This book is the result of work done over a period of four years, of studies conducted in distant geographic spaces that provided the context for a rich experience with more than 280 students, seven teachers, six different places, and three languages in four different countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Switzerland). This experiment is an adaptation of my doctoral thesis in which I designed and observed creative student–teacher interaction in a variety of educational contexts. The discipline chosen for this study is that of music education. At the beginning of this experience, I worked as a professor of music education in the secondary school “Les Cerisiers”, as a professor in a teacher education program, and as a researcher in the Haute École Pédagogique BEJUNE in Switzerland. The ages of the students that participated most actively in this project range from 11 to 13 years old. However, some activities were carried out with even younger students.

This book elaborates a pedagogical approach based on sequences of creative musical production which have been designed to be taught in different educational contexts. I describe their construction in the first and second parts of the book. In these sections, I focus on the initial research design from my perspective as a teacher, professor, and researcher in order to develop flexible pedagogical sequences for creative activities in which teachers can teach and students can learn music. In the third part of the book, I present a second research design in order to observe what happens during these sequences. To accomplish this, I abandon my roles as a teacher and professor to take on the singular focus of a researcher.

Why carry out this research in two stages and with such different approaches? The field of music education has a long history of
research carried out in labs and in the classroom. The results of these investigations have had deep repercussions on the daily practice of teachers. Yet some knowledge is not easily translated or applied in a school setting. I should note that in Switzerland, the current political landscape of teacher education and research encourages the re-evaluation and reconsideration of methodologies capable of responding to new educational needs coming from educational reforms and teacher training programs. Inspired by the on-site intervention designs of Sandoval (Sandoval, 2002, 2004; Sandoval & Bell, 2004), activity theory (Engeström, 1999; Engeström et al., 1996), and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, 2005), I have set out to develop a model with flexible pedagogical sequences and musical production activities for schools in Argentina, Canada, and Switzerland. This research and development design has allowed me to construct and consolidate a pedagogical model based on concrete experience and enriched by the research literature.

However, this research did not finish there. New research perspectives opened up, allowing my collaborators and me to observe what happens during the flexible pedagogical sequences that I developed. I chose an emerging research perspective: that of observing the forms of collaboration between students and teachers’ actions during these lessons. This approach would not have been possible without the preceding construction of flexible pedagogical sequences.

I created the pedagogical sequences with the purpose of developing a set of educational scenarios in order to observe and analyse them afterwards. During this experience, I realized how important it was to understand and inform our fellow teachers and teacher educators about what happens when you place student creative activity at the centre of teaching. However, much work remains to be done.

Why not start with the direct observation and examination of collaboration amongst students and their interaction with teachers during musical composition lessons? I did not set out to study a set of possible behaviours. My intention was to observe behaviour with a pedagogically sound foundation in a constructed environment through flexible pedagogical sequences consolidated in a variety of cultural and educational contexts.

My work proposes two different research designs:

• one for constructing and proposing pre-made flexible pedagogical sequences to be used by teachers (see the first and second parts of this book); and