

A Comparison of Teachers' Values and Perceptions in Sistema-inspired Programmes

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ABSTRACT

Within the context of Sistema and Sistema inspired programmes it is important to know whether the values, beliefs and experiences of teachers differ between and within programmes as this will impact on the effectiveness of programmes and the experiences of participating children. This research explored these issues comparing programmes in Canada, Colombia and Europe. Rating scales with 48 statements relating to values, pedagogic approaches, and desired outcomes for students were designed following a thematic analysis of preliminary interviews undertaken with 17 teachers from three programmes. Questionnaires were completed by 149 teachers from 34 Sistema-inspired programmes in Canada, Europe, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, England, Romania, Slovakia, Srebrenica, Switzerland, Wales and Colombia. Data were collected via Survey Monkey. Analysis of variance was used to analyse the data using SPSS. There were high levels of agreement for almost all statements but with significant differences and a wide spread of ratings for some. Colombian teachers responded more positively for almost all statements. All teachers agreed that their pupils enjoyed music. The findings highlighted areas of similarity and difference indicating the importance of these issues being considered in relation to teacher recruitment and continuing professional development.

KEYWORDS

Music education; perceptions; values; expectations; pedagogy; Sistema

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 1975 the phenomenon that is El Sistema (El Sistema, 2017a) began in Venezuela when the late Maestro Jose Antonio Abreu, a Venezuelan economist, politician, and musician started a programme with a small group of friends bringing more music where there was too little. Their first rehearsal in an underground garage has become something of a legend. The challenge became a concerted effort ‘to find an antidote to degradation and economic deprivation through an alternative offer that could be more attractive than gangs, drug dealing, and violence’ (Majno, 2012). This state-funded social and cultural programme, now consisting of a national system of youth and children’s orchestras and choirs, evolved over the ensuing 40 years. The orchestras and choirs are described (El Sistema, 2017b) as ‘social and personal life schools’ where children can cultivate ‘positive abilities and attitudes, and ethic, aesthetic and spiritual values’. Self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence, discipline, patience and commitment are all cultivated (El Sistema, 2017b). Young people learn about leadership, healthy competition, working towards goals and excellence, whilst ‘co-existing in a tolerant and friendly environment, which stimulates them towards a peace culture’ (El Sistema, 2017b).

Particularly over the last decade, since the appearance of the Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra at the Proms in the Royal Albert Hall in 2007, El Sistema has attracted growing interest and debate around the world in over 50 countries (Hallam and Hanke, 2012; Hallam, 2012a; Hallam, 2012b). Initially El Sistema was viewed largely positively (e.g. Govias, 2011; Tunstall, 2012). A literature review commissioned by Sistema Global (Creech et al, 2013; updated 2016) revealed key areas, methods, and potential new directions for El Sistema research including work on pedagogy. Interest from researchers and practitioners grew as programmes sought to measure their success; provide evidence to support funding applications; and to examine what changes, if any, needed to be made in the pedagogy and delivery of their programmes (Burns and Bewick, 2013; Harkins 2014; Robinson, 2015; Burns, 2016). The first critical book appeared in 2014 (Baker, 2014). This challenged the social nature of an orchestra and the pedagogical approaches employed. Much debate in the media and at conferences and seminars followed. A further worldwide review, *Playing for their Lives*, Tunstall and Booth (2016) reasserted the positive social impact of the programmes.

Sistema is not a franchise. Abreu actively encouraged those inspired by Sistema to develop their own programmes, relevant to their own contexts. Nevertheless, certain fundamental principles hold. Govias (2011) pointed out that social outcomes are at least of equal importance as the musical outcomes. Creech et al (2016) argued that Sistema inspired programmes are united in the aspiration to foster well-being and personal development amongst participants and provide musical opportunities for children who would not otherwise have been supported formally in developing their musical potential. But they also pointed out that there are different objectives - some focus on academic success, others on youth development; some differentiate between musical and social skills, others do not. Sistema Europe (2018) identified six programme principles: offering orchestral, vocal and other ensemble music activity as an agent of development, inclusion and integration; providing access for all young people, but particularly for those with the least resources and the greatest need; fostering stimulating learning environments which enable children to swiftly progress towards excellence,

facilitated by their starting young; ensuring high quality teaching that is immersive, intense and joyful, with peer learning and regular performances; maintaining regular, high frequency programme work, including multiple sessions/hours of activities per week; and deepening connections to community networks by developing the Venezuelan núcleo model in local contexts. Sistema Europe went on to argue that these principles are subject to continuous refinement and development and are not a mandatory requirement for membership of either the association or the network. El Sistema and Sistema-inspired programmes may therefore be thought of as dynamic programmes that are constantly evolving as programme leaders and teachers interact with young people and their communities, reflecting on how their programmes are implemented and learning from their own and each other's experiences.

At the same time as El Sistema was being founded, Kolb and Fry (1975) developed their experiential cycle of learning consisting of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Schön (1983) spoke of reflecting on an incident whilst it can still benefit that situation; while also reflecting on how practice can be developed after the event: 'We reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome' (Schön, 1983, p. 26). Others have pointed out the importance of understanding teachers' approaches and how their values, experiences and expectations influence their work (Sloboda and Davidson, 1996; Ward, 2004; Creech, 2008; Jaramillo, 2008; Booth, 2012; Mota and Figueiredo, 2012; Hallam and Creech, 2013).

The literature on teaching artists suggests that a large part of what is taught, either implicitly or explicitly, reflects who people are (Booth 2012). Each person is a product of their experiences to date. Reflecting on experiences may result in changes or reinforcement of ways of behaving and working. Furthermore, those reflections are informed by the individual's beliefs and values (Sloboda and Davidson, 1996; Ward, 2004; Creech, 2008; Jaramillo, 2008; Booth, 2009; Mota and Figueiredo, 2012; Hallam and Creech, 2013). Together, these affect how teachers teach and what their students learn. This is particularly important where teachers are part of a programme such as those inspired by El Sistema, which has its own values, expectations and ethos.

AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

This research aims to inform the way that programmes develop to enhance their efficacy. The research explored the values and perceptions of teachers engaged in Sistema-inspired programmes in Colombia, Canada and Europe, what was important to them and whether there were differences in teachers' responses between and within programmes in respect of pedagogic approaches and desired outcomes for students. Any differences might impact on the effectiveness of the programme and the experience of the participating children. The research questions were:

1. What are the values and perceptions of teachers engaged in Sistema-inspired programmes and what is important to them?
2. Are there differences in teachers' responses within and between programmes?

A questionnaire was developed based on interviews with 17 teachers from three programmes.

In open-ended questions teachers were asked what motivated them as teachers; what were the most important elements of effective teaching in their Sistema context; what were their key objectives as teachers; and what they considered to be the most important influences on their teaching. They were also asked to describe the main differences, if any, between how they were taught and how they teach currently. A set of 48 statements from these interviews were identified as the basis for the development of the questionnaire.

A five-point Likert rating scale was used. In response to 19 statements concerning their teaching and their pupils, teachers were asked to strongly agree; agree, disagree; strongly disagree; or choose 'don't know'. A scale of one to 10, (one = not important at all; 10 = essential), was used for 29 statements about teachers' values and social and musical pedagogy. Statements were grouped under My Values; My Teaching; Musical and Social Pedagogy, with subsections relating to: Musical Skills; Performance; Social Skills; Transferable Skills; Enjoyment; Personal Development, (Creech, 2008); and Pedagogy and Curriculum. Finally, teachers were asked to comment on thirteen statements about their pupils, again using the five-point Likert rating scale.

Awareness of the research was raised through pre-existing contacts with El Sistema programme leaders, Sistema networks, and social media. To ensure ease of access the questionnaires were openly available via Survey Monkey. They were available in English and Spanish. The statements were the same for all nationalities. Anonymity of responses was assured. Questionnaires were completed by 149 teachers in 34 Sistema-inspired programmes. The Sistema-inspired programmes were in Canada (n=57) (15 programmes); Colombia (n=47) (six programmes); and Europe (n=45) (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, England, Romania, Slovakia, Srebrenica, Switzerland and Wales) (13 programmes). The overall number of teachers engaged in Sistema work at the time of the research is not known, in part because many work part time or on a session basis. Some are volunteers and all engage in other professional musical activities. Programme leaders encouraged completion of the questionnaire but because of the nature of the work could not require its completion. As the questionnaire was only available in English and Spanish this may have limited responses from some European countries. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A series of analyses of variance were undertaken. 'Don't Know' responses were excluded from the statistical analysis. The proportion of 'don't know' responses varied from statement to statement and were very small.

FINDINGS

MY VALUES

There were two statements related to values: 'my pupils' social well-being is important to me'; and 'my pupils' musical achievement is important to me'. There was no statistically significant difference in the teacher responses to the first of these statements, although the range was large apart from the Columbian teachers. Details of the range, means and standard deviations are presented in **Table 1**. There were statistically significant differences in response to the second statement. The Colombian teachers' responses were statistically significantly higher than both the European (p=.017) and Canadian (p=.0001) teachers. The range of responses was wide (see Table 1) but the mode was 10, 'essential', for all programmes.

	Colombia		Canada		Europe	
Statement	Range	Mean (SD)	Range	Mean (SD)	Range	Mean (SD)
My pupils' social well-being is important to me n=149	8 to 10	9.94 (0.32)	5 to 10	9.58 (0.98)	7 to 10	9.64 (0.74)
My pupils' musical achievement is important to me n=149	4 to 10	9.79 (0.98)	2 to 10	8.42 (1.71)	6 to 10	9.00 (1.27)

Table 1: My Values

MY TEACHING

Teachers were asked to respond to four overall statements in respect of their teaching. The statements explored expectations of musical achievement and behaviour and whether the teachers reflected on their work and adopted new strategies as necessary. **Table 2** sets out the details.

Statement 1: I have high expectations for the musical achievement of my pupils.

This was the only statement for which statistically significant differences were found. These were between Colombian and Canadian teachers ($p=.03$). The majority of Colombian and European respondents strongly agreed with the statement, whereas the majority of Canadian respondents only agreed with the statement. No Colombian teachers disagreed with the statement. Of those disagreeing three (6%) were from Europe and three (6%) from Canada. One person from the Canadian programmes disagreed strongly. Four teachers responded ‘don’t know’.

Statement 2: I have high expectations regarding the behaviour of my pupils.

There were no statistically significant differences regarding this statement. There were individual differences, with one teacher from each of the Canadian and Colombian programmes disagreeing. Four teachers responded ‘don’t know’.

Statement 3: I regularly reflect on my teaching.

There were no statistically significant differences relating to this statement. One teacher from Canada disagreed and one Colombian teacher responded ‘don’t know’. All other teachers agreed or strongly agreed.

Statement 4: I adopt new strategies as necessary. All respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. There were no statistically significant differences.

	Canada				Colombia				Europe			
	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD
I have high expectations for the musical achievement of my pupils. N=145	40%	52%	6%	2%	63%	37%			60%	34%	6%	
I have high expectations regarding the behaviour of my pupils. N=145	62%	36%	2%		54%	43%	2%		53%	45%	2%	
I regularly reflect on my teaching. N=148	61%	37%	2%		65%	35%			70%	30%		
I adopt new strategies as necessary. N=149	75%	25%			76%	24%			61%	39%		

Table 2: My teaching

MUSICAL AND SOCIAL PEDAGOGY

Respondents were also asked to rate 29 statements in relation to their importance on a 10-point scale where one was ‘not important at all’ and 10 was considered to be ‘essential’. The means and standard deviations for each group are given below in **Table 3**.

MUSICAL SKILLS

In the responses relating to musical skills, the importance of technique was rated relatively highly with means for all programmes above eight and the mode for all programmes at 10. The range varied: for the Canadian respondents from one to 10; for the Europeans from three to 10; and for the Colombians from seven to 10. Statistically, responses from Colombian teachers were significantly higher than each of the other programmes. There were no statistically significant differences in response to the importance of listening. Essential (10) was the mode for all programmes with only the proportion of Canadian teachers falling below 50% for this mode.

The importance of improvisation had the full range of ratings from one to 10 for all programmes. For Canada the mode was five (23%); for Europe eight (26%); and for Colombia 10 (22%). There were statistically significant differences between Colombia and Canada (see Table 3). With regard to musicianship once again there were statistically significant differences between Colombian and Canadian teachers. For all groups the mode was 10. For Colombia this represented almost three in every four teachers (73%) whilst for Europe the mode represented slightly more than half (54%) and for Canada one third (37%) of those responding.

PERFORMANCE

The importance of achieving high standards was not statistically significantly different overall between the groups. All programmes had some teachers rating this statement at below five. The mode was 10 overall, 10 for Colombia (39%), nine for Europe (30%) and split equally (26% each) for Canada at eight and 10.

For Colombian and European teachers the importance of pupil performance was statistically significantly higher than for Canadian teachers (see Table 3). There was also a difference in the mode for Canadian teachers, which was eight (23%), compared with 10 for both Colombia (61%) and Europe (43%).

SOCIAL SKILLS

There were no statistically significant differences in responses to the importance of ensemble participation. The mode, range and spread of the ratings showed that the Colombians' lowest rating was six, with that of the European teachers seven. In contrast the Canadian teachers rated this statement from one, 'not important at all', to 10 'essential'. Similarly there was no statistical difference in response to the importance of co-operation. The mode was again 10 (over 60%) for all programmes and 68% overall with no respondents rating this statement lower than five.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Ratings for the importance of memory had an overall mean of 7.79 with a mean for the Colombian teachers of 8.80, which was statistically significantly higher than teachers from the other groups of programmes (see Table 3 for details). The mode remained at 10 for the Colombian teachers (44%) but fell for each of the other programmes to eight (Canada, 29%; Europe 30%) and to eight overall (28%). The importance of concentration was rated by Colombian teachers statistically significantly higher than all of the other programmes (for details see Table 3) even though the mode was 'essential' for all programmes with more than three quarters of the Colombians and around half of all teachers responding 'essential'. The Colombian teachers also rated the importance of discipline statistically significantly higher than all of the other programmes (see Table 3). All programmes had the mode of 10 with no ratings lower than five. For Colombians the lowest rating was eight. There was no statistically significant difference in responses to the importance of confidence. Ten was the mode for all programmes. The Colombian teachers rated the importance of independent learning statistically higher than all other groups (see Table 3). The mode for all programmes was again 10.

ENJOYMENT

The Colombian teachers rated the importance of creating a lifelong interest in music statistically significantly higher than other groups. Despite this, the mode for all programmes was 10 (46% overall, Colombians 67% European 42% and Canadian 40%). The importance of enthusiasm was also rated highly by teachers with an overall mean of 9.35. The only statistically significant difference was between teachers from Colombia and Europe ($p=.004$). All programmes responded 10 'essential', as the mode. Colombian teachers rated the importance of giving the young person a love of music, statistically significantly higher than teachers from the European programmes. Ten was still the mode for all programmes (65% overall, Colombian 89%; Canadian 63%; and European 60%). The Colombian teachers rated the importance of love of instrument statistically significantly higher than the other programmes (see Table 3). Ten was the mode overall (53%) with Colombia 82%; Canada 47%; and Europe 46%.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Only one of the statements under the heading of Personal Development showed statistically significant differences between groups. This was the importance of

stress free activity. This statement had one of the widest range of responses: three to 10 for the Canadians and Colombians; and one to 10 for the Europeans. The overall mean was 8.29. Colombian teachers' ratings were statistically significantly higher than all of the other teachers (see Table 3 for details). The mode for Canadian teachers was nine (23%) but for all other groups was 10, 'essential' for the Colombians 52% and the Europeans 39%. The importance of achieving personal potential had more than half of respondents in all programmes rating this statement as 'essential' (see Table 3). Although there were no statistically significant differences in respect of the statement the importance of encouragement, one Sistema Europe respondent rated this statement as 'not important at all'. The next lowest ratings were from two respondents, who both rated this six. Sixty one per cent of all respondents rated encouragement as 'essential'. Responses to the importance of self-expression had a wide range of responses (three to 10) but just over half of all respondents, 51% rated it as 10 'essential'. Ten was the mode for all programmes. Responses to the importance of self-fulfilment had means above nine for all programmes and more than half of all respondents in all programmes rated this as 'essential'. The lowest ratings were four for European teachers, six for Canadians and seven for Colombian teachers.

PEDAGOGY

The importance of active holistic learning had a mean above nine only for Colombian teachers. There were statistically significant differences between teachers in Colombia and Canada (see Table 3). The spread of ratings was similar for all programmes and 'essential' was the mode with 44% overall and Colombia 59%; Europe 45%; and Canada 39%. The country groups did not differ in rating the importance of pastoral support, praise and positive behaviour management. However, Canadian teachers had the narrowest range (seven to 10) with the other three programmes having a range of four to 10. The overall mode was 'essential' (51%). 'Essential' (49%) was the mode for all programmes in relation to the importance of working as part of an ensemble with no statistically significant differences. There were statistically significant differences in responses to the importance of linking singing and playing between European and Colombian teachers compared with Canadians. For Colombians the lowest rating was six, whilst for Canadians it was two. One European respondent rated this statement as 'not important at all' (for details see Table 3).

CURRICULUM

Responses to the statement regarding the importance of providing appropriately differentiated materials had an overall mean of 8.81. The mode was again 'essential' for all programmes. Statistically, the Colombian teachers gave significantly higher ratings than the Canadian teachers. European teachers also rated the statement significantly higher than the Canadians.

The importance of incorporating visual and aural elements in teaching showed statistically significant differences between the Colombian and Canadian teachers although there were no ratings below five from any of the respondents (see Table 3). The statement with the most diverse ratings related to the importance of using Solfa hand signs (also known as Solfege). Hand signs allow children to see the height or depth of pitch. The low "do" begins at midsection. Each hand sign (pitch) is then made above the previous one. The hand signs go up when the pitch goes up. The upper "do" is at eye level. Statistically Colombian teachers rated this statement significantly higher than the other programmes. European teachers also rated this statement statistically significantly higher than

the Canadian teachers (see Table 3). The mode and range for each programme were different with ‘not important at all’ being the mode overall (26%) and for Canadian teachers (37%). The mode for European teachers was seven (22%) and for Colombians, nine (28%). All programmes had some teachers rating this factor as 10, ‘essential’.

Statement	Canada Mean (SD)	Colombia Mean (SD)	Europe Mean (SD)	Sig p=
Musical Skills				
Technique is important	8.25 (1.89)	9.49 (0.82)	8.40 (1.56)	.0001
<i>Listening is important NS</i>	9.00 (1.24)	9.47 (1.08)	9.24 (1.05)	NS
Improvisation is important	6.11 (2.32)	7.49 (2.15)	6.96 (2.02)	.006
Musicianship is important	8.72 (1.29)	9.56 (0.84)	9.11 (1.15)	.001
Performance				
<i>Achieving high standards is important NS</i>	8.01 (1.70)	8.71 (1.53)	8.47 (1.38)	NS
Pupil Performance is important	7.86 (1.56)	9.25 (1.18)	8.73 (1.48)	.0001
Social Skills				
<i>Ensemble participation is important NS</i>	9.30 (1.47)	9.33 (0.86)	9.36 (0.96)	NS
<i>Cooperating with others is important NS</i>	9.54 (1.10)	9.64 (0.71)	9.60 (0.99)	NS
Transferable Skills				
Memory is important	7.26 (1.95)	8.80 (1.42)	7.44 (1.62)	.0001
Concentration is important	9.02 (1.32)	9.67 (0.71)	8.98 (1.06)	.003
Discipline is important	9.05 (1.27)	9.80 (0.46)	8.53 (1.24)	.0001
<i>Confidence is important NS</i>	9.37 (0.86)	9.64 (0.86)	9.69 (0.60)	NS
Independent learning is important	8.25 (1.57)	9.52 (0.79)	8.60 (1.53)	.0001
Enjoyment				
Lifelong interest in music is important	8.21 (2.12)	9.51 (0.87)	8.09 (1.94)	.0001
Enthusiasm is important	9.37 (0.88)	9.67 (0.64)	9.00 (1.28)	.005
Love of music is important	9.37 (1.03)	9.82 (0.58)	8.91 (1.47)	.001
Love of their instrument is important	8.86 (1.52)	9.73 (0.62)	8.77 (1.48)	.0001
Personal Development				
<i>Achieving personal potential is important NS</i>	9.35 (1.01)	9.61 (0.68)	9.44 (0.79)	NS
Stress free activity is important	7.83 (1.85)	9.11 (1.37)	8.02 (2.16)	.001
<i>Encouragement is important NS</i>	9.42 (0.80)	9.53 (0.66)	9.13 (1.62)	NS
<i>Self-expression is important NS</i>	9.05 (1.22)	9.36 (0.91)	8.84 (1.55)	NS
<i>Self-fulfilment is important NS</i>	9.27 (1.01)	9.51 (0.82)	9.16 (1.48)	NS

Pedagogy				
Active holistic learning is important	8.67 (1.44)	9.36 (1.09)	8.77 (1.31)	.023
<i>Pastoral support, praise and positive behaviour management are important</i> NS	9.05 (0.99)	8.98 (1.45)	9.02 (1.27)	NS
<i>Working as part of an ensemble is important</i> NS	9.02 (1.47)	9.57 (0.86)	9.07 (1.37)	NS
Linking singing and playing is important	8.23 (1.93)	9.42 (0.97)	9.13 (1.50)	.0001
Curriculum				
Providing appropriately differentiated materials is important	8.18 (1.78)	9.39 (0.86)	9.04 (1.11)	.0001
Incorporating visual and aural elements is important	8.51 (1.40)	9.24 (0.99)	8.98 (1.16)	.009
Solfa hand signs are important	3.77 (3.00)	8.15 (1.84)	6.27 (2.86)	.0001

Table 3: Means for statements of importance

MY PUPILS

There were statistically significant differences between the programmes for only two of the 13 statements. These were ‘My pupils enjoy singing’; and ‘My pupils generally have high self-esteem’. In response to the first of these statements the Colombian responses differed statistically significantly from the other programmes: (Canadian $p=.0001$; European $p=.001$). The range of responses for the Canadian and European programmes was from strongly agree to disagree, whereas some Colombians strongly disagreed with this statement. This is the only statement with which any Colombians strongly disagreed. For the statement ‘My pupils generally have high self-esteem’ the statistically significant difference was between the Colombian and the Canadian respondents ($p=.019$). Both Canadian and European respondents included ‘Strongly Disagree’, whilst some Colombians ‘Disagreed’ with the statement. For eleven statements where there were no statistically significant differences the range of responses varied widely: ‘my pupils: enjoy their music’ (SA to A); ‘love music’(SA to D); ‘have positive attitudes to music (SA to D)’; ‘attend lessons regularly’ (SA to D); ‘are on time for their lessons’ (SA to D); ‘are generally well-behaved’ (SA to SD); ‘concentrate on their work’(SA to SD); ‘enjoy learning’(SA to D); ‘are well motivated’(SA to D); ‘generally fulfil their potential’(SA to SD); and ‘help each other’(SA to SD).

Overall, there were relatively few country differences between teachers in responses to the questionnaires. The exception was those from the Colombian teachers which in general were more positive. However, there were differences between teachers within countries and programmes.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the values and perceptions of teachers engaged with Sistema-inspired programmes internationally; and to explore the differences and similarities between them. The findings can be interpreted within

an eco-systemic approach which argues that individuals develop influenced by the different contexts within which they find themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This suggests that participating teachers' responses are affected by their own upbringing, including their musical training, their current roles as teachers and the extent to which they consider themselves first and foremost as teachers or professional musicians. Their values and beliefs will also be influenced by their colleagues on the programmes where they teach and the cultural context within which the programme operates locally and nationally.

In terms of research into the impact on health and wellbeing in other arts programmes it is important to preserve the “ingredients” that make that particular intervention work. However, Sistema is not a franchise. Abreu actively encouraged those inspired by Sistema to develop their own programmes, relevant to their own contexts. It might be expected therefore that there would be differences between programmes even though certain fundamental principles would be held. The findings of this research showed that teachers overwhelmingly supported the aims of El Sistema, which are to cultivate positive traits in young people's social and personal lives, working towards goals and excellence, in a tolerant and friendly environment (El Sistema, 2017b; Govias, 2011; Creech et al, 2016). Creech et al. (2016) point out that programmes have different objectives - some focus on academic success, others on youth development; some differentiate between musical and social skills, others do not. They further point out that there are other programmes that set out to influence social and personal outcomes through music. Further research might explore this issue. Sistema Europe (2018) also focusses on the disadvantaged and the achievement of excellence in two of its six programme principles but goes on to state that these are subject to continuous refinement and development and are not a mandatory requirement for membership of either the association or the network. Sistema-inspired programmes may therefore be thought of as dynamic programmes that are constantly evolving as programme leaders and teachers interact with the young people and their communities, reflecting on how their programmes are implemented and learning from their own and each other's experiences. One important consideration for programme leaders is therefore the extent to which Sistema-inspired programmes can learn from each other and from other social action programmes that use music; and the extent to which Sistema-inspired programmes can learn from research in other areas.

The key research finding was that the Columbian teachers were significantly more positive in relation to the importance of the El Sistema values, the musical achievement and musical skills of the children, having high expectations of them, and supporting their enjoyment and development of personal skills. They were more likely to reflect on their teaching and adopt new teaching strategies. There were only two responses which were lower than at least one other group. One related to the children enjoying singing and the second to the curriculum including visual and aural elements. The responses from the Colombian teachers also showed greater consistency and higher levels of agreement. The question is why the Columbian teachers were more positive and also more consistent? Cultural differences are likely to be implicated here. Columbia is in many ways similar to Venezuela with shared issues relating to poverty and social problems. This may have influenced the environments where the programme was implemented, the nature of the children participating and the way the programmes were run. While all of the children participating in Sistema inspired programmes come from deprived backgrounds, the extent and nature of that deprivation differs

internationally and also within countries. Columbia has particular problems in this respect and this may in part explain the more positive responses made by the teachers. The findings may also be influenced by the length of time the programmes have been operating. Further research would be needed to explore this.

The differences in responses between teachers may be in part explained by differences in their own experiences as musicians. While their practice evolves, it is influenced by their prior experiences, how they reflect on those experiences, and the decisions they subsequently take. In Venezuela, many of the current teachers are alumni of the programme. Some of these alumni are now engaged in or lead Sistema-inspired programmes throughout the world. Other teachers will have had a range of experiences related to their own contexts. For instance, some may have had classical training at highly prestigious conservatoires or universities, while others may have expertise in different genres and been through a different type of training. All of these factors influence their values and perceptions and have implications for recruitment and on-going professional development. Further research exploring these issues is needed also examining the subtle differences between these evolving programmes.

The findings suggest that the social and personal aspects of the programmes are seen by some teachers as being more important than striving for musical excellence although striving for excellence is also emphasised as a key ingredient for success. As the Venezuelan's put it: 'tocar y luchar' - 'to play and to struggle'. It is through aspiring to achieve excellence that self-esteem and self-confidence grow, enabling future possible selves to become a reality. Nevertheless, the ratings for the importance of social well-being were different for a minority of teachers in all programmes. These differences are important as they suggest that some programme teams do not have shared aims. This may impact on the overall effectiveness of individual programmes and the experience of the children participating in them. Exactly how this may impact effectiveness requires further research, although it is likely that where staff share the main aim of a programme it will be more effective in that respect. Where aims are not shared, the overall effectiveness of the programme, whatever its aims, are likely to be reduced. Differences in responses may also be explained by issues related to the education system in each country. Most Sistema-inspired programmes do not set out to replace music education programmes, but in some places, for instance England, Sistema-inspired programmes take place within the school, during the school day. They contribute to, and in some places replace the music curriculum. In other places the programmes complement the music curriculum. The questionnaire did not include questions about creativity, composing or issues of musical knowledge relating to context, style or history, which form an integral part of many music education programmes. Indeed, the importance of improvisation, which is associated with composing and essential to the jazz genre, was rated amongst the lowest in terms of importance and also had a wide spread of responses. Further research exploring the views of pupils/students regarding Sistema inspired programmes would provide valuable insights into this. For many young people the school music curriculum is a non-negotiable part of their music education. The extent to which extra-curricular programmes complement this is important in relation to their musical progress. How the Sistema-inspired programmes interact with other musical provision should therefore be considered by programme leaders and teachers and is clearly an area for further research.

Care must be taken in interpreting some of the differences in responses. For instance, teachers' decisions regarding changes in teaching strategies will be influenced by a number of factors. For example, they may believe that a strategy is not working because the student is not paying sufficient attention. Sanctions and rewards may be in place to deal with the situation and the teacher may decide that a new strategy is unnecessary. Equally, a strategy that is working for some students may not be working for others. The teacher will then have to decide whether or not to adopt a new strategy for those students for whom it is not working. How teachers make such decisions could be explored in future research.

For Sistema, an important part of the philosophy is to take any opportunity to 'perform' to visitors or parents and friends, even as part of a rehearsal, where 'let's perform that' may form part of the pedagogy. Performances can be informal or formal. Large, high profile events are important, as in many cultures, it is the more formal performances, such as the end of term concert, that are regarded as the key goal at the end of a more extended rehearsal period. Teachers may therefore have interpreted the word 'performance' in the questionnaire in different ways. Further research in this area may provide interesting information in respect of the importance of regular formal and informal performances in supporting greater confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment.

There was general agreement about the importance of achieving high musical standards. However, some teachers in focusing on this goal may have lost sight of the underlying aim, to change lives through musical excellence as a means of enhancing self-esteem and self-worth and improving behaviour. The expectations for good behaviour were similarly high across programmes, although a teacher may have high expectations of behaviour, which are not matched by the actual behaviour of pupils. The challenge for the teacher is to decide why pupils are not well-behaved and then take action. The cause may be the pace of the lesson (too slow or too fast), level of difficulty and enjoyment or relevance of the repertoire. How important behaviour is to the teacher and how the teacher reflects on this, including whether the teacher adopts new strategies will impact on the outcomes for their pupils. Whether the pupils enjoy learning and are well-motivated will also impact on behaviour. The relationship between these could be explored in further research.

There were no statistically significant differences between the programmes in respect of attending lessons regularly or being on time for lessons, although some teachers disagreed with these statements. The key issue here is what action, if any, the teachers choose to take when pupils do not turn up for lessons on time or what steps they take to enable pupils to attend lessons regularly and arrive on time. One In Harmony programme anecdotally reported a pupil consistently turning up late until they found he had no watch. The team bought him one and he was on time thereafter!

There were no statistically significant differences in response to statements about the importance teachers place on enthusiasm and encouragement. These affect the way the teacher interacts with their pupils as do beliefs about the importance of creating a lifelong interest in music, a love of music and a love of their instrument.

Individual differences in responses to the statement relating to pupils having high levels of self-esteem may result from a number of factors, including how long the programme had been running. A teacher may have agreed with the statement because their students started with low self-esteem and, following extensive engagement with their programme, have improved self-esteem. Equally,

disagreeing with the statement and recognising that students have low self-esteem does not mean that teachers will not reflect on their practices, adopting strategies as necessary to improve the self-esteem of their pupils.

There are inevitably limitations to this research. All statements were open to individual interpretation by teachers. For example, perceptions of what constitutes good behaviour might differ, especially between cultures. No young people were interviewed - the focus was intentionally on the teachers and their expectations and reflections, including their assessment of their pupils. The research was at a fixed point in time. Most teachers reflected on their work and all stated that they adopted new strategies as necessary. Changes over time might therefore be expected. The programmes were grouped as Canadian, Colombian and European as it was not possible to analyse the difference between each individual programme as the sample sizes would have been too small.

CONCLUSIONS

Sistema-inspired programmes may be thought of as dynamic social and musical programmes that are constantly evolving. These changes occur within broader social and economic contexts, particularly marked were differences between programmes in South America and those embedded in Western European culture. Programme leaders and teachers bring their own experiences to the programmes. They interact with the young people and their communities. They reflect on how their programmes are implemented. They develop new strategies. They learn from their own and each other's experiences. The vast majority of teachers in Sistema-inspired programmes share broadly similar values. Almost all teachers reflected on their work and cared about the personal, social, educational and musical aspects of their work with young people. Teachers viewed the importance of various aspects of teaching in broadly the same ways. Their views of their pupils were broadly similar.

However, there were important individual differences in response to many statements. While these differences were not always statistically significant, they may be of great importance for the individual children and programmes with whom these teachers work. Teachers' own experiences, their aspirations for, and expectations of their students in determining outcomes may matter. Teachers with different prior learning and teaching experiences bring those experiences to programmes, possibly without being aware of them. These may influence their own expectations and teaching approaches, which may further impact on participating children and young people. Further research adopting qualitative research methods might explore these issues in more depth. The range of responses to many statements within programmes raises issues for ensuring coherent approaches. This is particularly important where teachers work as part of programmes supporting young people who live in challenging circumstances. The importance of this finding for recruitment of staff and the on-going professional development of teachers cannot be over-emphasised.

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