The Mediation of Music in the Development of Intrapersonal and Action Skills in Early Teacher Education

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Abstract

Soft skills enable the individual to successfully face the problems and challenges of a complex society in flux and under constant uncertainty. Music, in its different forms of expression, is here introduced as an ideal tool for the development of intrapersonal and action skills such as adaptability, optimism and proactivity. In this paper we analyse a case study regarding a project carried out by and for future teachers. Our data collection methods included questionnaires, observations, student productions and interviews. The results reveal that music can be a mediating element for the development of soft skills. Specifically, it has been observed that music can help the individual to face and effectively resolve changing and novel situations that require self-efficacy, self-confidence and social support. Music can also improve the physical and socio-emotional well-being of individuals as well as helping them successfully face adversity.

Keywords: adaptability, optimism, proactivity, early teacher education, forms of musical expression

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La Mediación de la Música en el Desarrollo de las Habilidades Intrapersonales y de Acción en la Formación Inicial del Profesorado

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Resumen

Las habilidades para la vida permiten a la persona hacer frente de manera satisfactoria a los problemas, desafíos y retos de una sociedad compleja en constante cambio e incertidumbre. La música, en sus diferentes formas de expresión se presenta como una herramienta idónea para el desarrollo de dichas habilidades, a nivel intrapersonal y de acción, tales como la adaptabilidad, el optimismo y la proactividad. A partir de un proyecto llevado a cabo por y para futuros maestros, se ha realizado una investigación cualitativa basada en el estudio de caso. Para la recogida de datos se hizo uso de cuestionarios, observaciones, producciones del alumnado y entrevistas. Los resultados obtenidos muestran que la música puede ser un elemento mediador para el desarrollo de habilidades para la vida. Concretamente, se ha observado que la música puede ayudar a la persona a enfrentarse y resolver de modo eficaz situaciones cambiantes y novedosas que propicien la autoeficacia, la autoconfianza y el apoyo social. También la música puede ayudar a mejorar el estado de bienestar físico, socioemocional y afrontar la adversidad de modo positivo.

I n a world of constant rapid changes, uncertainty and complexity, people require cognitive, behavioural and emotional skills that enable them to successfully face everyday challenges or problems in order to have a more fulfilling life (Bolat & Korkmaz, 2021), whether at school (Zepke & Leach, 2010), at work (Deng et al., 2014), in their community or in their personal lives (Galagali, 2011; Giraldez-Hayes & Prince, 2017).

At present, soft skills address not only health education, but other social issues as well. The WHO (2001). Life Skills Education programme aims to develop positive and adaptive behaviour by enabling individuals to practice psychosocial skills, learning from their own experiences and from the people around them (Prajina, 2014). For its part, the WHO (1997) identifies a series of soft skills that should be taught at school: decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, emotion management and stress management. According to Seligman et al. (2009), skills such as resilience, positive emotions, engagement and meaning can be taught at school. Thus, one of the main tasks of this institution is to train students in personal development, in order for them to develop the aforementioned skills and others such as honesty, loyalty, perseverance, courage, integrity, curiosity, persistence, kindness, fairness, humility, and compassion. Lippman et al. (2015) classify soft skills into two categories: intrapersonal (time management, stress management and creative thinking) and interpersonal (managing relationships with others, motivation, leadership and negotiation). Further, Giraldez-Hayes and Prince (2017) divide them into three categories: intrapersonal skills (adaptability, optimism, resilience and integrity), interpersonal skills (empathy, cooperation and active listening) and thinking, organisational or action skills (critical and creative thinking and proactivity). Following the model of these authors, in our research we analyse two intrapersonal competencies, adaptability and optimism, and a third action competency: proactivity. These skills were because of their importance to the teaching profession and for the links between them: adaptability with proactivity (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2019), and proactivity with optimism (Ashford & Black, 1996; Geertshuis et al., 2014). In a previous work, we analysed the development of three other interpersonal skills through music

mediation (Cortón-Heras, et al., 2023). The aim of this research is to know, understand and discuss how the selected soft skills are developed and improved in a group of music teacher training students through a musical expression project.

Adaptability, Optimism, and Proactivity

Adaptability has been defined as the ability of individuals to adjust their thoughts, actions and emotions in response to new, changing or uncertain situations (Martin et al., 2012). One of the traits that determine individual differences in adaptability is an individual's self-esteem, described as their positive or negative self-perception (Zhang et al., 2020). Adaptability is a fundamental skill for teachers, as it involves inherent change and regular adaptation in managing new or uncertain demands and situations as part of their teaching work (Collie & Martin, 2016). There is evidence of the importance of adaptability in the success and effectiveness of teachers (Collie et al., 2020).

Adaptability is also related to proactivity. Teachers are expected to respond effectively to changing needs in the classroom (Collie & Martin, 2016). Further, proactivity is likely to influence adaptability in learners, including the propensity to adopt enterprising behaviours and seek new opportunities (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2019).

Proactivity is conceptualised as the set of mechanisms that generate goal-directed behaviour through the exercise of some form of cognitive control (Lieder & Iwama, 2021). It also refers to having the initiative to set and pursue one's own goals without anyone in the immediate environment suggesting it. This is a highly sought-after skill in the professional stage, as it is associated with professional, academic and personal success (Geertshuis et al., 2014).

Optimism is a personality trait that reflects the tendency to have favourable expectations for the future (Scheier & Carver, 2018). Optimism is related to improving one's physical and mental health and coping with everyday social and work life, so increasing optimism is an effective way of increasing confidence and giving meaning to life (Hang-Joong, 2019). It has been suggested that while optimism generally evolves and increases during early and middle life, it tends to decline in adulthood as the person ages (Purol &

Chopik, 2021). However, it is a skill that can be improved (Taylor et al., 2020). Hence the importance of fostering it at school, as can be seen in the effect of the academic optimism of teachers on the performance of their students (Chang 2011; Hong & Cheng 2013; Wu & Lin, 2018).

Soft Skills Training

The soft skills so far discussed can be acquired through training or direct experience (Bolat & Korkmaz, 2021). Many of them can and should be introduced, taught and fostered at school, through practice, reflection and dialogue, in order for students to effectively adapt to their social context (Giraldez-Hayes & Prince, 2017; Stewart, 2013). As Dewey (2008) and Freinet (2002) argued, school must educate for life, be life and be alive. UNESCO, first in the Faire report (1973) and then in the Delors report (1996), supported an education that trains students to exist as people and to co-exist in harmony. More recently, the 4th goal of the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) is quality education that promotes sustainable development in a globalised world. However, in order for teachers to be able to teach soft skills, they must first develop these skills themselves. Lavilles & Robles (2017) found a significant correlation between soft-skill development levels in teachers and their performance. According to Peabody (2019), teachers who have positive relationships with their students generally have the ability to recognise, understand and manage their own emotions as well as their students' for the benefit of their learning. In addition, students prefer teachers who are empathetic and respectful towards them (Belanger & Longden, 2009), who are passionate and enthusiastic about what they do, and who are kind and open-minded (Stelmach et al., 2017).

The Mediation of Music in the Development of Soft Skills

Music has a positive influence and effect at the affective level in the preservation of social harmony and the acquisition of soft skills oriented to the future development of the student (Bennett, 2004; Croom, 2012; Soliveres-Buigues et al., 2021a), including empathy, emotional regulation and personal well-being (Goldstein, 2011; Lamont, 2012). Participation in group musical activities also promotes the development of personal relationships, as

well as instilling confidence in students. Addressing diversity through musical activities, such as the selection of a multicultural repertoire with different styles, for instance, helps make music an inclusive subject for students (Holliman et al., 2018).

The development of soft skills, as we have seen, ensures that students have a positive relationship with their own well-being, whether in relation to their self-fulfilment or to self-perception and adaptation to a context (Lamont, 2012; McManus & Giraldez-Hayes, 2021; Turino, 2008). However, it is possible and effective to work on the aforementioned soft skills using music as a transdisciplinary vehicle for learning beyond the music classroom (Soliveres-Buigues et al., 2021b).

Soft Skills in the Early Training of Music Teachers: A Project

The soft skills project on which this research is based took place during the 2020/21 academic year as part of the Forms of Musical Expression course of the Primary Education degree (Music mention) at the University of Valladolid, Spain. The target group consisted of 30 students organised in groups of five. Each group was responsible for the design and implementation of ten activities focussed on the development of one of the following soft skills: optimism, empathy, cooperation, proactivity, adaptability and active listening. However, as stated above, for this study only adaptability, optimism and proactivity have been selected, as these skills belong to the intrapersonal and action spheres and are relevant in early teacher training and professional development. To work on these skills, various forms of musical expression were used: verbal/vocal expression, instrumental expression, musical creation and movement and dance. Seventy-two activities were designed, distributed in two sessions, each lasting two hours, during the months of April and May 2021, for a total of 12 sessions. At the end of each session, a meeting was held for reflection and shared evaluation. In addition, each student had to write a journal reflecting on each session, whether on their experience in their role as leader of the session or in their role as recipient of the session. After one week, they also had to co-evaluate a colleague's journal and give constructive feedback.

Methodology

The aim of this research article is to better know, understand and discuss how the selected intrapersonal competences (adaptability, optimism and proactivity) are developed and improved in a group of music teacher trainees through a musical expression project. We decided to use the interpretive research paradigm because it allows for a holistic analysis of the complexity of a particular reality that we intend to study through observation and understanding in its environment (Bautista & Nelly, 2011), prioritising the subjective behaviours of educational phenomena (Flick, 2018; Nussbaum, 2007).

This research is a case study, as we considered this to be the most appropriate methodological design given itspurpose. Through the description, documentation and interpretation of everything that took place in the real classroom scenario, the case study methodology allows us to interpret some of the fundamental factors for the implementation of the pedagogical-musical project proposed in this research (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995). In this work we used the following data collection techniques (see Table 1)

Table 1
Research techniques, instruments and informants

Technique	Instrument	Informant
Participant and non-participant observation	6-session field notebook	4 researchers
	85 photographs	30 students
	119 videos	30 students
Learning products	90 journals and 90 co-evaluations	30 students

Technique	Instrument	Informant
	72 didactic designs of activities for the 3 soft skills	3 groups of 5 students
Interview	30 open-ended interviews	30 students

The data analysis followed an inductive triangulation system, typical of the thematic-interpretive model (Crowe et al., 2015). We codified data from the transcriptions of the video sessions and interviews as well as the photographs, journals, activity designs and the researchers' field notebook, after a review of the scientific literature discussed in the researchers' theoretical framework. This resulted in six analytical categories linked to the following soft skills: positivity, empathy, cooperation, adaptability, proactivity and active listening. In this study only three of them will be detailed due to space limitations: a) adaptability; b) optimism; and c) proactivity (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Network of categories

Given the large size of the dataset, we used a software tool called Atlas.ti (v. 22) to analyse and manage it, although the codification process was carried out ad hoc by the researchers. Table 2 shows the codification system proposed to identify the data collected in this research.

Table 2
Data codification

Codification				
Document number	Pagination	Skill type	Session number	Student number
44:2	22	O (Optimism)	1 or 2	Student 1

Note. Includes photographs, videos and their transcripts, journals, field notebooks, activity designs and interviews.

Analysis and Discussion

Adaptability

From an educational perspective, music is the ideal tool for creating an environment in the classroom that favours adaptability based on social support, optimism, self-confidence and self-efficacy (Hodges, 2010). This climate is essential to foster adaptability, as social support has been shown to have a positive impact on this skill (Wang & Fu, 2015). Studies show that students with higher perceived social support have higher self-confidence and self-efficacy, which leads to greater adaptability (Karacan-Ozdemir & Yerin Guneri, 2017).

"Throughout the session we were able to see how we should not only see situations as black and white, but that there is a broad spectrum of greys that we need to learn" (181:1 - 10 - 11, A. 2, Student 24). There are also studies that demonstrate the predictive power of optimism on career adaptability (Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2014, 2016). In addition, it is very important to adapt to situations with a positive attitude, not be afraid of change and unforeseen
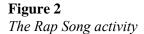
events, maintain a positive attitude and not be afraid of failure or perceive a sense of frustration that can often arise. This skill is closely linked to overcoming or coping with frustration (181:1 - 10 - 11, A. 2, Student 24 / 217:1 - 21, A. 2, Student 26).

The education of music professionals should ensure the acquisition of certain soft skills as fundamental to the teaching profession (Riedler & Eryaman, 2016). As discussed, one of these skills is adaptability (Ghazali & Bennett, 2017), along with diligence, confidence, courage, interpersonal skills, work ethic, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills (Weston, 2020). As one participant says: "the fact that we have been able to experience these situations before they happen to us will undoubtedly help us as teachers in the future to be able to deal with them successfully and competently" (253:3 - 35, A. 2, Student 2).

The study found that adaptability, like the other soft skills here studied, is connected to musical expression.

Regarding instrumental expression, this skill was trained when students faced changes in the way they had to perform with small percussion instruments. "Overcoming initial frustration and allowing me to fail without feeling guilty" (156:3 - 19 - 21, A. 1, Student 22). Teachers had to improvise with new instrumentations and adapt to the changes (45:4 - 13, A. 1, Student 5). Also, as we have discussed, it is common to encounter unforeseen events and deficiencies with musical instruments (unavailability, insufficiency, breakage...) that a teacher must deal with adaptively by using, for instance, body percussion, or devising new ways of playing the music, or changing the planned activity entirely.

The research showed that vocal expression can also be used to develop adaptability through the versatility of the human voice. In our project, one of the proposed skill-building activities focused on vocal improvisation in the form of a rap song about the importance of this life skill (see Figure 2). Rapping and songwriting can improve well-being through their positive effects on inclusion, social and cultural connectedness, self-esteem and empowerment (Dingle et al., 2021). "At first it seemed very complicated, because I didn't see myself being able to create a rap song, but with the cooperation of the group we have been able to create an amazing song" (497:2 - 26 - 28, A. 1, Student 23).

Figure 2
The Rap Song activity

Note. Source: Research material (53:1 - A. 2, S. 7.)

Similarly, it was observed that movement and dance (kinetic expression) foster adaptability by allowing the student to cope with changes, minimising the frustration that is usually generated by changing situations, as has been discussed above. In our project, one activity subjected the students to unexpected changes in melody and/or choreography. All these changes were successfully dealt with by using the body's own movement as a tool capable of synchronising and adapting to a variety of unexpected changes through anticipation and adjustment (Mills et al., 2015).

> In the last activity, with a selection of songs selected by the leading group with messages pushing for adaptability, the participating group spontaneously began to dance together in an atmosphere of positivity, enjoyment and freedom. All this was a sign of the cohesion that had developed within the group of university students and, above all, and most importantly, as people with a common goal "to rediscover the value of music in schools". (603:3, A.2, Teacher 1)

Optimism

Students participating in the project have significantly improved their degree of optimism. They have faced the events that happened to them with greater responsibility, looking for a logical and reflective cause as to why things and events happened, instead of attributing bad results to external factors. They now believe that it is possible to learn from any experience, however negative it may be, seeing opportunities where there were originally threats. Problems exist and reappear throughout our lives. Denying them and pretending they do not exist is not optimism (Luri, 2018). This skill can be transferred to their future learners, hence the importance of being optimistic in the classroom.

Communication of negative self-perception with other peers in small groups can be reversed into optimism when given feedback in a trustful atmosphere, through positive and encouraging discourses that enable the reversal of students' expectations of failure by reminding the student of their own or their peers' previous successful experiences (Vehkakoski, 2020), as well as options for improvement that the person is unable to see for themself. "We all can improve as people, but we must be aware that our shortcomings do not define us, and that each of us has something positive to offer. (...) I felt very comfortable and hopeful that I can improve my attitudes day by day" (161:2 - 16, O. 2, Student 3).

Moreover, self-knowledge opens the way to optimism because the person becomes aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, maximising the former and seeking alternatives to the latter, either by working on them or minimising them. In order to be optimistic, it is essential to have a balanced self-esteem, to know oneself, to see one's strengths and weaknesses in a way that is adjusted to reality; otherwise optimism can generate negative results (Haynes et al., 2006).

"(...) We must foster positive self-esteem in our future students, allowing them to value and accept themselves as they are, and thus enabling greater emotional stability" (164:3 - 16, O. 1, Student 3). Numerous research studies confirm that teachers' academic optimism has a significant impact on students' academic performance (Wu & Li, 2018), thus the importance of fostering this skill in teachers (Thien & Chan, 2020). Optimism seems to be closely related to people's expectations about themselves, about a task or about the response of others to something. This relates directly to the well-

known "Pygmalion Effect", in which student performance is significantly associated with teachers' beliefs, such that when expectations are low, response or achievement is consequently lower (Klassen & Tze, 2014). Thus, optimism becomes indispensable, because if we are negative our expectations will generally be low (152:2 - 13, O. 1, Student 1).

Music is naturally linked to emotions (Edgar, 2013) and can easily be used as an emotional stimulus (Küpana, 2015). Music is sound received by our ear and interpreted by our brain, provoking feelings and emotions that may be pleasant, unpleasant, relaxing, etcetera. Optimism and music are useful tools to foster joy and confidence, and the music classroom is a good space to put this into practice (164:4 - 18, O. 1, Student 3). We cannot forget that one of the most important goals in music education is to feel music as a positive phenomenon (Ocaña-Fernández, 2020) capable of conditioning happiness and life satisfaction (Lyubomirsky, 2011), and having positive effects on people's health and well-being (Aksoy, 2014).

Two fundamental aspects related to optimism have materialised in this project: on the one hand, the influence of music on mood and, on the other, the motivating nature of learning to play a new instrument or the thrill of performing a musical composition, however small it may be (212:5 - 18, O. 1, Student 4). Indeed, shared instrumental practice fosters attitudes of confidence and personal and group self-improvement by enabling the correct performance of complex rhythms (Di Natale & Russell, 2015), thanks to the cooperation of all members of the group (Andreiko et al., 2019; Soliveres-Buigues et al., 2021b).

The collective instrumental practice created an atmosphere of great satisfaction: "the feeling of joy, confidence and group cohesion that emerged when the rhythm was played correctly was impressive" (201:1 - 11, O. 2, Student 20) and, ultimately, of optimism "in being part of and belonging to a percussion ensemble". For some of the students, optimism is created by self-improvement in the face of a musical challenge (229:6 - 17, O. 2, Students 25) and for others it lies in the motivation generated by the activity itself. The activity "made us all feel better about ourselves and therefore more positive" (153:2 - 17, O. 2, Student 5). These results are consistent with those found in studies by Scott (1992), Priest (2006) and Devroop (2012), who found higher levels of optimism following participation in instrumental music activities.
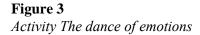
On the other hand, collective vocal practice also proved to be an activity capable of stimulating emotions in the project (Varner, 2020), fostering optimism among the participating university students, who found a song for every moment and mood (200:1 - 5, O. 1, Student 20). In addition, singing as a cooperative group activity contributes to the improvement of social and community integration of the participants by enabling an atmosphere conductive to optimism and identification with others (Dingle et al., 2019; Einarsdottira & Gudmundsdottir, 2016).

Movement and dance (kinetic expression) was also capable of generating emotional change. In our project, it was selected for an individual and a group activity, and it was the latter that most improved the enjoyment and optimism of the group, when done openly and freely and when the music selected was meaningful for the participants. We observed an effect of emotional contagion among participants, considering that the effects produced by music derive from the musical structure and the listener's experience with it (Céspedes-Guevara & Eerola, 2018).

> The determining factor in this was the music selected. From the very first song we all instantly brightened, because they were songs known to all of us and considered iconic in our parties and celebrations. You could see how the vast majority of the students danced joyfully without having to step out into the centre [of the classroom]. This is, without a doubt, another of the symptoms of the group bonding we are developing thanks to these sessions, as I believe that, if this activity had been attempted on the first day, something like this would not have happened. (155:3 - 30, p. 2. Student 24)

In Figure 3, the students participating in the project move as suggested by the different pieces of music. This created an atmosphere of joy, well-being and optimism.

Figure 3

Activity The dance of emotions

Note. Source: Research materials (8:1 - A 2, S. 4)

Indeed, the impulse to move to the rhythm of music is universal in human beings, and we let ourselves be carried away by certain types of music (Levitin et al., 2018). Furthermore, dance allows for the externalisation and bodily self-expression of emotions and feelings, both positive and negative, and through catharsis it improves physical and emotional balance and well-being of the individual (Dingle et al., 2021), which leads to a more optimistic view of reality (606: 3, - 2, O. 1, Teacher 1).

Proactivity

This skill was the least known and least valued for all the students participating in the project, but after the implementation of the activities they were able to improve it thanks to the support of the group. They are also more aware now of the importance of this skill in a globalised and ever-changing world, and especially for the 21st century teacher. Proactivity is the ability to

assess a given situation, offer a possible solution for it and uphold the decision for a certain period of time (Holguin Alvarez, 2017).

> There is no doubt about the importance of proactivity in our society. It happens sometimes that people with great ideas have not followed them through because of fear of failure or embarrassment and other prejudices and phobias acquired during childhood and pre-adolescence. A person may be innately proactive, but frustrating experiences undermine creative intentions. If the survival instinct we all have is anything to go by, proactivity is necessary to solve problems directly related to our progression as individuals. However, fear creates an *a priori* hindrance that is difficult to overcome in adulthood, leaving certain individuals at the mercy of their circumstances and fears. (399:4 - 12, PR. 1, Student 22)

"Proactivity is very important for teachers, we must develop this ability to be able to make decisions and be active in our future sessions. We also need to be able to provide solutions to the situations we face!" (179:1 - 17 - 18, PR. 2, Student 11). Proactive behaviour seems to have an impact on academic performance, career success, stress tolerance, coping, and so on; hence the importance of fostering it at all educational levels, including higher education (Cansino, Román & Expósito, 2018). Proactive people attempt to improve their emotional response to critical situations that generate psychological and personal discomfort such as somatization, depression, anxiety and paranoia in non-proactive people. In addition, proactive behaviours are often associated with positive indices of personal well-being (Gustems & Calderón, 2014).

The functions and benefits of music are so clear that it could be argued that when certain skills are acquired in music, especially emotional skills, competencies in other areas of life are strengthened (Ros-Morente et al., 2019). Part of these competencies include leadership and proactivity, which imply a certain motivation and satisfaction with life. This suggests that music can become an important resource to help individuals acquire and strengthen their emotional and social competencies (Portowitz & Klein, 2007). It also improves well-being and health (Aksoy, 2014). Music actually supports individuals in certain situations, distracting them from excessive mental ramblings that may lead to negative thoughts, which is a resource that allows the person to continue with their purpose and achieve their goals. Music is

often used in a playful way or as an element of relaxation. If we associate it with education, it can become a motivational tool (Koehler et al., 2021). This is also the case for fostering and promoting soft skills, in this case proactivity, as music is a form of expression common to all human beings (Spak & Card, 2019).

As future teachers, the inclusion of music in the classroom seems to increase students' intrinsic motivation, because they participate in the learning process in an active way (Hallam, 2010; Rauduvaite & Li, 2018). This skill requires dynamism, involvement and improvisation (215:3 - 20, PR. 2, Student 10).

Music can be seen as a form of culture that unites people from very diverse backgrounds, that is to say, it promotes social inclusion (Olcina-Sempere & Ferreira, 2020) and this can be harnessed in the classroom to create a good learning atmosphere and foster the development of skills such as proactivity (227:1 - 24, PR. 2, Student 28).

Music is very important for the development of proactivity, because it is able to make people who participate less, for whatever reason, feel more comfortable and want to participate, which makes them more proactive in the development of activities (460:1 - 27 - 30, PR. 2, Student 22). In our project, proactivity has been an aim of musical practice in its expressive instrumental, vocal, creative or kinetic form (155:4 - 33, PR. 2, Student 23). In addition, after each activity and session, all participants were encouraged to reflect, in line with studies that mention reflection and proactivity as factors that grow together, leading to professional development (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2019). In the Instruments activity, as shown in Figure 4, each student chose a small percussion instrument from the centre of the classroom, and freely and spontaneously created a rhythm that the other students had to repeat. At the end of the activity, the group gathered to reflect on it.

Figure 4
The Instruments activity

Note. Source: Own work (100:1 - PR. 2, S. 2)

As for instrumental expression, proactivity was facilitated when presented in the form of group improvisation through the free and spontaneous creation of rhythms and melodies by each participant (203:1 - 3 - 7, PR. 2, Student 24). The rationale behind this is that research shows that musical improvisation allows subjects to express feelings and emotions in an uninhibited way facilitating their inclusion (Schroeder et al., 2019). "I think that a climate of trust was generated that was adequate and conducive to not being afraid to make mistakes and that everyone participated actively, however proactive they were" (155:2 - 23, PR. 2, Student 1).

Vocal expression, especially collective singing, also helps develop proactivity. Students who were more reactive, when singing individually in front of the group, could, if they wanted, ask for help from their peers when singing so that everyone was uninhibited and enjoyed their active participation (214:3 - 14, PR. 1, Student 28).

Improvisation, whether vocal, instrumental or kinetic, is also shown to be a valuable tool in the development of proactivity. Not only does it increase the active involvement of all participants and allow for inclusion and social cohesion; it also has a cathartic power for releasing tension and emotion (Schroeder et al., 2019). The catharsis is enhanced when the group has a certain cohesion that allows for inhibition to be minimal (214:1 - 13, PR. 1, Student 18) and reduces the fear of failure or making a mistake (155:2 - 23, PR. 2, Student 17). These results are consistent with the findings of Ros-Morente et al., (2019), in whick participation in group music-making activities is shown to develop socioemotional competencies such as leadership and proactivity.

Conclusions

The research shown in this article has tried to introduce music, in its different forms of expression (instrumental, vocal/verbal, kinetic), as an element of mediation for the development of soft skills in initial teacher training. Through a project, it has been possible to observe a qualitative improvement in adaptability, optimism and proactivity as fundamental intrapersonal and action skills for a future teacher. Regarding adaptability, we have perceived how music has been an effective tool capable of generating facilitating environments for self-efficacy, self-confidence and social support. Through musical practices such as improvisation, students had to face novel or changing situations and resolve them favourably through self-confidence and trust in the group itself. We have also seen how optimism can be developed through pleasant and positive musical experiences, thus promoting personal and group well-being and a healthy and balanced self-esteem in students. Finally, we have studied how proactivity can become a determinant of professional success and performance, stress tolerance and personal well-being; hence the importance of its inclusion as a teaching competency. In this project, music has promoted the creation of shared learning environments characterised by a climate of trust, spontaneity and optimism.

In short, the case study analysed in this article has revealed that the mediation of the arts, particularly music, can foster the development of life skills necessary not only for a teacher, but also for the comprehensive training of students and their personal development, regardless of their educational or

life stage, as it provides them with a set of tools and cognitive and socio-emotional strategies necessary to satisfactorily face the challenges and problems of an increasingly uncertain, complex and global world. These are fundamental skills for teaching professionals, for effective educational action and for a more fulfilling life.

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Declarations and Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest with this work.

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