

## **Creativity and New Approaches to Continuing Professional Development for Second-Level Music Teachers in Ireland: A Review**

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Since the inception of a new music curriculum in 1999 for the Leaving Certificate programme, the number of students selecting music as a formal subject in second level education in Ireland has grown by over 600%. There has also been a fundamental change in the assessment criteria associated with this new curriculum at the senior cycle in the Irish Educational system. In addition, changes have also been noted in the formal State examination results obtained by students undertaking this ‘transformed’ music curriculum. Aiming to support the learning experience, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), a constituent component of Ireland's Department of Education and Science, called together a group of second level music teachers, dubbed ‘local facilitators’, to generate ideas for enhancing teachers’ skills and creativity in order to support their work in the classroom. The purpose of this paper is to report on a trilogy of inservice courses undertaken by second level school music teachers in Ireland during 2010 and 2011. The three courses had the following themes: “Being creative with technology in the classroom”, “Being creative with classroom singing” and “Being creative with classroom composing”. Core to the programme was the personal creative development of teachers attending these nationwide courses. The paper describes how the concept of creativity was explored with teachers through this series of Professional Development opportunities. Findings are derived from teacher evaluations and particularly from the nature of the requests that emanated from the inservice. The growing confidence of music teachers and their willingness to explore their creative potential through technology, singing and composing is reviewed. Further ideas concerning the nurturing of creative thinking in music education within the Republic of Ireland are proposed.