to the listening map might help to make it look more interesting?

Jake	Good job for talking about the “instruments” Sculthorpe used. I think you could also use the words “tempo” and “dynamics”. For example, did the introduction start with a loud, medium or soft dynamic? Do you think this was a good choice?
Jonathan	Dynamics? Tempo? ☺ Which instruments created the bird sound?
Lizzie	
Madeline	
Michelle	Good description of mood (spooky) and instruments. I think you could also describe the tempo and dynamics. Try to do this for all the sections. It will help you show better listening skills. Good job for commenting on the instruments and mood. I think you could also talk about the tempo and dynamics. For example, did the introduction have a fast or slow tempo? Do you think this matches the idea of Kakadu?
Nels	Did the anaesthesiologist have any special instructions for Peter? This looks easy to understand. I wonder if adding some pictures would help to make it look more interesting?
Olive	I’m not sure if they were friends at first? -Try to include some information about the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in each section. This will help you show good listening skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the tempo (speed) of the music? Do you think it matched the idea of Kakadu?</li> <li>• What instrument created the sound of a flock of birds? Did it sound real or fake?</li> </ul>
Russell	Mood? Mood? I don’t think there were any congas. Maybe just write drums instead? ☺ I wonder if you heard a solo instrument somewhere in the piece? Which family do you think it comes from? Can you explain why?
Serena	
Tanisha	
Tara	What was the tempo like? What sort of dynamic (volume level) did it have? Try to include this information in each section. It will help you show good listening skills. ☺ You’re on the right track, Tara! I like how you talked about the instruments, mood and dynamics. Maybe you could also comment on the tempo. For example, did the introduction have a fast or slow tempo? Do you think it matched the idea of Kakadu?

**Deleted original work**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Feedback item</b>
Alison	
Barack	
Bardon	
Charlie	The last 3 points are about the calm mood of the music. I wonder if you might have some other ideas to add to this section?
Curry	
Daniel	
Dove	
Jake	
Jonathan	
Lizzie	I'm not quite sure what you mean here?
Madeline	
Michelle	Very close! It's from the same family as the oboe.
Nels	
Olive	
Russell	
Serena	I'm not quite sure what you mean. Could you explain this a little more?
Tanisha	Do you think this matches the idea of Kakadu?
Tara	



Data displays showing how students used written individual feedback items (School B, Term A).

**Fully used**

Student	Feedback item
Alleana	Hmm...I'm not quite sure what this sentence means. Could you explain it a different way?
	You're on the right track, Alleana! Did Manny leave any special instructions for Peter Sculthorpe?
	Which section do you mean? Is it section 5 or 6?
Belle	This means the title of the piece. This means the name of the person who wrote the music.
Chloe	Why did Peter say no at first?
Ducky	Do you mean "he"?
	Good observation. Can you explain why you think this is a minus?
Henry	Did he say yes at first?
	This explanation is pretty complete, Henry! Just check that little question above.
	Mood?
Ivy	-Try to describe the tempo, dynamics, mood and any instruments you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show better listening skills.
Izzy	Did Manny leave any special instructions for Sculthorpe?
Jeff	Who did he ask to write the piece of music? Did that person want to write the music at first?
	Good start, Jeff! Try reading "Peter Sculthorpe-Interview Transcript" again. This might help to give you more detailed information.
	Was it fast or slow?
	Was it fast or slow?
	-Do you think this matches the idea of Kakadu?
Jeremy	You have summarised the main points well, Jeremy! If you want to, you could add more detailed information. For example, Why did Sculthorpe say "no" at first? Did the anaesthesiologist leave any special instructions for Sculthorpe?
	Great! Were you able to pick out any particular instruments?
	What was the mood like?
	Can you explain a little more here?
Katie	Good start, Katie! Did Peter want to write the music at first? Why or why not? What made him change his mind?

Neymar	
Sakura	Nearly! Double-check the spelling. 😊
Samantha	No Bongos. 😊 Maybe just say drums?  This is a great PMI chart, Samantha! Your comments are thoughtful and you have provided a reason for most of your opinions.
Steph	Nearly! Double-check spelling. 😊  Maybe put Peter Sculthorpe's name here.  You have the important points here, Steph. Did Peter want to write the music at first? Why or why not?  Good comment. Can you explain why you think this is a "plus"?  Good comments here, Steph! Try to give a reason for your opinions. This will show a more thoughtful response.
Steve	Can you explain what you mean a little more here?  Will you be adding some pictures in your good copy?
Zelda	What was the tempo (speed) like?  I think a section is missing here. Try listening to the music again.  Not quite! But it's from the same family. 😊 Maybe just say wind instrument.

### Partially used

Student	Feedback item
Alleana	The first 2 points in this section are really good because you have given a reason for your opinion. Try to do the same thing for all the comments in the 'Plus' and 'Minus' sections.
Belle	
Chloe	Did she go to Kakadu before or after Sculthorpe wrote the piece?  Good start, Chloe. Try to explain a reason for your opinions. This will show a more thoughtful response. For example, why do you think Sculthorpe should have made the music sound more modern?
Ducky	
Henry	-Try to include a "mood" word for each section.
Ivy	This is an excellent section, Ivy. You made good comments and gave a reason for every single point you made. Super! Try to do the same for the "Minus" section too.
Izzy	✓ Good comment! You explained a reason for your point of view. Try to do the same for the rest.

Jeff	-Try to describe the tempo (speed), dynamics (loud or soft) and instruments you hear in <u>each</u> section.  Great ideas here, Jeff. Try to give a reason for your opinions. This will help you show a more thoughtful response. For example, why do you think Sculthorpe should have put in a little silence?
Jeremy	-Try to describe the tempo, mood and dynamics for <u>each</u> section.
Katie	Try to describe the speed and volume level of each section. Maybe put it in small writing at the bottom of each box?
Neymar Sakura	You are on the right track, Neymar, but I think there are too many sections here. (There should be 5-7 sections.) If you want to, come and see me - we can try working through it together. 😊
Samantha	-Try to describe the tempo, mood and dynamics for <u>each</u> section. This will help you show good listening skills.
Steph	This is a great description! You have pointed out the tempo, mood, dynamics and instruments. Try to do the same for the other sections. This will help you show good listening skills.
Steve	Did Manny leave any special instructions for Sculthorpe?  -Try to describe the tempo (speed), dynamics (loud or soft) and instruments you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show great listening skills.  Do you think this matches the idea of Kakadu?  You are on the right track, Steve! Try to give a reason or explanation for your opinions. This will help you show a more thoughtful response.
Zelda	-Try to describe the tempo, dynamics and mood of <u>each</u> section.

**Did not use**

Student	Feedback item
Alleana	-Maybe include the tempo for each section?
Belle	Good start, Belle. Go to Google Classroom and try re-reading “Peter Sculthorpe-Interview Transcript”. I think this will help you answer this question. If you need any extra help, come and ask. 😊  Good description! You described the speed, mood, instruments and “picture” of the section. Try to do the same for the other sections too.  I think a section might be missing between these two. Try listening to the music again - you are nearly there!  Tell what you liked about the music. Tell what you didn’t like about the music.  Did you find anything interesting?  Do you need some help with this, Belle? Come and see me if you do. 😊

	<p>Good start. Remember to include your PMI chart.</p>
Chloe	<p>Can you tell which family the “mysterious” sounding instrument is from? ☺</p> <p>-Maybe describe the tempo in each section too.</p>
Ducky	<p>Good explanation, Ducky. Did Manny leave any special instructions for Peter?</p> <p>Good description! How would you describe the dynamics?</p> <p>What family do you think the main instrument comes from? Maybe have another listen to the music? ☺</p> <p>-Try to describe the tempo, dynamics and instruments you hear in each section. This will help you show good listening skills.</p> <p>All good ideas here, Ducky! Try to give a reason for your comments. For example, why did you like the surprises in the music? Did it keep you interested or do you think it matched the surprising nature of Kakadu?</p>
Henry	<p>Mood?</p> <p>Do you think this matches the idea of Kakadu?</p>
Ivy	
Izzy	<p>Good! Could you pick out any particular instrument?</p> <p>-Try to describe the instruments and tempo you hear in <u>each</u> section. This will help you show better listening skills.</p>
Jeff	
Jeremy	
Katie	<p>Nearly! Double-check spelling. ☺</p> <p>Here are some more ideas: What tempo (speed) did the introduction have? Do you think it was a good choice? Did you like the changes of sections? Did it match the idea of Kakadu?</p>
Neymar	<p>Good start, Neymar. Did Peter Sculthorpe want to write the music at first? Why not? What made him change his mind? Try reading “Peter Sculthorpe-Interview Transcript” again. It may give you more information.</p> <p>Do you think it matched the idea of Kakadu?</p> <p>Can you explain why you think this is a “minus”?</p>
Sakura	<p>If you want me to take a quick look at it once you are done, just ask. ☺</p>
Samantha	
Steph	
Steve	
Zelda	<p>Why did he refuse at first?</p> <p>Good start, Zelda. You have most of the main points here. Did Manny Papper leave any instructions for Sculthorpe?</p> <p>Why do you think this is a “minus”? Try to explain your reasons. This will help you show a thoughtful response.</p>

**Deleted original work**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Feedback item</b>
Alleana	Good guess! The main instrument is actually from another “family”. 😊 Try listening again-see what you think!
Belle	
Chloe	
Ducky	
Henry	Good guess! Not quite correct. Try having another listen to the music. It actually belongs to another family of instruments. 😊
Ivy	
Izzy	
Jeff	
Jeremy	
Katie	
Neymar	
Sakura	
Samantha	Good guess! Not quite. It’s actually from a different family of instruments.
Steph	
Steve	
Zelda	

## Appendix M

### Data Displays Showing Student Use of Written Whole-Class Feedback

Data displays showing how students used applicable items of written whole-class feedback (School A, Term B).

#### Fully used

Student	Feedback item
Alison	We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.
Barack	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Bardon	
Charlie	
Curry	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Daniel	<p>We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Dove	<p>There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling and see if you have missed any words.</p> <p>We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.</p>
Jake	<p>We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.</p> <p>Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>

Jonathan	<p>We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.</p> <p>If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.</p> <p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).</p> <p>Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.</p>
Lizzie	<p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Madeline	<p>There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling and see if you have missed any words.</p>
Michelle	<p>Double-check your spelling.</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Nels	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood).</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Olive	<p>We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.</p>
Russell	
Serena	<p>We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.</p> <p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).</p>
Tanisha	
Tara	<p>Double-check your spelling.</p>

	<p>Check that your sentences make sense. Try reading each sentence out loud or asking a friend what they think.</p>
	<p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>

### Partially used

Student	Feedback item
Alison	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Barack	
Bardon	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Charlie	
Curry	
Daniel	
Dove	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Jake	
Jonathan	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Lizzie	
Madeline	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Michelle	
Nels	<p>Check that your sentences make sense. Try reading each sentence out loud or asking a friend what they think.</p> <p>Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word “because”. This will help you show better thinking.</p>
Olive	
Russell	
Serena	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Tanisha	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Tara	



**Did not use**

Student	Feedback item
Alison	
Barack	You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.
Bardon	Make sure you have 2-3 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.
Charlie	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Curry	
Daniel	You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.
Dove	
Jake	You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.
Jonathan	
Lizzie	We don't know when Ira showed George the newspaper, so we shouldn't say "Next day" or "A few days later". Change this to "One day..." or "Sometime later" to be more accurate.
Madeline	
Michelle	
Nels	
Olive	<p>If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.</p> <p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood).</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Russell	<p>If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.</p> <p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood).</p> <p>Make sure you have 3-4 points in each section of your PMI chart. If you need more ideas, look at the image on Google Classroom or talk to someone else.</p>

	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Serena	You may need two or more slides for your listening map. I don't think all the sections will fit on one slide.
Tanisha	
Tara	

Data displays showing how students used applicable items of written whole-class feedback (School B, Term B).

**Fully used**

Student	Feedback item
Alleana	
Belle	<p>There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling.</p> <p>If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.</p> <p>Try not to include additional information like “Interesting facts”. It’s a nice idea but you will not be marked on this. ☺</p> <p>You might need two or more slides for your listening map.</p>
Chloe	
Ducky	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>You might need two or more slides for your listening map.</p>
Henry	<p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Ivy	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word “because”. This will help you show better thinking.</p>
Izzy	
Jeff	
Jeremy	
Katie	<p>There were some mistakes here. Double-check your spelling.</p> <p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>You might need two or more slides for your listening map.</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Neymar	
Sakura	<p>Check the words you have used carefully. Some did not make sense (for example, accento, chorus, mute stick and paste).</p> <p>Try not to write about the same thing twice (for example, putting wah wah mute in “Plus” and “Minus”). Good PMI charts said something different for each point.</p> <p>Try not to include additional information like “Interesting facts”. It’s a nice idea but you will not be marked on this. ☺</p>

	You might need two or more slides for your listening map.
Samantha	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Steph	Check your facts (don't make things up). Listen to the radio show on Google Classroom to see if your explanation is correct.  Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.
Steve	If you used the word "medium" or "moderate" in your listening map, please be more specific. Do you mean medium tempo or dynamics?  Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Zelda	

### Partially used

Student	Feedback item
Alleana	
Belle	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Chloe	Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word "because". This will help you show better thinking.
Ducky	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Henry	
Ivy	
Izzy	Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.
Jeff	
Jeremy	If you used the word "medium" or "moderate" in your listening map, please be more specific. Do you mean medium tempo or dynamics?  Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word "because". This will help you show better thinking.  Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Katie	
Neymar	Check that your points make sense. Try reading each point out loud or asking a friend what they think.  Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.

Sakura	
Samantha	
Steph	
Steve	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>Check that your points make sense. Try reading each point out loud or asking a friend what they think.</p>
Zelda	Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word “because”. This will help you show better thinking.

### Did not use

Student	Feedback item
Alleana	<p>Check your facts (don't make things up). Listen to the radio show on Google Classroom to see if your explanation is correct.</p> <p>Check the words you have used carefully. Some did not make sense (for example, <i>accento</i>, <i>chorus</i>, <i>mute stick</i> and <i>paste</i>).</p>
Belle	Check the words you have used carefully. Some did not make sense (for example, <i>accento</i> , <i>chorus</i> , <i>mute stick</i> and <i>paste</i> ).
Chloe	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Ducky	<p>Describe the music that Gershwin wrote, not the performers (for example, you don't have to comment on Herbie Hancock's facial expression).</p> <p>Try not to write about the same thing twice (for example, putting <i>wah wah mute</i> in “Plus” and “Minus”). Good PMI charts said something different for each point.</p>
Henry	You might need two or more slides for your listening map.
Ivy	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Izzy	Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.
Jeff	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>Remember to give a reason for your opinion. Use the word “because”. This will help you show better thinking.</p>

	<p>Try to write about different things (for example, instruments, tune and dynamics). Good PMI charts described a few different musical elements.</p> <p>Try to include a picture on every slide. This will make the presentation more attractive.</p>
Jeremy	<p>Check that you have all the important points and the correct sequence of events. Try listening to the radio show or reading the “Why did George Gershwin...” document on Google Classroom again.</p>
Katie	
Neymar	<p>Check your facts (don’t make things up). Listen to the radio show on Google Classroom to see if your explanation is correct.</p> <p>If you have less than ten sections in your listening map, please listen to the music again to see what you have missed.</p> <p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes two <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>You might need two or more slides for your listening map.</p>
Sakura	<p>Check your facts (don’t make things up). Listen to the radio show on Google Classroom to see if your explanation is correct.</p>
Samantha	
Steph	
Steve	
Zelda	<p>Make sure <u>every</u> section in your listening map describes three <u>different</u> musical elements (for example, instruments, tempo and mood). This will help you show better listening skills.</p> <p>If you used the word “medium” or “moderate” in your listening map, please be more specific. Do you mean medium tempo or dynamics?</p>

## Appendix N

### Comparison of Student Groups: Term A and Term B

Data display comparing student groups in Term A and Term B (School A).

<b>Group</b>	<b>Written Individual Feedback (Term A)</b>	<b>Students who remained in group</b>	<b>Written Whole-Class Feedback (Term B)</b>
Group 1	Charlie Daniel Lizzie Madeline Serena Tanisha	Madeline Tanisha	Alison Curry Dove Jonathan Madeline Michelle Nels Tanisha Tara
Group 2	Barack Curry Jake Jonathan Michelle Nels Tara	Jake	Barack Bardon Daniel Jake Lizzie Serena
Group 3	Alison Bardon Dove Olive Russell	Olive Russell	Charlie Olive Russell

Data display comparing student groups in Term A and Term B (School B).

<b>Group</b>	<b>Written Individual Feedback (Term A)</b>	<b>Students who remained in group</b>	<b>Written Whole-Class Feedback (Term B)</b>
Group 1	Ivy Jeff Jeremy Samantha Steph Steve	Samantha Steph Steve	Katie Samantha Steph Steve
Group 2	Alleana Chloe Henry Izzy Katie Sakura Zelda	Henry Izzy Sakura	Belle Ducky Henry Ivy Izzy Jeremy Sakura
Group 3	Belle Ducky Neymar	Neymar	Alleana Chloe Jeff Neymar Zelda